

THE COMMENTATOR

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Bennun and Levin Appointed The Commentator's Next Editors in Chief; Marmon to be Managing Editor

By SRULI FRIEDMAN

Jonathan Levin (YC '24) and Rivka Bennun (SCW '24) were selected by outgoing Editor in Chief Ariel Kahan (YC '24) to be editors in chief for volume 89 of The Commentator.

Bennun and Levin, senior editors of the features and news sections, respectively, confirmed their appointment with Kahan on March 28. The two will be the first editors in chief to serve simultaneously since Jamie Hirsch and Tzvi Kahn of volume 69, printed in the 2003–04 academic year. Bennun will also be the first editor in chief from Stern College for Women.

"I could not think of any two people more deserving of the job," Kahan said about his decision. "Over the past few years, Yekusiel and Rivka have shown tremendous dedication to the paper. I look forward to seeing what they do with The Commentator next year."

Levin, a political science major from Monsey, NY, who goes by his Hebrew name Yekusiel, has written for The Commentator since his first semester at YU in October 2020. Since then, he has written or co-written over 50 articles, including 32 since the start of the Fall 2022 semester. Levin was

appointed junior news editor in November 2021 and senior news editor in May 2022.

Kahan stressed Levin's work ethic, dedication and prolific writing as factors in his decision to appoint him editor in chief.

"Yekusiel is a brilliant news writer and one of the most productive editors this paper has ever seen," Kahan said. "He single handedly published some of the most famous and well read stories this paper has ever produced. His work ethic and dedication are incredible and he is well deserving of this appointment."

Bennun also described her excitement to

work with Levin on volume 89.

"Yekusiel is extremely talented and has worked very hard this year to maintain a standard of journalistic excellence and integrity in managing our news section," Bennun shared. "I've witnessed the countless hours he has put into perfecting every story, and I feel honored to be taking on this role with him next year."

Bennun, an English and Judaic studies major from Cedarhurst, NY, has also written for The Commentator since her first semester in Fall 2021. She was appointed junior features editor in January 2022 under

then-senior editor Kahan, and was quickly promoted to senior features editor in May of the same year. Besides features, Bennun is also a regular contributor to the news section.

In explaining his decision to promote Bennun to editor in chief, Kahan cited her passion, success in managing the features section and broad journalistic experience across multiple sections of the paper.

"As a writer and editor, Rivka is creative, intelligent and passionate, and always runs her features section smoothly," Kahan stated. "Additionally, her vast experience helping in news represents her breadth of journalistic experience. Under her leadership, the features section thrived. There is no question in my mind that Rivka is deserving of this honor."

"I'm honored to work together with Rivka," Levin said. "She puts her heart and soul into her work, and deserves a lot of credit for what The Commentator is now. Our respective sections have worked closer together than ever this year, and I know that she will bring a lot of unique skills and talents to the position of editor in chief."

Elishama Marmon (YC '24), a political science and mathematical economics major,



(From right to left) Incoming Editors in Chief Rivka Bennun and Jonathan Levin and Managing Editor Elishama Marmon

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Stern College for Women Jewish Studies Department Restores Undergrad Talmud Courses

By RIVKA BENNUN

The Stern College for Women (SCW) Jewish studies department has added two Talmud courses for the Fall 2023 semester, Associate Dean of Torah and Spiritual Life Shoshana Schechter and Rebecca Ivy Department of Jewish Studies Chair Deena Rabinovich announced Tuesday.

According to the announcement, the

"I am so excited about the decision to add these courses. These opportunities will make learning Gemara so much more accessible to Stern students."

Miri Granik (SCW '24)

addition of an intermediate and advanced class came due to "increased interest" in the course following news of the classes' cancellation due to low registration.

The restored intermediate class and the new advanced class will be taught in

the afternoon by Rabbi Shlomo Zuckier. The regular morning advanced class, currently taught by Rabbi Zuckier, will be taken over by Rabbi David Nachbar, who currently teaches in the Graduate Program in Advanced Talmud/Tanach Studies (GPATS).

Additionally, while Introductory Talmud was not offered this semester due to low enrollment, a similar course, titled "Talmud Psychology," will be offered in the fall and will aim to teach the same content as Introductory Talmud.

"It was heartwarming to see the outpouring of interest revolving around women's Talmud learning on the Beren campus," stated Schechter and Rabinovich in the announcement, sent to Beren students through email.

Following news of both courses' cancellation, an open letter signed by students and alumni began circulating social media and WhatsApp groups April 19 and expressed protest over the university's decision to cancel the courses. It has garnered nearly 1500 signatures as of publishing.

The open letter, authored by several current and former students from SCW and GPATS, called on the university to restore Introductory and Intermediate Talmud,

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Professor Chen and Rabbi Lerner Selected as Professor and Adjunct of the Year

By JONATHAN FELMAN

Professor Wenxiong Chen and Rabbi Dov Lerner were selected as Professor and Adjunct of the Year for Yeshiva College (YC) by the current class of seniors this April.

The winners, announced in an email by Dean Fredric Sugarman on April 24, were chosen through two rounds of voting by the YC senior class.

According to an email sent to the student body by Sugarman, the purpose of the award is to recognize and "let a deserving faculty member know how the Senior class appreciates their hard work and dedication to Yeshiva College."

Chen received his Ph.D. from the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Math in Beijing in 1986, taking an educational position in the United States the following year. He came to YU in 2002, where he has taught math since. He also served as chair of the department from 2016 to 2020.

He told The Commentator that his experiences with students inspire his work as a professor.

"It is my passion for mathematics and the desire to share my knowledge and understanding with students," said Chen. "Teaching and mentoring students can

be incredibly rewarding, and I find my fulfillment in seeing my students grow and succeed."

Lerner received his BA in English literature in 2011 and semikha [rabbinic ordination] from YU in 2014. He later received an MA in Religion and a Ph.D. in the History of Judaism from the University of Chicago's Divinity School.

Lerner told The Commentator that he was appreciative of the award.

"For a whole range of reasons I find teaching at YU to be a true gift, including the warmth, humor, commitment, and curiosity of the students," said Lerner. "I am so deeply touched by their signal of appreciation."



Wenxiong Chen and Rabbi Dov Lerner were selected as Professor and Adjunct of the Year for Yeshiva College (YC) by the current class of seniors this April

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No Caf Daddy, No Problem

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

In Retrospect: Part II

By **ARIEL KAHAN**

And now comes the final article that I will ever write for The Commentator. What makes or breaks any experience in life is the people touched and the lessons learned. In fifteen years, if you ask me about specific articles I published or edited, it is unlikely I will remember specifics. If you ask me about the friends and connections made along the way, however, stories and memories will flow from my mouth. Hundreds of hours of writing, editing and managing The Commentator will all be reduced to stories about the special people involved. And that is the way it should be.

There are points in anyone's life where they think life is a "me game," and points in life when they are reminded that life is a team game. Well, being Editor-In-Chief was certainly one of my team game reminders. The job necessitates a serious support network, and Baruch Hashem, I hit the jackpot.

The Commentators' previous editors-in-chief served as constant role models and sources of inspiration for me. Specifically, Sruli Fruchter, Yosef Lemel and Benjy Koslowe, no matter what the question was, always made themselves available. I cannot emphasize how empowering your guys' words of encouragement have been for me, and I thank you all for that.

Similarly, Rav Yosef Blau was always a source of constant advice and support. It was always a pleasure to hear the perspective of someone so nuanced with such a grasp on institutional history and politics. Being able to develop a relationship with Rav Blau is one of the highlights of the Editor-In-Chief experience, and I cherished it dearly.

I don't think there is a day that goes by where I wasn't grateful for the role that the editorial board played in making this year's Commentator a success.

To social media (Danya, Allie), thank you for always being so responsive and always happily doing the strangest tasks. I don't think you understand how easy it was to work with people so reliable and pleasant. The Commentator would have been dysfunctional without your efforts.

The same is true for layout (Julia,

Azriel, Emily). Week in and week out you performed your difficult tasks without complaint and produced a great product. You were always super communicative and competent. Without you guys as well, the puzzle would be incomplete.

To the business section (Shmuel, Moshe, Tani), it was always a pleasure working to solicit articles with all of you and sometimes realizing that we just have to write them ourselves. When recruitment got tough, all of you came through with articles for every issue. I also enjoyed the good hock with all of you and found our conversations funny and endearing.

To the opinions section (Shuie, Nava, Josh, Moshe), I cannot think of a section that had to deal with crazier situations than you guys did. Regardless of the situation or how many articles piled up, you all worked extremely hard to make the opinions sections phenomenal. All of you are thoughtful, funny and a pleasure to work with.

To the features section (Dov, Rivka, Zakkai), I am constantly mesmerized by how much you love what you do. Your curiosity about Commentator and YU history as well as commitment to excellence helped make this year's features section fun and very educational.

Finally, to the news team (Chaim, Yekusiel, Sruli, Rina), every year there is one section that is run so well it functions on its own. That is how I felt about news this year. The way you guys worked every day to produce great content and keep YU students and the broader Jewish community informed about current events is unbelievable. Some of the articles look like they were published by professional journalists, not college students eating pizza on the 5th floor of the library between lunch and shiur.

To Elishama: You simply have a way of getting things done (at scary hours of the night). No matter how busy you were, you found time to write, edit and copy edit articles. You have a great work ethic and you are the most deserving person to be managing editor.

To Yekusiel and Rivka: I can't think of two better people for this job. You guys have shown unbelievable

commitment to the paper and have run your sections so well. I am also amazed by both of your *middos* and values. It is this combination which will allow you to do a great job next year. When things inevitably get stressful next year, always remember to take a deep breath and remind yourself what is really important in life.

On that point: What is really important in life? Undoubtedly, it is the way you are with your family and friends, and how you maintain a steady life as an *eved* Hashem.

Thankfully, I like to think that I have the greatest family and friends in the world. I would like to thank my friends who always are there for me no matter what and have made (shoutout to Jonatahan Wenger who always read The Commentator articles I sent him, even when he wasn't interested).

If it is true of my friends it is for sure true of my family: I want to thank my most wonderful siblings Elie, Aliza, Liana and my all time favorite family member Teddy (my dog) for always being close and fun to hang around. I would like to thank my parents for always being there and giving me unconditional love and support. You are all the best.

And to Tamar, I won't elaborate because you would not like all the attention and cringe but take the nicest things I could say about anyone, multiply them by a thousand and it is still only a fraction of what I could say about you.

Having this job was an unbelievable and unparalleled experience. I dream about happily boring my kids and grandkids with Commentator stories one day. But my real dream is to live a nice, simple life, surrounded by the friends and family I love, doing the things in life that are really important.

Having this job was a blessing, and it taught me a lot. But there is a time and place for everything in life, and now it is time to wish The Commentator farewell and celebrate a tremendous year. And who better to celebrate with than the people that mean the most to me.

THE COMMENTATOR

2022-2023

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The Commentator is the student newspaper of Yeshiva University.

For 88 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 Umadda, and a commitment to journalistic excellence.

Read more at yucommentator.org

Revel Establishes Graduate Program for Christian Students

By **SAMMY INTRATOR**

The Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies will launch a new graduate degree program for Christian students this Fall.

The one-year virtual/in-person program, developed in collaboration with the Philos Project, a nonprofit organization that promotes Christian advocacy in the Near East, is intended for Christians looking to better understand the Jewish roots of Christianity and explore Hebraic studies in greater depth.

Additionally, it will also educate about potential misconceptions about Judaism and mentor graduates on how to apply their knowledge to positively impact Christian society and Judeo-Christian relations.

“When it comes to religious differences there is a uniqueness that must absolutely be maintained and respected,” Daniel Rynhold, Revel’s dean, told *The Commentator*. “But there are also artificial barriers that can lead one group to view another as alien in the most damaging ways. And if we want to break down those barriers, all the political policies in the world cannot hold a candle to the basic encounter between people simply sitting together, talking, and studying. This program creates a space for just that.”

To be eligible for the Revel program, potential students will need to apply through the Philos Project first before applying to Revel. They will be required to complete courses on multiple topics, including on biblical Hebrew and Jewish-Christian relations, to reflect their “starting point” in Jewish studies, in addition to the standard Revel program.

Accepted students will also take an immersive Hebrew course in the summer prior to starting classes.

Although Revel has always been open to

students of non-Jewish backgrounds, lack of education in the Hebrew language was long an obstacle for Christian students interested

program.

YU has worked with the Philos Project in the past. In September, the Philos Project

International Affairs co-hosted an evening of Latino-Jewish art and music for YU students and Washington Heights community members, drawing a crowd of over 200, including New York politicians.

“If we succeed, then despite the many differences that do — and should — separate us, we will begin to see more and more Christians who understand where their faith comes from and who can empathize with their Jewish neighbors,” said Nicholson.

Applications for classes this Fall closed in March.

“We want to break down those barriers, all the political policies in the world cannot hold a candle to the basic encounter between people simply sitting together, talking, and studying. This program creates a space for just that.”

Daniel Rynhold, dean on Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies

in normal Revel courses, Rynhold told *The Commentator*. To overcome that, Rynhold worked with Robert Nicholson, the resident and director of the Philos Project, to create a program where basic Hebrew and Jewish studies are built into the curriculum instead of being a prerequisite to enrollment.

The inaugural class, which will include between five and ten students, will receive a master’s in Jewish Studies upon completing their requirements.

The program costs approximately \$35,000 a semester, but accepted students will receive a scholarship of over \$23,000 from YU and the Philos Project. To remain eligible for financial assistance, students will need to fulfill the Philos Project’s requirements.

“It’s an opportunity for Christians who want to understand where their faith comes from to understand our texts in a way that has not generally been open to them — from an authentically Jewish perspective,” said Rynhold.

Rynhold intends to add a director of external programs to the Revel administration in the coming weeks to help conduct the

and YU’s Rabbi Arthur Schneier Program for



The Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies has established a new graduate degree program aimed at Christians

THE COMMENTATOR

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Continued from Front Page

will take the role of managing editor, replacing Seffi Jonas (YC '23). Marmon, associate editor and editor of Unpack with YUPAC, has been writing for *The Commentator* since Fall 2021.

Marmon expressed his anticipation to work with Bennun and Levin. “I’m really looking forward to working with Rivka and

Yekusiel next year.” Marmon stated. “Both of them are great editors and will be awesome editors in chief! I’m sure we’ll be able to give YU the best paper we can make!”

Other editorial appointments for volume 89 include Junior Opinions Editor Joshua Shapiro (YC '25) as senior opinions editor and Junior Features Editor Dov Pfeiffer (YC '24) as senior features editor to replace Bennun. Rina Shamilov (SCW '24), junior

news editor and former news and arts & culture editor for *The YU Observer* will replace Levin.

“I feel tremendously honored and humbled to have been promoted to this position,” Bennun said. “I’ve always believed that *The Commentator* is so much more than just a student paper — it reflects the vibrancy and diversity of not only our student body, but our broader YU community. Looking ahead

to next year, we have a brilliant team of writers and editors who are committed to putting out *Emet*, and I’m looking forward to working with them in producing our best work.”

“Our team, across all sections, is extraordinarily talented,” said Levin. “Our amazing team — as well as past editors — have taught me so much, and I know that with all of us together, next year will be the best yet!”

TALMUD COURSES RESTORED

Continued from Front Page

hire a full-time replacement for Rabbi Moshe Kahn, who taught Talmud at SCW for nearly 40 years until he passed away in January and secure funds to endow a chair of Talmud in Rabbi Kahn’s name.

“In a time when women who are dedicated to Torah, mitzvot, and meticulous observance of Halacha learn Torah at the highest levels,” stated the letter, “removing the building blocks that can lead to that advanced Torah study seems to go against all that Yeshiva University has stood for.”

Following the letter’s release, YU issued a press release Friday announcing a “number of new initiatives,” including a scholars program that will offer high-level Talmud and Tanach study for interested students and a chair of Talmud to be made in honor of Rabbi Kahn. The university asked donors to help fund these programs.

“We would be delighted if those who support women’s advanced Torah study and the students, friends and supporters of Rabbi

Kahn would endow a Rabbi Moshe Kahn Chair of Talmud Studies for Women,” stated the university.

Schechter told *The Commentator* that the new initiatives have been in the works for several months.

Miri Granik (SCW '24), who recently published an op-ed expressing her concern over the cancellation of Talmud courses, shared her excitement about their restoration.

“I am so excited about the decision to add these courses,” said Granik. “These opportunities will make learning Gemara so much more accessible to Stern students.”

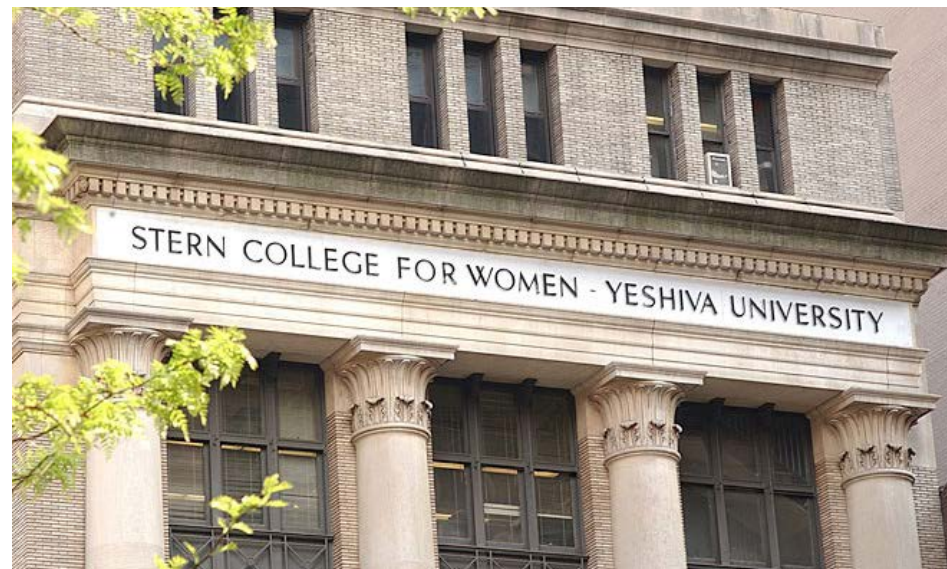
Miriam Schwartz (GPATS '22) emphasized the importance of endowing a Talmud chair.

“Having an endowed chair for a full time Gemara professor would solve the problem of not being able to hire an adjunct professor for small groups of students,” said Schwartz, “would enable reinstating the Gemara skills track of GPATS, and would ensure that there are faculty members who are dedicated to growing the Gemara offerings and engaging

the broader student body in learning Torah *sheBaal Peh* at SCW.”

News of the cancellation of Talmud courses garnered debate in the broader YU

community, leading to several op-eds published in *The Commentator*, including from Schechter and GPATS Director Professor Nechama Price.



Stern College for Women

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

Annual Day of Giving Raises \$3.2 Million, 23% Percent More Than 2022

By RIKI GREENBERG

Yeshiva University's annual day of giving, The Gift of YU, raised over \$3.2 million from over 1,000 different donors and \$2 million in matching funds in a span of 24 hours this March.

YU's 8th annual Gift of YU took place

"The Gift of YU brought our community of generous donors together in a truly inspirational manner."

Yeshiva University President Ari Berman

March 22. Donors had the opportunity to contribute funds across YU's numerous undergraduate and graduate programs, with the highest of these being Yeshivas Rabeinu Yitzchak Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS), as well as an annual fund to "support the highest priorities of the students."

According to Kurt Deschermeier, director

of YU's Day of Giving, students, as in previous years, played an integral role in the success of The Gift of YU, bringing in nearly \$300,000 in donations. Hundreds of student volunteers reached out to people for donations, including past donors and personal friends and family.

"We couldn't be more proud of our students," Deschermeier told The Commentator. "Their passion for YU makes them our best advocates."

Overall, the campaign brought in approximately \$600,000 more than last year, which fell short of its goal of three million.

"The Gift of YU brought our community of generous donors together in a truly inspirational manner," Yeshiva University President Ari Berman told The Commentator. "We saw the outpouring of support from all areas of the community recognizing our unique role as the flagship Jewish university that educates the next generation of leaders to advance humanity with wisdom and purpose."

"Thank you to all those who took part in this effort, from our longtime donors to the many students who made their very first gift to YU."

Beginning in 2016 and taking place each year since, The Gift of YU is YU's most lucrative fundraiser, and according to Deschermeier, highlights "the importance of philanthropy to YU," supporting

"scholarships, academics, Torah study, and everything that happens on campus."

The gift of YU also raises funds for "Rise Up: The Campaign for 613," YU's ongoing campaign to raise \$613 million to "meet the

evolving needs of our students and faculty, create more innovative and entrepreneurial initiatives, and develop state-of-the-art facilities." The Rise Up campaign has reached \$350 million since its inception in 2018.



YU's annual day of giving raised \$3.2 million last month, the most since the pandemic

THE COMMENTATOR

Technology Awareness Group Opens Branch at YU

By ANDY KATZ

Technology Awareness Group International (TAG), an Orthodox Jewish group focused on providing filtering options for various technological devices, opened a branch at Yeshiva University shortly before Pesach.

The first iteration of a standing TAG service in YU, the branch, which opened on Wilf Campus on March 20, is open to RIETS, MTA and undergraduate students, as well as *rebbeim* and their families, and is available to assist students in deciding on a device filtration system.

Rabbi Ely Bacon, an Undergraduate Torah Studies (UTS) *mashgiach ruchani* [spiritual advisor] started the program before handing it over to student volunteers. It is staffed by Nerya Miller (SSSB '24), who leads the center, and six other student

volunteers.

"The goal of TAG is to improve the *avodas*

"The goal of TAG is to improve the avodas Hashem of the talmidim of the yeshiva by helping shmiras einayim, bittul zman, and mental health that can arise from improper use of technology."

Nerya Miller (SSSB '24), head of the YU TAG Center

Hashem [religious worship] of the *talmidim* of the yeshiva by helping *shmiras einayim* [guarding of the eyes], *bittul zman* [wasting time] and mental health that can arise from improper use of technology," Miller told The Commentator.

Before implementing any filters, Miller said, it is recommended to meet with one of

the seven student TAG volunteers to discuss the different filtration options. The TAG of-

office is open for appointments to discuss what options are best for each individual.

According to Miller, the TAG office has already served around 75 students, installing approximately 110 filters for various devices.

"I didn't have time to find a filter on my own, so I was stoked when I started seeing signs for TAG," Micha Bayever (YC '25) told

The Commentator. "The TAG team was very helpful and put a filter on my computer in less than 30 minutes!"

The YU TAG office at Glueck 309 has varying hours that can be found on the office's front door for walk-ins, but is also open to appointments.



TAG International opened an office at YU to help students with internet filters for devices

Yeshiva University to Drop COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement for Most Students and Staff

By YOSEF BLUTH

Yeshiva University will drop its COVID-19 vaccine requirement for staff, un-



YU's COVID-19 vaccine requirement for most students and faculty will be lifted on May 12

BRAÑO / UNSPLASH

dergraduate students, visitors and most graduate students and faculty beginning May 12, YU's COVID-19 response team announced Tuesday.

"We appreciate the cooperation of the entire YU community during the Covid pandemic, and hope and pray for only minimal Covid-related disruption moving forward."

Chaim Nissel, Vice Provost of Student Affairs and Graduate Dean of Students

Vice Provost of Student Affairs and Graduate Dean of Students Chaim Nissel told the Commentator that the decision, made by YU's COVID-19 team and their medical consultant, was based on a decline

in infection and death rates, the ending of vaccine mandates in nearby colleges and the end of the vaccine requirements for federal workers.

"We appreciate the cooperation of the entire YU community during the Covid pandemic," Nissel told The Commentator, "and hope and pray for only minimal Covid-related disruption moving forward."

Due to clinical placements, vaccinations and a booster will continue to be required for students taking in-person classes and programs at the Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology and Wurzweiler School of Social Work, as well as students in health science programs at the Katz School of Science and Health.

These rules will also remain in place for any faculty and staff who work in health-care facilities or who supervise students at clinical sites.

Although the vaccine requirement will be lifted, the university encouraged students to follow COVID-19 guidance and stay home if they are feeling sick.

Other colleges in the New York area, including Columbia, NYU and the SUNY and CUNY systems have also announced an end to vaccine requirements in recent months.

REITS Runs Event Commemorating Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik's 30th Yahrzeit

By EZRA BARON

Rabbi Issac Elchanan Theological Seminary (REITS) held an event commemorating the life and legacy of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, the rosh yeshiva of RIETS from 1941–'85, on the occasion of his 30th *yahrzeit* on April 17.

into] Torah.

Those in attendance also watched a video of the Rav's 1976 *Erev Yom Kippur teshuva drasha* given in Lamport Auditorium, the location of the event, 47 years earlier.

To encourage as much student participation as possible, the event was held during morning seder.

"The student body was the most sig-

Soloveitchik taught here."

A previous ceremony commemorating the

Rav's 20th Yahrzeit was conducted in 2013.

"Remembering the Rav and studying his words is not looking backward, it is understanding our present and our future."

Rabbi Menachem Penner, Max and Marion Grill Dean of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary

Held in the morning in Lamport Auditorium, where Rabbi Soloveitchik, popularly known as the Rav, gave yearly *drashos* [sermons] the event allowed Yeshiva University students to hear from several speakers who were close to the Rav.

The program began with introductory remarks from Rabbi Penner and Rabbi Turk, a long-time *shamash* [assistant] of the Rav. Next, Yeshiva University President Ari Berman spoke about how Rabbi Soloveitchik took the traditions of the Orthodox Jewish world in Europe and used them to build a new Torah community in America.

Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Herschel Schachter, one of the Rav's closest students, then spoke about how the Rav, contrary to people's perception, meticulously followed the *min-hagim* [traditions] he received.

Rav Schachter's words were followed by Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Menachem Genack, also a student of the Rav, who gave several *divrei Torah* from The Rav regarding *sefirat ha-Omer* [counting from Passover to Shavuot].

Lastly, Rosh Yeshiva Rav Mayer Twersky, the grandson and close student of Rabbi Soloveitchik, spoke about the need for students to feel like a part of the *mesorah* [tradition] through reading the Rav's works and learning his *chiddushei* [new insights

nificant audience," Rabbi Turk told The Commentator. "They are too young to have had any experience of the Rav personally and we wanted them to see the impact he had on YU and on the communities in which they were raised."

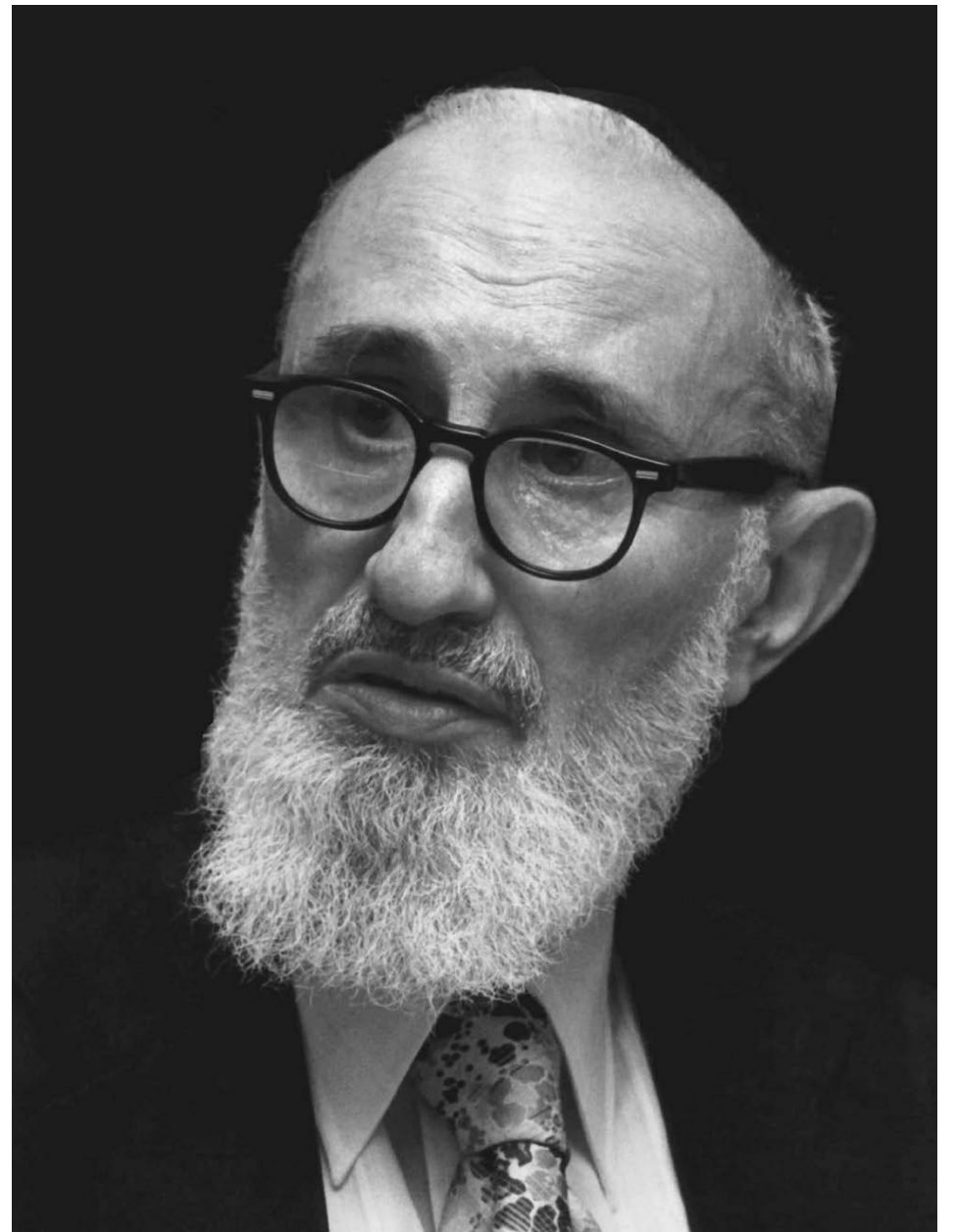
The commemoration was planned by Rabbi Neal Turk, Director of the RIETS-Ferkauf Joint Graduate Program in Pastoral Counseling, and Rabbi Menachem Penner, Max and Marion Grill Dean of the RIETS, with input from other Roshei Yeshiva such as Rabbi Genack and Rabbi Michael Taubes.

Although Yeshiva University previously co-hosted an event in Englewood, New Jersey commemorating the Rav's *yahrzeit*, the Rebbeim told The Commentator that they felt it was important to host a bigger ceremony in Yeshiva for the 30th anniversary.

Both Rabbi Turk and Rabbi Penner expressed that this event was more than just a memorial.

"Remembering the Rav and studying his words is not looking backward, it is understanding our present and our future," Penner told The Commentator.

"I hope those who attended will be inspired to learn the Rav's *chiddushei Torah* and read his works," added Turk. "YU students should be proud of the fact that Rav



YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, popularly known as the Rav, was Rosh Yeshiva of Rabbi Issac Elchanan Theological Seminary for close to half a century

May News Brief: Earthquake Aid, YU Students Participate in National Roller Hockey Tournament

By MIJAL GUTIERREZ

YU Students Donate Aid for Survivors of Turkey/Syria Earthquake

Yeshiva University's Office of Student Life (OSL) ran an aid collection project to aid people affected by the February earthquake in Syria and Turkey this semester.

In an effort to aid those suffering from the earthquake, OSL and SOY Vice President of Chessed Yedidya Schechter organized donation boxes throughout both Wilf and Beren campuses to gather supplies donated by students to aid survivors, collecting clothing, diapers and other supplies.

"We wanted to show we are thinking of, and even more importantly working to help out, our brothers and sisters in Turkey and Syria — Jews and non-Jews alike — to continue with our mission of aiding the world and being a light among nations by helping others," shared Schechter.

The donations, currently in OSL, will be brought to the Turkish Consulate in New York City, which will then ship and distribute the supplies throughout the impacted areas in Turkey and Syria.

Two large earthquakes, the first with a magnitude of 7.8 and the with a magnitude of 7.5, struck Turkey and Syria within 20 hours of each other this February, killing over 50,000 and causing over 34 billion in damage.

Syria's diplomatic mission to the U.S. was expelled in 2014, although the United States has not severed diplomatic ties with the country.

YU Students Participate in Tournament for the National Collegiate Roller Hockey Association (NCRHA)

Yeshiva University Roller Hockey Team, which forms part of the YU Athletics department but is run independently by students and coaches, competed in the National Collegiate Roller Hockey Association's (NCRHA) national championships April 19–24, finishing in eighth place.

YU's team was part of a group of top-performing teams from across the country who were invited to play in a tournament for this non-NCAA-recognized sport.

Consisting of 17 players, who practice in the Yeshiva University High School for Boys

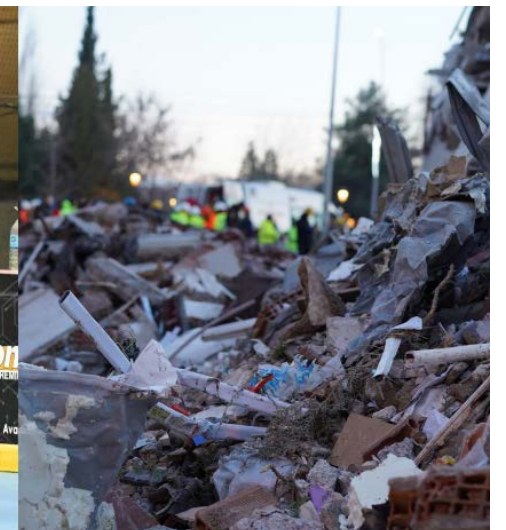
gym on Wilf Campus, YU's team placed in sixth place in its division, earning a place in the Irving, California-based tournament.

YU won its first game, but lost its second in overtime.

"We were 1-8 last season, and this year we finished in 6th place, and then got swept at the regional tournament," Coach Aryeh

Minsky told The Commentator. "We came in unranked and all but written off.

"But the guys really rose to the occasion. Our defense and goaltending were tremendous. Our offense and special teams were lights out. We dominated good teams, and skated with great teams. We showed the league that we're a top program, and I expect



Scene of collapsed buildings in Gaziantep, Turkey due to the earthquake & picture of YU's Roller Hockey Team

LISA HASTERT / EU CIVIL PROTECTION & HUMANITARIAN AID & THE YU ROLLER HOCKEY

Two NYC Councilwomen Speak to Students

By YAIRA KATZ

New York City Councilwomen Inna Vernikov (R) and Julie Menin (D) held a panel discussion about antisemitism, bipartisanship and their experiences as Jewish women in the political sphere on Wilf Campus April 24.

The event, held in the Sky Caf in Belfer Hall, was organized by Daniel Ganapolsky (YC '24), a staffer for Vernikov and Vice President of the Dunner Political Society (YC '24), which cosponsored the event. Ganapolsky also moderated the panel.

Menin represents District 5 in Manhattan which includes East Harlem, Roosevelt Island, the Upper East Side, and Sutton Place. Vernikov, a Brooklyn resident, represents the borough's 48th District and also serves as minority whip. She is one of six Republicans on the Council. Both are members of the Council's Jewish Caucus.

One topic discussed was the influence Jewish identity and antisemitism played in the councilwomen's political careers.

Vernikov told students that her family emigrated from Ukraine to the U.S. in order to escape antisemitism she still felt in the former Soviet bloc, and that witnessing rising antisemitism in America led her to run for office to combat it.

Menin added and shared that being raised by a family of Holocaust survivors taught her "not to sweat the small stuff," and instead to focus on creating larger change through her position. This includes disregarding antisemitic attacks directed at her and her political platform on social media.

Menin and Vernikov also told students that being in the Jewish Caucus allowed them to work across the aisle and fight for justice for the Jewish community and be-

"I thought it was very informative and an amazing way to meet my first councilwoman. It made an excellent impression."

Isabelle Adler (SCW '25)

yond, as their shared religion helps cement a relationship that transcends opposing political views.

The councilwomen also discussed other issues, such as their experience as women in politics, and shared ways students can get involved in the public sphere.

Both told The Commentator that they were happy to come.

"I was delighted to be able to discuss my Jewish values and what role they have played and continue to play in my political decisions," said Vernikov. "I'm glad I was able to talk about what I'm really passionate about with the students at Yeshiva University and I hope they will also pursue what motivates them!"

Similarly, Menin said that she was happy to relay her story and the work she is doing in city council to students, and emphasized the importance of young people getting involved in politics and working across party lines.

"It is critical that we bring youth into the democratic process and the importance of bipartisanship," said Menin. "No path is singular and I hope to have inspired other youth to run for office."

The event was well received by students.

"I thought it was very informative and an amazing way to meet my first councilwoman," Isabelle Adler (SCW '25), a political sci-

ence student shared with The Commentator. "It made an excellent impression."

Ganapolsky shared a similar sentiment.

"I thought the event went spectacularly well. I decided to offer the panel because I felt a common concern among many politically inclined students in YU, myself included, about how we can pursue a career in politics or public service without giving up our Jewish values and practices.

"Councilwomen Vernikov and Menin beautifully displayed how those two ideals are not in contest with each other, but rather uplift one another and encourage us to serve with honesty, integrity and passion."



Students pose with Councilwomen Vernikov and Menin in Sky Cafe on April 24

ANNA CORREA

Muss to Add Air Conditioning Next Year

By JONATHAN LEVIN

Muss Hall, one of three dorms for Yeshiva University undergraduate students, will add air conditioning to individual rooms this

summer, the Office of Residence Life (ORL) announced April 26.

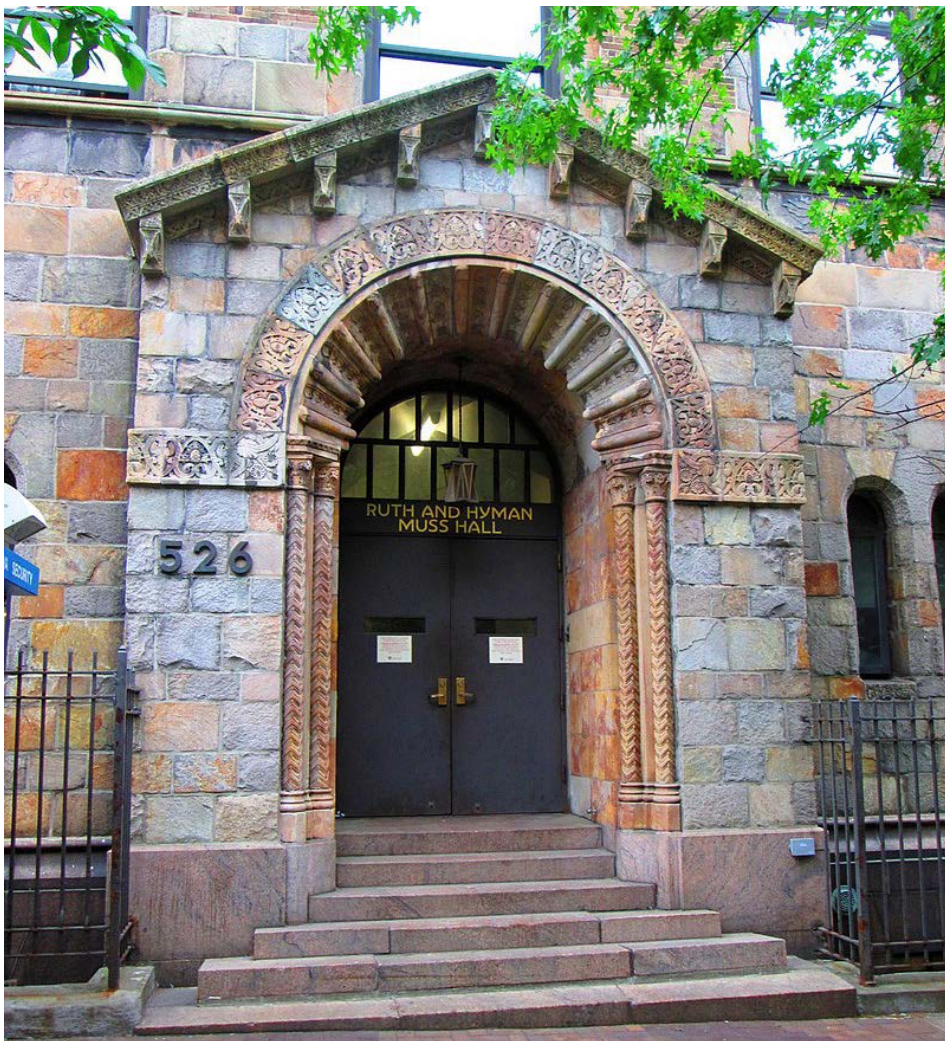
Built in the 1920s, the nearly one-century-old dorm's electrical system is currently unable to support air conditioning for individual rooms, and only provides air

conditioning for the lounge and the Klein Beit Medrash. The dorm's electrical system will be upgraded to allow air conditioning units to be installed in individual rooms in

maintaining Muss Hall as a discounted option for those who are price sensitive," said Feder. "Students who don't mind living a few extra steps further from the center of

"I was proud to live in Muss for nearly my entire undergraduate and RIETS experience at Yeshiva, as did my father before me, and generations of others dating back nearly 100 years."

Avi Feder, Director of the Office of Residence Life



Muss Hall, one of three YU dorms, will add air conditioning next year

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

a similar setup to Morgenstern and Rubin dorms.

The work, funded by the university and planned by ORL and YU's facilities and operations team, will begin this June and is expected to be completed by the end of the summer.

"Muss Hall is a historic building with a richness and grandeur which is beyond compare," Residence Life Director Ari Feder told The Commentator. "I was proud to live in Muss for nearly my entire undergraduate and RIETS experience at Yeshiva, as did my father before me, and generations of others dating back nearly 100 years. I am humbled and excited to continue supporting the legacy of Muss Hall and enabling its residents to live even more comfortably into the future."

Costing \$3,875 a semester for a double or triple room, Muss is \$1,500 cheaper than double rooms in Rubin and Morgenstern, which will cost \$5,375.

Feder told The Commentator that Muss's pricing will continue to be lower, as in past years, to provide an affordable housing option for students.

"Muss Hall has always been a great value proposition and we made every effort to find the funds to finance this project while

campus and not having constant access to an elevator will find Muss Hall a great building to call home here at Yeshiva University."

Pricing for double rooms, or rooms inhabited by two students, have risen by \$375 a semester across campus since last year.

Beis Yitzchak, Student-Run Sefer, to Publish First Issue in Nearly a Decade

By CHAIM BOOK

Beis Yitzchak, a student organized *sefer* [religious publication] of Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) with articles authored by Yeshiva University-affiliated Roshei Yeshiva, students and alumni on various Torah topics in Hebrew, is scheduled to publish for the first time since 2015.

The 48th volume of the formerly annual publication will collect articles written in Hebrew on various topics primarily related to the tractate REITS and Undergraduate Torah Studies (UTS) programs are studying, but it will also accept all articles on Gemara and Halacha provided that they meet editorial approval.

This year's project, which is accepting submissions through this month, is spearheaded by editors-in-chief Dovid Wartelsky and Michael Fagin, and executive editor Akiva Garner.

Beis Yitzchak is expected to be available around Rosh Hashanah at the beginning of the next academic year. Approximately 40 articles are expected, including more than a dozen from roshei yeshiva, rabbeim and prominent rabbinic alumni.

"Beis Yitzchak is the perfect opportunity to have your personal Chidushim edited and published in one of the oldest and most prestigious journals in the Torah world," Fagin told The Commentator. "It's a timeless way to cement your learning and

create a feeling of accomplishment that you have a seat at the table of Torah." Rav Willig, Rav Rosensweig), as well as the modern-day Gedolim (your contempo-

"Beis Yitzchak is the perfect opportunity to have your personal Chidushim edited and published in one of the oldest and most prestigious journals in the Torah world."

David Wartelsky, editor in chief of Bais Yitzchak

Beis Yitzchak was last published in 2015, when the Yeshiva studied *Mesechet Ketubot*. Though article collection continued for the next few years, primarily in 2017 and 2019 when the Yeshiva studied *Kedushin* and *Bava Kamma* respectively, a lack of student interest in overseeing the project caused the publication to be stalled. An attempt to restart Beis Yitzchak was made in 2019, but it did not come to fruition.

This year, student interest was rekindled. The articles on *Bava Kamma* submitted in 2019 are to be merged with the current volume on *Gittin*. Other articles on *Kedushin* submitted in 2017, which were collected but never published, are anticipated to be released as a standalone volume predated to 2017.

"Beis Yitzchak is something you can keep on your shelf and show your grandchildren," added Fagin. "Look, you can say, 'I was published in the same pages as the Gedolim of yesteryear (Rav Schachter,



The first Beis Yitzchak in nearly a decade will be published around next Rosh Hashana

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

YU, Mohamed Bin Zayed University to Hold Jewish Studies Conference in Dubai

By SRULI FRIEDMAN

Yeshiva University and Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities (MBZUH) will hold a Jewish studies conference at the Crossroads of Civilization Museum in Dubai Wednesday, the first such conference to be held between YU and an Islamic University.

The conference, titled "Interacting Philosophies, Shared Friendships," will feature speeches by faculty members of both universities on topics related to historical interactions between Jewish and Muslim communities and philosophers of both faiths.

Organized by Senior Adviser to the Provost and Deputy Director of the Straus Center Rabbi Stuart Halpern and the Crossroads of Civilizations Museum's founder, Ahmed Almansoori, the event will be attended by Emirati officials, community members and students from both universities. Planning for the event began in January, Halpern told The Commentator.

Almansoori, a former member of the UAE Federal National Council who has held numerous positions in UAE's government, founded the Crossroads of Civilization museum in 2013. The museum contains a variety of collections, with artifacts relating to the many civilizations that passed through Dubai by exploration and trade, the broader history of the Middle East and Islamic art. According to its website, the museum's "key message is that human tolerance of diversity, and multicult-

turalism, in all its forms, enables creativity and human development." In 2021 the museum opened the first Holocaust memorial exhibition in the UAE.

"I am excited to visit Dubai and learn more about its history while also celebrating the promising future of our nations."

Penina Spearman (SCW '23)

"We are grateful to His Excellency Ahmed Almansoori for his warm spirit of

collaboration in planning and hosting this week's program at his Crossroads of Civil-

ization Museum, and are eager to see our communities' and our countries' relationship strengthen and flourish," Halpern said to The Commentator.



Dubai Skyline

ZQ LEE / UNSPLASH

raries, or even YOU, who have gone on to become a Gadol BaTorah.)'

"It's a timeless way to cement your learning and create a feeling of accomplishment that you have a seat at the table of Torah."

Other than Fagin, Wartelsky and Garner, the other editors working on the project are Edan Friedman, Yitzhak Graff, Yinon Gurvich, Nadav Heller, Noam Putterman, Yossi Rybak, Akiva Sturm and Uriel Sussman.

Some of the speakers at the conference will be by Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies Dean Daniel Rynhold, Assistant Director of the Sacks-Herenstein Center Shira Weiss and Arthur C. Schneier Program of International Affairs Director Ronnie Perelis from YU, and Professors Ebrahim Bourshashen and Haider Hussain of MBZUH. Almansoori and Halpern will provide opening remarks.

The event will be available for live viewing from 6 to 9 p.m. Dubai time, or 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. EST.

The program is being presented jointly by YU's Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, the Rabbi Arthur Schneier Program for International Affairs and The Zahava and Moshael Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought. Five students from Stern College for Women, two from the Schneier Program and three from the Straus Center, will attend the event.

"I am excited to visit Dubai and learn more about its history while also celebrating the promising future of our nations," Penina Spearman (SCW '23), a Straus Scholar, told The Commentator. "Thank you to the Straus Scholars program for arranging this meaningful trip!"

Besides the conference, YU students will attend an event commemorating the 75th anniversary of Israel's founding at the Israeli Embassy in Abu Dhabi on Thursday.

Students Share Their Mental Health Journeys at Stomp Out the Stigma

By AVRAHAM FROHLICH

On Wednesday, April 19, YU's chapter of Active Minds hosted its thirteenth annual Stomp Out the Stigma event in Lamport Auditorium. The event, which aims to destigmatize mental health challenges and promote awareness of mental health resources, featured three YU students who spoke about their relationships with mental health. As noted in last year's article about the event, Stomp Out the Stigma consistently garners the highest level of attendance of any YU event, and this year was no exception, with hundreds of YU students, faculty and alumni in attendance. Due to the sensitive nature of the subject, and at the request of some of the speakers, The Commentator has excluded the names of two of the three speakers.

Yael Berger (SCW '24), co-president of YU's Active Minds chapter, began the night by introducing President Ari Berman to give opening remarks. Berman began by thanking Active Minds and the Counseling Center for organizing the event, remarking that Stomp Out the Stigma is "one of the most impactful events on our university calendar" and "reflects the essence of who we are as a community and as a family." He then shared some words of Torah, noting that the willingness of the YU student body to "support each other" and see "every single person as *kadosh* [holy]" stands in stark contrast to the behavior of the students of Rabbi Akiva, who had "narrow eyes" and saw each other in a superficial manner. President Berman concluded by thanking the speakers, stating that he "admire[s] so much the strength and the courage of our students who tell their story."

Following Berman's speech, Berger thanked the Counseling Center, the Office of Student Life and others who made the event possible and introduced Miriam Bluth (SCW '24), fellow co-president of Active Minds, to introduce Rachel Eisenstein (SCW '24) as the evening's first speaker. Eisenstein began by describing herself as "a girl from Seattle,

by explaining her motivation for speaking, saying that "most people are not aware of just how many people are suffering from mental illnesses," which "enables people to hide their struggles" and not get the help they need. She expressed hope that sharing her story will "help others feel comfortable talking about these issues and for those who

one realized that I was struggling because I covered it up so well, and I was still doing so much." During COVID, his struggles intensified, which resurfaced concerns about his "fate as a firework."

Later on, the student began meeting with a therapist whom he called instrumental in his "maintaining [his] health and well-being ever since." The therapist helped him construct healthy coping mechanisms and internalize that he is "not a slave to" his emotions. Thanks to a "robust support system" and "a heightened sense of self-awareness," he declared that he is no longer fated to be a firework. While he doesn't consider himself immune from future mental health struggles, he stated that "the progress that I have made and the lessons I have learned have made me stronger in the long run." As a closing message, he implored the student body to understand that being a "high achiever and someone with mental illness is [not] mutually exclusive" and not to judge "anyone else and especially yourself based on the challenges you're faced with instead of who you are as a person."

To close out the evening, Dr. Yael Muskat, the director of the Counseling Center at YU, shared some remarks. After thanking all those who organized and supported the event, Muskat singled out the speakers for their "incredible bravery" and for "inspiring us to have hope and to remember to get help when you need it the most." In that vein, she urged all students that are struggling to schedule appointments with the Counseling Center. "Above all," Muskat shared, the speakers tonight "remind us that challenges are a part of life. They don't define us. They make us stronger. And you are not alone."

"It was amazing to see such a large turnout at an event like this," Bluth said, reflecting on the evening's success. "It really makes YU feel like a community of people who truly care and listen and support their peers. I'm so grateful to have been part of the process and am so glad that YU has carried on the tradition of hosting this program for many consecutive years now because it truly does make a difference."

"Attending Stomp Out the Stigma was an eye-opening experience," Dov Frank (YC '25), a first-time attendee, remarked. "It was inspiring to see fellow students bravely sharing their struggles with mental health, and it made me realize that I'm not alone in my own journey. I feel as though the event gave hope and motivation to the general student body to prioritize mental well-being to a far greater degree."

"Above all," Muskat shared, the speakers tonight "remind us that challenges are a part of life. They don't define us. They make us stronger. And you are not alone."

who loves reading, growing my shoe collection and acquiring eyeshadow palettes." During her speech, Eisenstein talked about her experiences with generalized anxiety, depression and anorexia nervosa restricting type. She explained that while people often feel anxious, "anxiety as a disorder is different" and can be "completely crippling," even resulting in physical symptoms. She then described how her anxiety and the resulting loss of control brought about struggles with depression, dissociation and, at times, self-harm. Eisenstein went on to talk about her struggles with an eating disorder and her experience in a residential treatment center.

Over time and with the aid of therapy, she began to "fight and improve" and learned how to respond effectively to unhealthy thoughts, dubbed "Leo." After expressing how grateful she is for her therapists' support and guidance, Eisenstein stressed the importance of patient advocacy within therapy. She also thanked her friends and family, stating that it is "imperative to have a solid support system." Eisenstein closed

need it to find support."

The next speaker, also a Beren student, was introduced by Avygayl Zucker (SCW '24). In her speech, the student opened up about her experiences with anxiety, depression and borderline personality disorder (BPD). She started off by describing her turbulent home life, which led her to see a therapist from the Counseling Center. While therapy was "really nerve-racking at first," she ended up finding it "really cathartic." She then described how, due to increased tensions at home, she was forced to leave and felt lost and alone. As a result, she began to lose motivation and had trouble sleeping and eating healthily. After meeting with a new therapist, she was diagnosed with depression and later with BPD, which included anger management issues and a fear of abandonment among other symptoms.

The student quipped that her "brain definitely has a six-pack" from all the hard work she's put into working on her mental health. After working with her therapist, she started repairing her relationship with her parents, moving past behaviors that caused fighting. Nowadays, she regularly goes home and has an easier time sleeping thanks to sleep training. To all those that supported her throughout her journey, she stated that she "thank[s] God every day that you were in my life." In closing, she remarked that "no matter how alone you are, there is always someone on your side."

The final speaker of the evening, introduced by Tehila Bitton (SCW '24), was a Wilf student. The speaker talked about his struggles with mental health and dedicated his speech to the memory of a relative who had struggled with similar issues. He began by stating that "I've always seen myself as a firework — jarring, impactful, but ultimately short-lived." After detailing his childhood experiences with anxiety, the speaker talked about his chaotic, often overwhelming, high school experience and his rough start at YU. Despite feeling lonely and experiencing intense anxiety and depression during his freshman year, he stated that "almost no



Rachel Eisenstein (SCW '24) speaking at Stomp Out the Stigma

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

Minyana Lama Li? A Look at Historical Beren Talmud Enrollment

By DOV PFEIFFER

Since Rav Soloveitchik's inaugural shiur at Stern in 1977, one of the noteworthy aspects of Stern College has been its willingness to provide opportunities for women to learn Gemara. In the aftermath of several weeks of intense discussion prompted by the since-reversed planned cancellation of three Beren Talmud classes, now is a particularly pertinent moment to present some of the recent enrollment history of the undergraduate Talmud offerings on Beren campus.

The enrollment numbers utilized here were obtained using YU's InsideTrack registration numbers. Enrollment data available goes back to the Fall 2003 semester. Numbers for Beren enrollment are based on the number of female students enrolled that can be found on the Office of Institutional Research page. It is important to note that for several of these classes, students interested but who didn't want to register directly, be it for partial class overlaps or some other reason, would attend by auditing, and these do not show up in the numbers. When available, numbers of students actually attending

the classes have been included in addition to the actual enrollment numbers. Also, for convenience, I have not normalized the enrollment numbers for overall Beren enrollment, but I included the numbers on the spreadsheet when they were available.

Intro to Talmud, which, as its name suggests, was primarily intended for students without prior Gemara background, has averaged about 7.5 students per semester since 2003. In the beginning of the time span where the data is available, the eight semesters spanning the four years from Fall 2003 through Spring 2007, Intro was only

offered five times, with an average of 6.2 students per class. In the seven years after this, spanning Fall 2007 to Spring 2014, the class was offered every semester, and had fairly consistent enrollment, averaging 7.7 students, never dipping below five, and only going above ten once.

After two years of rocky enrollment, the class was again offered consistently between Fall 2016 and Spring 2019, with average enrollment similar to, but slightly below, the averages in its consistent offering period.

Continued on Page 9

What DASNY Documents Can Tell Us About YU's Finances

By YITZHAK GRAFF AND ZACHARY NOTKIN

Recently, State Senator and chairman of the Committee on Judiciary, Brad Hoylman-Sigal, sent a letter to the New York State Inspector General Lucy Lang, asking her to investigate whether or not the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) purchased bonds from Yeshiva University in error. The senator asserted that YU misrepresented itself to DASNY in order to secure the bond financing.

A significant amount of background regarding YU's relationship with DASNY can be found in the many publicly available DASNY and YU documents that address this. Drawing from the official bond agreements, the DASNY board meeting minutes, YU's financial audits and other publicly available DASNY documents, we can begin to understand the background of what is currently happening. We will first briefly address what DASNY is, then move on to summarizing the history of YU's relationship with DASNY before remarking on some tangentially related facts that were reported in the audits.

The Dormitory Authority of the State of New York has a somewhat misleading name, as most of its current activities have little to do with dormitories. Rather, DASNY finances construction projects within New York State for municipal, healthcare and educational facilities. DASNY provides the funding by purchasing bonds from the organization doing the construction. Once the bonds mature, the corporation that received the financing repays the bonds with interest. DASNY works with both public and private corporations to assist them in paying for the construction and maintenance of facilities. The Dormitory Authority gets its name from its original purpose in the 1940s, when it was tasked with constructing dormitory facilities at teacher's colleges throughout

New York State. Over time, the New York State government expanded DASNY to finance municipal, healthcare and educational facilities broadly.

Yeshiva University, being an educational corporation, is eligible for DASNY financing for any of its facilities. Yeshiva has taken

went to financing the construction of the Michael F. Price Center for Genetic and Translational Medicine at AECOM located at 1301 Morris Park Ave. (The debt from the 2004 bonds was transferred to the newly independent Einstein in 2016.)

YU once again received DASNY money in

involve upgrading the heating and cooling systems as well as modernizing the elevators in the following buildings: Belfer Hall, Furst Hall (Belz Building), Stanton Hall (245 Lexington), Schottenstein Residence Hall, 215 Lexington and Brookdale Residence Hall. There is nothing about these bonds that appears out of the ordinary, and YU has been able to work with DASNY to finance construction and maintenance for almost 30 years.

This quiet relationship has been brought into public discourse by the initiation of State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal's investigation into bonds. In response to YU's current litigation with the YU Pride Alliance, in which YU claims to be a religious institution, Hoylman-Sigal noted that YU was identified as a "nonsectarian" institution in the 2009 and 2011 bond agreements. The implications of this potential contradiction could mean that DASNY issued these bonds in error, since the agreement may have misidentified YU's nature. It is worth noting that the phrase "nonsectarian" was left out of the clause identifying YU in the 2022 bond agreement, potentially signaling a shift in YU's legal self-identification. The results of Hoylman-Sigal's investigation remain to be seen.

The DASNY bond agreements contain much information about YU's finances beyond the details of the bonds that are the primary purpose of the agreement. Any party entering into a bond agreement with DASNY has to disclose details about its finances to demonstrate that it will be able to repay the bonds once they mature. There are a few details of interest that we noticed while reading through these documents.

The 2022 bond agreement offers some details about how YU has responded to some of the lawsuits it is currently litigating. In

Drawing from the official bond agreements, the DASNY board meeting minutes, YU's financial audits, and other publicly available DASNY documents, we can begin to understand the background of what is currently happening.

full advantage of DASNY's services over the last 30 years. Already in 1994, Yeshiva sold \$31 million worth of bonds to finance the construction of the building located at 1859 Eastchester Road for Albert Einstein College of Medicine. In 1998, YU received another \$30 million to renovate the building at 55 Fifth Ave. for the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law.

YU received another \$65 million in 2001, a third of which was used to refinance the 1994 bonds and the rest was divided up among many purchases of new properties and renovations of existing buildings. Most of the funds went to purchasing and renovating dormitories and classroom space on the Beren Campus. The 1990s and early 2000s saw a great expansion of facilities on the Beren Campus including the purchase of the Schottenstein Residence Hall (1995), 35th Street Residence Hall (1997), 215 Lexington Ave. (1999) and 36th Street Residence Hall (2000). All of the above are listed as having been at least partially financed through the 2001 series DASNY bonds. Renovations in 245 Lexington and 253 Lexington were also financed through the DASNY bonds. Then, in 2004, YU received another \$100 million from DASNY. 90 percent of this funding

2009, a total of \$140 million. About \$16.8 million from these bonds went to refinancing the 1998 series bonds. The rest of the money was divided up between several projects that covered all of YU's Resnick, Wilf and Beren campuses. A large portion of the money went to financing the construction of the Glueck Center for Jewish Studies at 515 West 185th St., which began construction in 2006 and opened in fall 2009. Another portion further contributed towards the cost of building the Michael F. Price Center for Genetic and Translational Medicine at AECOM. Some \$15 million went to upgrading IT and wireless internet on the Beren and Wilf campuses. In 2011, YU sold another series of bonds to DASNY, worth \$90 million. \$46 million went to refinancing the 2001 bonds. The other \$44 million was allocated for financing maintenance on YU's Resnick, Wilf and Beren campuses.

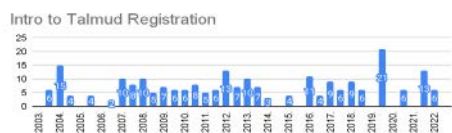
YU's most recent DASNY bonds were issued in 2022, totaling just under \$153 million. Over \$131 million of the bonds went to refinancing the remaining debt of the 2011 and 2009 bonds. The remaining \$20 million are designated for renovations to improve energy efficiency in buildings on both the Wilf and Beren campuses. These improvements

Continued on Page 10

BEREN TALMUD ENROLLMENT

Continued from Page 8

More recently, from Fall 2020 to the present, the class has been offered exactly once per year, averaging 11.5 students per class, due in large part to 21 students — the largest number on record — enrolling in Spring 2020. In addition, while the official enrollment for Fall 2018 was nine students, Sara Verchleisser-Pittinsky (SCW '21), who was a student in the class, stated actual attendance was around 20, which she attributed to the time slot mostly being composed of Jewish Studies classes.

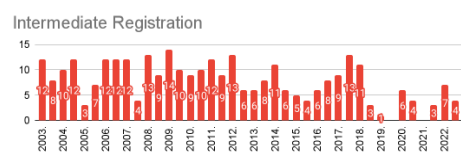


Until recently, Intermediate Talmud, intended for students with some experience with Gemara study, was always taught by Rabbi Moshe Kahn z"l. From the beginning of when data is available through Fall 2012, it was reasonably well attended, averaging slightly more than ten students per class, with only three semesters below eight. After that, attendance dipped over the following semesters, with an average of 6.7 students per class in the period through Spring 2017. Following a brief uptick, attendance cratered heavily in the nine semesters from Spring 2019 to the present, averaging just four students per class, and not being offered twice. It may be worth noting that the class was lengthened starting Spring 2012, and average attendance was significantly larger before the change. Several students informed

me that the time slot Intermediate had been offered was incredibly inconvenient. It must be noted, however, this analysis doesn't take class size into account, and is heavily weighted by the lackluster enrollment of the most recent years. With Intermediate this coming semester returning to a shorter

In the aftermath of several weeks of intense discussion prompted by the since-reversed planned cancellation of three Beren Talmud classes, now is a particularly pertinent moment to present some of the recent enrollment history of the undergraduate Talmud offerings on Beren campus.

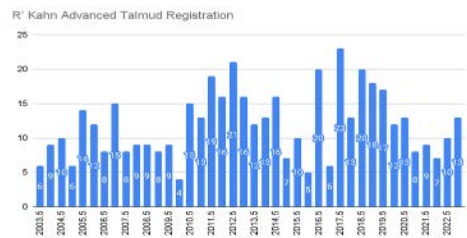
time commitment, it remains to be seen if numbers will increase.



Advanced Talmud, which was also taught by Rabbi Kahn, is a more complicated story. Looking at the data, it seems that there was a general growth over time from around ten per class in the 2000s to around 15 in the early 2010s, and, after a short lull, three semesters with 20 students, as well as a semester with 18 and one with 17. This coincided with an additional Advanced Talmud taught at night, to be discussed shortly. The following drop seems to coincide well with

COVID and the class being taught on Zoom. However, Advanced Talmud was also fairly frequently audited, making the statistics somewhat unreliable. Thus, while only 12 students are listed as enrolled for Spring 2020, a former student estimated the actual number at around 20. Similarly, both Fall

2018 and Spring 2019, listed at 20 and 18 students respectively, were estimated as being attended by around 25.



In addition to Rabbi Kahn's advanced Talmud shiur, another advanced Talmud option has been offered several times in the past. This article will only focus on the most recent one, Rabbi Ezra Schwartz's night shiur, which opened advanced Talmud to students whose majors would've required

classes in the mornings. After a few semesters with approximately 6.5 students per class, the shiur was marked for cancellation due to insufficient interest, failing to meet the minimum of five students. However, as an Observer news article and editorial explained, this was due to a significant number of students taking the course as audits, in part because required classes still partially overlapped with the shiur. For example, while Fall 2019 lists nine students as being enrolled, about 16 seem to have actually attended.

The registration data for Talmud classes on Beren doesn't paint a clear picture, composed of increases and decreases that often lack particularly clear reasons. It also would be unwise to use this data as evidence for interest without considering scheduling and other factors. However, these numbers do provide a look at trends in attendance over time, and can help with identifying reasons why these trends occurred to orient future planning.



Students in Rabbi Kahn's zt"l Gemara shiur
FORMER TALMUD STUDENT AT SCW

Censorship at YU: The Commentator Controversy

By NADAV HELLER

Since its inception, The Commentator has been a constant presence at YU. Even if not everyone reads it, it is always present, churning out articles about happenings on and off campus. As a student-run paper, it is not beholden to the administration or its standards, and over the years writers and editors have taken advantage of that liberty. Unfortunately, not everyone approved of their adversarial antics, and it appears that significant attempts were made to curtail The Commentator's influence.

In the fall semester of 1999, copies of The Commentator and The Observer began to go missing. On two separate occasions, YU Facilities had covertly removed hundreds of issues of The Commentator from public spaces for "safety and aesthetic reasons." At the time, it was apparently common practice for YU to remove student publications prior to public events. Administrators were unfazed, with one noting, "they've been doing this for years ... it's not surprising that they did it this time either."

These two instances, however, drew particular attention, as the issues in question contained several articles deeply critical of the administration. One issue questioned the dismissal of a secretary, and another suggested that YU had misused an \$8 million gift. Claims of conspiracy presumably abounded, and an article was published in the next edition of The Commentator alleging that YU Facilities was deliberately censoring the paper. But almost nobody got to read it. Before distribution, 1800 copies of

the issue mysteriously disappeared.

When the students investigated, senior security officials confirmed that Jeffrey Socol, director of Facilities Management, had instructed the staff to remove the copies. This was the last straw for the editors, who demanded reimbursement to the tune of \$2000 and an immediate stop to the suppressive activity. "My goal is to put a stop to this," said co-Editor in Chief Aaron Klein. "And if initiating a lawsuit is what it is going to take, we are prepared to do that."

To add even more pressure, Harold Levy, a member of the Board of Regents, sent then-President Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm a letter asking why YU was silencing student publications. A second member of the board suggested that the matter might become subject to investigation if it was not promptly clarified. As public interest grew, reporters from The New York Times reached out to YU for comment, which they elected not to provide. The day before NYT published their article, YU gave The Commentator an \$1850 reimbursement, along with a letter from the dean asserting that the university did not condone removing or disposing of any newspapers. The Observer's missing copies were not mentioned in the article, nor were they reimbursed for the 1,200 missing newspapers. "It pains me to discover that Yeshiva only recognizes the discarding of student newspapers is wrong only when ... reporters bring it to their attention, and not when their own students do," said SCWSC President April Simon. The removal of issues was discontinued, but the controversy did

not end there.

In the February 2000 issue, co-Editor in Chief Alex Traiman reported that the President's Circle, a group that allocated funds to various student activities, had elected not to contribute to The Commentator in the upcoming semester. This was despite providing Stern's paper, The Observer, with a "whopping \$13,000" for new equipment. Traiman attributed this discrepancy to The Commentator's ongoing feud with the administration, claiming that stooping to "such punitive measures is quite simply

In the fall semester of 1999, copies of The Commentator and The Observer began to go missing.

immature."

In the following edition, Louis Tuchman, co-chair of the Circle, responded sharply to Traiman's allegations, clarifying that the Circle was under no obligation to provide them with funds every semester, "and you can be sure we will not do so." In addressing the funding discrepancy, he said that the money given to The Observer "only begins to redress" the historical funding imbalance between the two papers. As a final riposte, he criticized Traiman for speculating at the Circle's intentions without comment from any of the members.

When reviewing The Commentator of twenty years ago, it is difficult to tell how much of the editors' criticism (and there is a lot of criticism) is founded, and how much of it is just angry anti-administration posturing. The relationship between the two organizations in this era was extremely tenuous. This is perhaps best exemplified by Traiman's scathing March editorial, "Oh. You're Just Stupid," where he refers to administrators as "grumpy," "Dumb and Dumber," and "simply a few pennies short a dollar." In addition, New York Times reporter Jeremy Peters suggested that Klein deliberately "tried to up the paper's metabolism by publishing a series of articles that were highly critical of the school administration." Recognition of this enmity is key when considering the extent to which The Commentator is reliable here.

Commentator issues from this era often present biased accounts of events. The Columbia Scholastic Press Association reviewed The Commentator in 2002 and gave them an overall grade of C+, at least in part for their unreliable reporting. In their notes at the end, their very first criticism stated that "more effort should be placed on objective reporting on news pages. Many of the front-page stories re-

flect a definite bias ... Front-page news stories must be objective! Opinion should be clearly labeled as such." In addition, they received poor grades for accuracy, fairness and completeness. It seems like reliability was a recurring issue at this time.

In this case, however, it seems that their outrage was, if not justified, at least well-founded. The fact that reputable outside sources like The New York Times and the Board of Regents were involved, and that YU eventually reimbursed The Commentator, both indicate that YU did make some effort to censor the paper, an effort that would repeat itself in the coming months and years.

In fact, just a year prior, YU had confiscated and concealed vending machines owned by The New York Times. "I was very upset," said Eric Schubert, then NYT's sales manager for YU. "It was removed from inside the building, so I knew it had to be Facilities." After several unsuccessful attempts to contact the relevant administrators, The Commentator gained access to a storage room where they found and photographed the missing machines. It is still unclear why Facilities objected to the machines in the first place, or why they did not contact The Times to have them removed properly. Despite their differences, the fact that these two newspaper confiscation controversies occurred within a month of each other is curious, and may bolster The Commentator's reliability in this case.

The Commentator's tumultuous relationship with YU's administration is on full display in this saga, and highlights timely questions about what can and should be said. The era we currently find ourselves in, like any other, mired in its own tumult, and The Commentator has not shied away from reporting on delicate situations. It is my hope that conscientious reporting remains a priority, and that gripes between the paper and faculty can be left in the past. Despite its challenges, the fight to preserve the paper's autonomy was clearly not in vain, as it continues to respectfully tackle the issues and events that shape YU.



An empty newspaper rack outside the library

THE COMMENTATOR

DASNY DOCUMENTS

Continued from Page 9

a section detailing liabilities born out of litigation, YU assured DASNY that, "There is no material pending litigation against the University at this date for which adequate insurance coverage does not exist or which would have a material adverse effect on the financial resources of the University." This section went on to specifically reference the Child Victims Act cases without mentioning any other litigation that the university was facing as of June 2022. It's possible that this insurance information is outdated since it appears to have been taken directly from the 2021 PWC audit, which only recorded financial details for the fiscal years ending on June 30, 2021 and June 30, 2020. As such

we cannot draw any conclusions about how YU is responding to more recent litigation from this bond agreement.

Further, the DASNY bond agreements lend a glimpse into how Yeshiva University has been using its assets to stabilize its finances. The 2022 bond agreement and the attached PWC financial audits reveal an arrangement that YU entered in 2017 to consolidate some of its debt. On April 21, 2017, YU transferred five of its Manhattan properties to a holding company called Y Properties Holdings LLC. These five properties are the Gottesman Library, Belfer Hall, 253 Lexington, 245 Lexington and 215 Lexington. On the same day, Y Properties, which is

wholly owned by YU, entered into a 15 year, \$140 million mortgage with Argentec Real Estate Finance LLC on its five properties that refinanced \$137 million of pre-existing debt. The first ten years of the loan have relatively small annual payments that balloon in 2027 in order to repay the remaining \$132 million principal. YU has expressed an intention to refinance the loan before 2027, which it is entitled to do at any time before 2032.

Check out <https://lazymasmid.blogspot.com/2023/05/you-dasny-bonds-bibliography.html> for a bibliography of our sources.



The DASNY headquarters in Albany

MATT H. WADE / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

We Asked, Y(O)U Answered: Senior Thoughts About Graduation

By FLORA SHEMTOB

As finals approach and we close out the year at Yeshiva University, it's important to remember that for the seniors, this is the end of a chapter. There are so many great moments that people experience in their lives and this chapter at Yeshiva University is no different. Throughout their time at YU students don't only learn, they grow. The experiences they go through are unlike any other. The Commentator asked graduating seniors about their experience at Yeshiva University and some of the highlights they have experienced.

Eli Saperstein (SSSB '23) Accounting

"See, I never thought I'd make it to YU. Most people I grew up with simply do not come here, I didn't know Yeshiva University even existed until my senior year of high school. Yet without YU, I would never have become the person I am today. Being involved in so many aspects of the YU experience. This was by far my favorite part of YU; rising up to take advantage of the opportunities that rose up, ranging from the many clubs, initiatives, and student newspapers. They have shaped not just my experience at YU but who I am today and will continue to be. They taught me something I wish I'd learned right away, that every action at YU is an act of creation, but for the first time I'm thinking past graduation.

At Yeshiva University, it is clear to students that we are part of a legacy, a garden planted by people who never anticipated seeing the full fruits of their labor. We are

acutely aware that we stand on the shoulders of giants, tending a garden planted by those who never planned on seeing its full potential. This is the YU legacy. Seniors planting seeds in a garden they'll never get to see. This principle is embedded in the spirit that pervades YU, where seniors and the student body invest in the future by planting trees whose fruit they may not enjoy. I believe that this principle is trans-

The Commentator asked graduating seniors about their experience in Yeshiva University and some of the highlights they have experienced.

mitted to the students and that this is the reason our Yeshiva University grows great because seniors plant trees in whose shade they shall never sit or benefit."

Ezra Emerson (SSSB '23) Strategy and Entrepreneurship

"There are so many memories for me to choose from for the highlights of my time at YU. I want to list a few that stand out to me the most. *Yom Hazikaron* and *Yom Ha'atzmaut* programming is always the best in my mind. From the moving programs to the incredible davening and dancing after, followed by some awesome concerts, it will never get old to me. I also love the times when I went to Rav Goldwicht's shuirim. Listening to the wise

and inspiring words that Rebbe has given to me, will forever stay in my mind. Another thing that comes to my mind is all the times I have worked on the student council. From being the SOY PR to now being the Syms vice president, I have really learned so much about what it means to be a team and how to lead a body of people when it is most needed, plus the amount of coolness that came from being on those positions were really enjoyable for me. Lastly, I want to bring the one thing that I really will miss the most, and that is having the chance to do a *siyum* in front of my *shuir*. B"H I have been blessed with the ability and knowledge to do a *siyum* on mishnayos many times, and it won't stop after YU. But I would never forget the impact and warmth it brought to the *shuir* room whenever I would get up and start to recite the last mishna. From fellow *shuir*

students to my rebbe, all looking and smiling at me while I read, it is something that I will truly cherish forever."

Fruma Silver (SSSB '23) Marketing

"I've gained so much from my time at YU, and specifically in Sy Syms. I've been exposed to so many opportunities, business and otherwise, and have formed connections that will last a lifetime. The environment of secular and Torah learning and programming that we have created on campus is like no other, and it has been a privilege to attend YU."



A YU senior at graduation

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

An Advisor for Life: A Tribute To Lolita Wood-Hill

By RAFAEL SAPERSTEIN

Editor's Note: Debbie Beaudreau, of blessed memory, was a member of the Pre-Health Advisement office and worked closely with Lolita Wood-Hill. She provided quotes for this article to The Commentator shortly before her passing on April 13. After careful consideration, The Commentator has selected to keep her quotes.

When asked to comment, Wood-Hill told The Commentator that "Debbie was the most generous and gracious person you could ever hope to meet. She was our connector, always checking on every-

one and making sure we stayed in touch. Students who have long since graduated from YC have expressed their sympathy and their gratitude for the impact she had

to focus on spending time with her parents as they get older.

Wood-Hill came to YU in October of 2010, after learning about the job open-

From advising zoom calls and scheduling emails to committee letters and MCAT studying, Wood-Hill has enabled and empowered YU students to succeed in their desired careers after college.

on their success. She was a rare gem, and will be missed."

To quote Dean Fred Sugarman in an email three days after her passing, "Deb was a delight, a positive person who cared deeply about work."

She will be missed by the entire YU community.

Over the past decade, YC students have gained admission to various U.S. medical schools at an acceptance rate more than twice the national average. Over that time-frame, each one of those pre-med students, as well as pre-dental and some pre-law students, have passed through the office of one person for guidance on their path to graduate school. Ms. Lolita Wood-Hill, the pre-professional and pre-health advisor for Yeshiva College, has led these students along every step of the way. From advising Zoom calls and scheduling emails to committee letters and MCAT studying, Wood-Hill has enabled and empowered YU students to succeed in their desired careers after college. This year, however, will be the last of her storied and illustrious career at YC, as she retires at the end of this academic year

ing at a pre-health advising conference in Atlanta. The YU pre-health advisor at the time, Ms. Whitney Houston, was leaving, so Wood-Hill made the move uptown from her previous position at Hunter College. Since then, she has been the driving force behind hundreds of YU students aiming for graduate school, providing them with volunteer and research opportunities, course selection advice and a listening ear that can be accessed on the YU advising website. In addition to her direct interactions with students over the years, Wood-Hill has developed and maintained numerous relationships with other pre-health advisors as well as admissions administrators at various medical schools, a network through which medical school admissions officers have come to know and respect YU's applicants.

Many members of the advisory team, as well as Deans Fred Sugarman and Karen Bacon, expressed their appreciation for Wood-Hill's accomplishments throughout her time at YC. Bacon emphasized that in addition to her statistical success in getting students into medical and dental schools,

"each student who was her advisee was given individual attention in completing YC requirements for graduation and in seeking the best next step in their career plans. This approach to advising is best described as mentoring. For this we are truly grateful."

Sugarman recalled how in his years-long collaboration with Wood-Hill, she helped YC students compete for spots in some of the most competitive medical schools in the U.S., often accounting for the fact that most YC students wanted to attend medical schools in big cities with large Jewish populations. In addition to her work in pre-health advising, Wood-Hill was also instrumental in creating the College Edge program at YU, in which hundreds of disadvantaged high school students are assisted by YU students in learning about the college admissions and acceptance processes. She was also involved in the At Risk program in YU, which assists students who were at risk academically and helps them get back on track with their studies. Wood-Hill's involvement in extracurriculars related to student success, both through the College Edge program and the At Risk program, is part of what made her tenure at YU so special. As Sugarman noted, in addition to her ability to succeed in advising, "her empathy is extraordinary."

Over the course of the past decade, Debbie Beaudreau, who worked at YU until her untimely passing on April 13, was at Wood-Hill's side as her assistant in the advising center. Beaudreau provided the following quotes to The Commentator shortly before her passing.

Continued on Page 12



Lolita Wood-Hill

YU NEWS

FROM THE COMMIE ARCHIVES

(February 4, 1943; Volume 17, Issue 1) — Exams Too Easy

By COMMENTATOR STAFF

Editor's Note: As final exams approach, The Commentator has reprinted a seemingly satirical opinion complaining exams were too easy.

Examinations have always been a rather testy adventure to us. But the examinations this semester were a pleasure to everyone concerned—even the K.P.'s (knowledge proctors). The examinations were much too easy—much too simple for this Simon to reason. It was this thought which has awakened some priceless prejudices. We have a suspicion.

It wouldn't be too immodest an assumption to propose that the administration has put a swift one over on us. Let us not forget that the authorities are considering the abolition of these questionable quizzes, to which the student body is diametrically opposed. And rightly so.

Finals, By All Means

Why should we slave all term and not be rewarded? Why should we be denied the privilege of taking finals? After all if exams are to be purged, think what we would lose—sleepless nights....absence from minyan during study week....black coffee to awaken the old bean....no more "study sheets". No more examinations. Abolish examinations? Never!

The courage of our forefathers, Abraham, Jacob and Isaacs is lacking in these administrative heads in the those administrative heads who do not announce flatly that examinations are out for good. The result of this lack of fortitude has been to "ask" the instructors to formulate such easy question sheets that students would be ashamed to enter upon the testing grounds at the end of the term.

We Want 'Em Tough

The student body demands that

examinations be made tougher—tougher even than Brenner's roast beef; examinations that will bring the blood back into our eyes; examinations that will be stiffer than a corps of corpses. We want whole examinations, not rationed mentality probers. The exams of the past semester have not passed the acid test at all.

The caliber of examinations must achieve new heights, new bluffs. In the past they have been confined to cradles—cribs as the vernacular would have it. In the future we must have harsher examinations. We must have cross examinations.



The Commentator Archives

THE COMMENTATOR

AN ADVISOR FOR LIFE
Continued from Page 11

Beaudreau had been working at YU for two years before Wood-Hill's arrival, and said that the moment that Wood-Hill arrived, "I knew we were going to hit it off." She noted Wood-Hill's national recognition, and remembers going to pre-health advising conferences where she would mention working at YU and always be asked about how Wood-Hill was doing. In addition to Wood-Hill's "total competence in pre-health advising," Beaudreau emphasized the "respect that she showed, treating everyone as an equal" on the advising team.

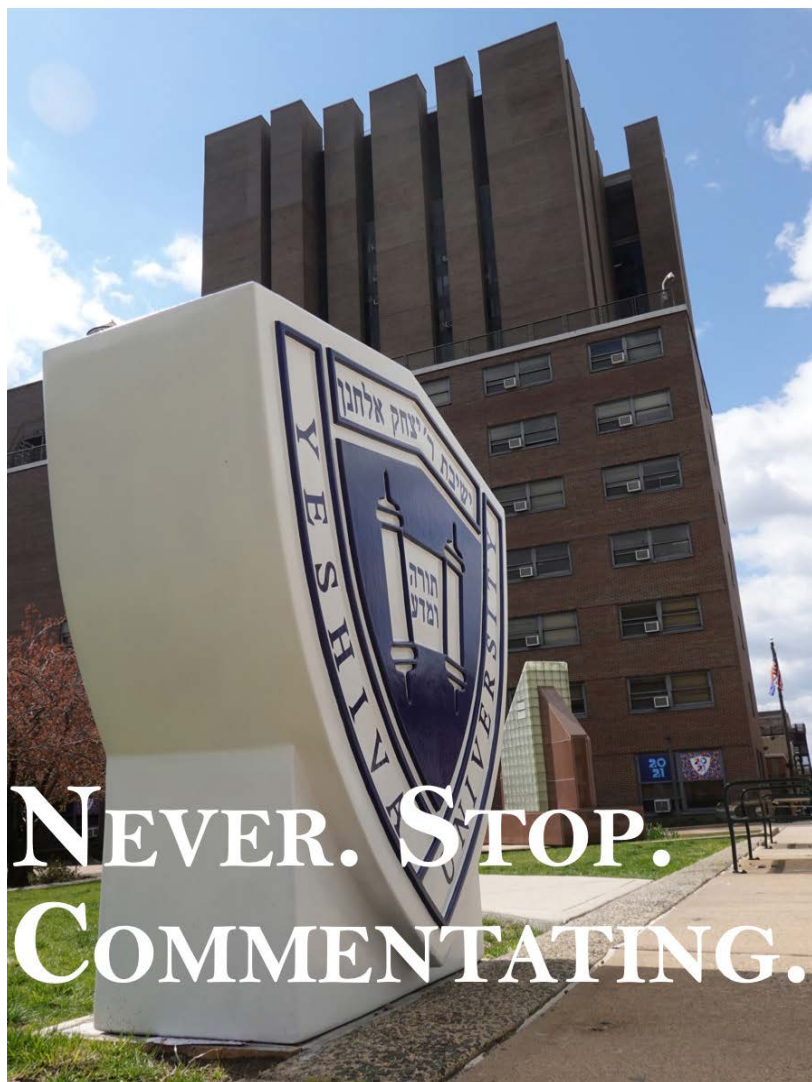
Ever since coming to YU in 2010, Wood-Hill's advising has been an integral part of

the pre-health experience at YU. She attributes part of her success to the culture that YU has developed, with the "community being willing to help people when they're not well off," allowing students to stay confident in their success, as well as having a strong alumni network for students to consult. Additionally, Wood-Hill had very strong relationships with many medical school admissions committee members, which she combined with some of the work she did outside of YU to build strong connections. Some of that work included participating in national pre-health advisory committees and writing articles and multiple book chapters on pre-health

advising. Most importantly, though, she consistently did her best to help every student and to represent YU well. Going forward, Wood-Hill will stay in the advising sphere by doing volunteer pre-health work for the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions and working with a nonprofit group that holds a summer program to provide quality advising for disadvantaged students.

After Wood-Hill's retirement, Professor James Camara, who is currently a chemistry professor in YC, will take over as pre-health advisor. Over the course of the past year, he has been training under Wood-Hill throughout the different phases of the

medical school application cycle, gaining experience to lead students in the coming years with their applications. Wood-Hill, Beaudreau and Sugarman all expressed their confidence that Camara will do a great job in his new role, and that YC students are in good hands regarding pre-health advising going forward.



Regarding Kol Yisrael Areivim

By YITZHAK GRAFF

Yeshiva University's Vice President of Legal Affairs and General Counsel Andrew Lauer recently made a public statement to the New York Times regarding the presence of a religiously based LGBTQ club at the University. Though he did not mention it by name, it seems fairly clear that he was referring to the Kol Yisrael Areivim club that was announced in October. The reality of the Kol Yisrael Areivim club experienced by students at Yeshiva University often contradicts the image presented in official statements from the administration. Despite this, little has been done to challenge the misleading narrative fronted by Yeshiva University spokesmen. In this article, I intend to present the development of Kol Yisrael Areivim from its creation to the present and provide commentary on how the material facts differ from Yeshiva University's public-facing narrative.

On Oct. 24, 2022, Yeshiva University Public Relations released two statements on its blog. One was an announcement of the creation of a new club called Kol Yisrael Areivim, and the second was an FAQ that addressed the new club among other topics. These two documents were condensed into an email that was sent to the undergraduate students the same day. These public statements all contained the same basic details, that "Yeshiva is establishing a student club for undergraduates: the Kol Yisrael Areivim Club for LGBTQ students striving to live authentic Torah lives," and that "Within this association, students may gather, share their experiences, host events and support one another while benefiting from the full resources of the Yeshiva University community — all within the framework of Halacha — as all other student clubs." Although no timeline for the creation of the club was offered, these statements confidently guaranteed that the new club would run events just like all other student clubs.

On Nov. 1, 2022, The Commentator published an inquiry into Kol Yisrael Areivim which revealed that the club did not exist in any measurable capacity. Included in the article were two statements from Hanan Eisenman, the Director of Communications at Yeshiva University. Although both statements mostly reiterated the Oct. 24 statements, there were two notable details. One, that Eisenman referred

to Kol Yisrael Areivim as a framework and not as a club, and two, that Eisenman advised "those interested in helping develop the operational components of the club to contact Student Life."

Unrelated to the prior events, the deans of students ran an open forum for students on Nov. 2 at the Beren Campus and Nov. 3 at the Wilf Campus. Undergraduate Dean of Students Sara Asher, Associate Dean of Students Joe Bednarsh, and Director of the Office of Student Life Jonathan Schwab fielded questions from students on both campuses. At both meetings, the deans received questions about Kol Yisrael Areivim, and they informed the students in the audience that they were not able to provide any details about Kol Yisrael Areivim beyond what was included in the public statements.

The next update came about two weeks later. On Nov. 16, the Office of Student Life emailed a November events calendar to the undergraduate students. There was an entry listed under Nov. 22 for the following event:

"Kol Yisrael Areivim Collaboration Discussion; Office of Student Life, Beren & Wilf, 5:45pm-6:45pm. Join Dr. Schwab to discuss plans for the first event of the year. RSVP to [Dr. Schwab's email]."

The next day, Nov. 17, was the date of an important hearing in front of the Appellate Court in the YU Pride Alliance vs. Yeshiva University case. At this hearing, Yeshiva University's attorney, Eric Baxter, was given the opportunity to argue why the lower court's decision to find Yeshiva University in violation of the New York City Human Rights Law was incorrect and should be reviewed. In his arguments, Baxter brought up the Kol Yisrael Areivim Club Framework as evidence of Yeshiva University being accommodating to its LGBTQ students. He stated:

"I would add that Yeshiva University does have a club for LGBTQ students, it invites them to participate to meet together to have activities, to host events, to support one another. All with the full resources of the university."

When pressed by one of the judges about whether or not this club was for undergraduate students, Baxter doubled down:

"It's housed at the undergraduate program it was created specifically to help meet the needs of the plaintiffs in this case. The university cares about their needs, wants them to be [sic] feel welcome and in-

vited at the university, and wants them to have a space where they can address their concerns."

It is noteworthy that as of the date of Baxter's statements before the court, there had been no activity of any kind for the Kol Yisrael Areivim club framework. To put it bluntly, Eric Baxter, and by extension Yeshiva University, directly misrepresented the reality of the Kol Yisrael Areivim club framework in court to further a legal argument.

The first action of any kind that involved students in this club framework was the Nov. 22 meeting. The collaboration discussion met as scheduled on the evening of Nov. 22. The discussions were productive enough to generate an idea for a proposed event.

On Dec. 7, 2022, one of the students involved in the Kol Yisrael Areivim discussion sent an email to the undergraduate students on behalf of the Kol Yisrael Areivim club framework containing a Google Form to collect feedback on a proposed event idea. The proposed event was scheduled for Jan. 23, 2023. No updates were released confirming or canceling the event. Jan. 23 came and went without any further communication from Kol Yisrael Areivim. The Dec. 7 email was the last official communication on Kol Yisrael Areivim that was sent to the undergraduate students.

Despite this pause in direct communication with its students, Yeshiva University continued to make public statements about the Kol Yisrael Areivim club framework. On Jan. 12, 2023, Yeshiva University released a public statement in response to a New York Times article from the previous day. The statement was framed as responding to allegations that the university was discriminating against its LGBTQ students and breaking the New York City Human Rights Law by doing so. The statement employed two arguments to refute this. The first argument noted that under current interpretation of the First Amendment, Yeshiva University was legally allowed to prevent the YU Pride Alliance from becoming a club on religious grounds. The second argument claimed that no discrimination against LGBTQ students was present at Yeshiva University. Kol Yisrael Areivim was cited as evidence for this, and described as follows:

"YU last year announced the framework for the Kol Yisrael Areivim club for our undergraduate students who identify as

LGBTQ and are striving to live authentic Torah lives. Our Office of Student Life is working together with our students on the activities of this club."

Despite Yeshiva University's public claims of operating events through Kol Yisrael Areivim out of a commitment to its LGBTQ student, there have been no new events planned for Kol Yisrael Areivim since Jan. 23, and there has been no communication on the future of the club framework since Dec. 7. This reality contrasts starkly with the statement of Andrew Lauer in the April 3 article from the New York Times. Lauer dismissed claims that Yeshiva University was discriminating against its LGBTQ students, asserting that the university had created a religiously based club for them in 2022. He continued adding, "Yeshiva has already established a path forward to continue providing loving and supportive spaces for its LGBTQ students. Well-meaning politicians are kindly asked to learn the facts before attacking Jewish education."

Here Lauer uses the claim of an active religiously based LGBTQ club to publicly rebuke state senators for claiming that Yeshiva University is engaged in discriminating against its LGBTQ students. His demand for the state senators to "learn the facts" is particularly brazen considering that the Kol Yisrael Areivim club framework has not facilitated a single event in the six months since its creation.

Lauer's statements are not an outlier over the six-month lifetime of the Kol Yisrael Areivim club framework. Twice prior, Yeshiva University used it as a public defense against allegations of discrimination against its LGBTQ students. First, on Nov. 17, when Yeshiva University's attorney used Kol Yisrael Areivim in a legal argument to claim that the school was not discriminating against its LGBTQ students. Second, on Jan. 12, in a public statement defending allegations of the university discriminating against its LGBTQ students in the New York Times. Now third, with Lauer's statements to the state senators in the New York Times. These three statements alone outnumber the two internal emails from Nov. 16 and Dec. 7 that contained specific information for programming under Kol Yisrael Areivim. It seems that Kol Yisrael Areivim exists more to deflect criticism than it does to actually serve Yeshiva University's students.

The Good Press Stern Deserves

By GABY RAHMANFAR

The recent saga concerning Talmud classes at Stern presented an opportunity for those who seem to enjoy bashing YU to do exactly that. The disparaging comments I have seen online regarding this issue and the YU employees involved have been vile, to say the least. I'm extremely concerned if this is how our community engages in discourse. As an undergraduate student, someone who's actually on the ground, I would like to contribute a voice to this conversation.

I am in the Advanced Gemara shiur at Stern. As one of Rav Kahn's zt"l last *talmidot*, I mourn his passing every single day. Was I confused by the decision to cut the Intro and Intermediate Talmud classes? Yes. Did I believe the decision needed to be reversed? Yes. Did I ever think that bash-

ing YU and shaming those involved in the decision was part of the solution? Absolutely not.

A careful examination of the situation at Stern actually paints a different picture of the administration. Dean Shoshana Schechter has spearheaded tremendous change at Stern and has taken Torah learning and programming to new heights, even though she has little staff in her department and is given a minuscule budget. Professor Nechama Price has been keeping GPATS alive and growing for over eight years as director despite the immense difficulty of that task. Under her auspices, GPATS has a recorded number of students and introduced a *shana-gimmel* track for the first time. Dr. Deena Rabinovich is leading a movement of female educators that is vital for keeping our community alive. These women have a glass ceiling above their heads, yet they have accomplished so

much for women's learning.

In my two years at Stern, I have gained enough to last me a lifetime. I've had the opportunity to learn with some of the greatest Jewish minds of our generation, like Rabbi Mordechai Cohen, Rabbi Saul Berman, Dr. Michelle Levine and many more. My thesis mentor is one of the *poskei hador*, Rabbi Kenneth Auman (how many other university students get to say that!). The relationships I've gained here have changed my life. Our new campus couples, the Fines and the Schonbruns, are people I turn to on a daily basis and have become family to me. Rabbi Yosef Blau *shlita* has become my rebbe, which as a woman is not easy to come by. Shoshana Schechter and Nechama Price are my mentors and inspire me as female role models.

How many other university students have these opportunities?

I acknowledge that there are changes to

be made. I hope that as decisions unfold, some of those changes will begin to come to fruition. However, many of the comments and reactions I've been hearing and seeing are unwarranted and, quite frankly, embarrassing.

To those of you who believe that such comments will help further positive change for women's learning at YU, that is not the case. It makes it much harder for those of us who are working hard to make those changes accomplish anything.

While there is much room for introspection with the current predicament at Stern, there is also much reason for *hakarot hatov* for what we do have, and it is only with this in mind that we can truly enact positive change going forward.

YU means so much to me and so many others, and I'm forever grateful for all it has given me.

Yeshiva University Must Prioritize and Expand Women's Talmud Study

By CHANA KAHN, ELIEZER KAHN,
CHAVI KAHN AND TZVI KAHN

The recent passing of our husband and father, Rabbi Moshe Kahn, beloved Talmud teacher at YU's Stern College and GPATS for 40 years, elicited an outpouring of support and tributes. Social media exploded with descriptions of Rabbi Kahn's impact, describing how he provided hundreds of women with the skills to learn Talmud and Jewish law on an advanced level — something that most Orthodox educational institutions have abjured. Local Jewish newspapers and podcasts discussed his major contributions to Talmud Torah for women. Most notably, Rabbi Kahn's synagogue, Congregation Rinat Yisrael in Teaneck, New Jersey, buried a *pasul* (invalid) Sefer Torah with him, a most fitting honor for a man who dedicated his life to teaching Torah.

However, in recent days, it appeared that YU was ready to spurn Rabbi Kahn's legacy: The school canceled several Talmud courses in the women's undergraduate and graduate programs. Additionally, the administration had no plans to hire a full-time replacement for Rabbi Kahn.

This news pained us immensely. Rabbi Kahn strongly believed that intensive Talmud study is a transformative process that shapes the mind and the soul, bringing people to a deeper understanding of the wisdom and values of Torah Judaism. He deeply felt that it was wrong to deprive Jewish women of this experience. He would have been heartbroken if he were alive to witness YU's effort to dilute the Talmud programs that he helped create and strengthen.

For years, Rabbi Kahn persistently and doggedly ignored critics and naysayers both within and outside YU. Instead, he simply taught Torah, allowing his actions and the dedication of his students to speak for themselves. When criticisms of his beliefs and calls to rethink offering serious Talmud study to women at YU began to surface, he viewed them as a badge of honor — and a positive sign that Talmud study for women was indeed becoming more popular and

visible. When he learned in recent years that his *shiur* was no longer blacklisted at certain women's seminaries in Israel, he jokingly acted disappointed.

Women's Talmud study has made enormous strides since Rabbi Kahn began teaching in the 1980s, and YU has done a great

Does YU merely tolerate Talmud study for women, or does the institution believe in its importance and protect and prioritize it?

deal to help advance it. However, readily canceling Talmud classes soon after Rabbi Kahn's passing generates the impression that YU lacks true commitment to advancing women's Torah study. Does YU merely tolerate Talmud study for women, or does the institution believe in its importance and protect and prioritize it? Will YU only preserve women's Talmud study in response to pressure, or will it proactively lead the Jewish community as a trailblazer in advancing Jewish education for women? While YU may have been able to straddle the fence in the past, its students and alumni deserve and demand more.

We are grateful that the YU administration reinstated the Talmud classes. But we cannot overlook that it took a public petition signed by more than 1,400 people and open letters to effect such change. In truth, the work of honoring Rabbi Kahn's legacy by elevating the level of women's Torah study at YU has only just begun. The controversy surrounding the cancellation of classes has exposed a systemic lack of institutional support in the landscape of women's Talmud study that has persisted even as the number of women studying Talmud in modern Orthodox communities has steadily increased.

Though there are now cohorts of learned women who can teach Talmud competently, only a relatively small number of American

yeshiva day schools and gap-year seminaries in Israel offer Talmud to women. At a communal level, Talmud study is still generally perceived as an exclusively male endeavor. A woman walking into a *shul* or *beit midrash* with a Gemara in hand knows she will draw askance looks or comments. This needs to change.

Such change can begin with more robust leadership and vision from YU's administration. Rabbi Yosef Blau recently issued an important statement in *The Commentator* in support of high-level *shiurim* and Talmud study at Stern College, arguing that at a minimum, mornings at Stern College should be devoted to Torah studies, as it is on the men's campus. In addition to properly placing *limmudei kodesh* in a special category of its own, apart from general undergraduate studies, doing so would allow women wishing to master the skills to learn Talmud and its commentaries the requisite time to dedicate themselves to doing so.

Stern College students, particularly those who yearn to study Torah at the highest levels, shouldn't have to choose between Torah and their secular coursework. The fact that so many women at Stern College have had

to choose was a source of ongoing distress for Rabbi Kahn. We ask that any fundraising tied to the establishment of an endowed chair in his memory be contingent upon YU making a good faith effort to remedy this.

We know that meaningful change will not happen overnight. But Rabbi Kahn's passing, and the recent controversy over canceling *shiurim*, marks an inflection point in YU's history that should prompt a serious reevaluation of how it values and prioritizes opportunities for women's Torah study. Will YU honor Rabbi Kahn's legacy and sustain and expand upon his life's work? The answer remains to be seen.

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The beit midrash on Beren Campus

THE COMMENTATOR

The Students Respond: We Are Interested in Gemara!

By MIRI GRANIK

After falling in love with learning Gemara in my classes at Yeshiva University High School for Girls (Central) and Midreshet Lindenbaum, I proudly chose to attend YU with the hope to continue learning at the highest levels without compromising on secular academics. When I looked to register for classes, I was intimidated by the Advanced Talmud course, even though I had been in advanced *shiurim* in the past. It was known to be a very demanding *shiur*, and I was overwhelmed about committing to this difficult class every morning, along with all the other pressures of starting university. Once I began to warm up to the idea, I learned that my Sy Syms requirements conflicted with the advanced *shiur*, so it was suggested that I join the intermediate *shiur* instead. I had not known of the intermediate *shiur* before, but I'm so glad I found out about it. I had the absolute privilege of learning under Rabbi Moshe Kahn *zt"l* for a few months until he stopped teaching in November due to his declining health. I will always cherish the time I learned with him because he challenged me and empowered me to hold myself to the highest standard. He created

a uniquely warm learning environment for a Zoom *shiur*, even with his uncompromising demand for precision.

Rabbi Joseph Schwarz took over the intermediate *shiur* in the middle of the Fall 2022 semester, after Rabbi Kahn was no longer able to teach, and continued into the Spring. Ms. Tzophia Stepansky, a third-year student in GPATS, taught Intro to Talmud,

While the numbers of enrollment may seem disheartening, I can assure you that there is more behind this story, and that the women at Stern College and Sy Syms are dedicated to Gemara study in university and beyond.

however, this class was cut for the Spring due to a lack of enrollment (despite having had six members in its final semester, and no one knowing how many students might have signed up in the Spring). Because of this, several students seeking an introductory Gemara course joined the intermediate track, eager to learn with the options available to them. Rabbi Joseph Schwarz graciously accepted all the students who joined and was careful to pace his *shiur* so that no student fell behind. However, some

students, including myself, felt that the class no longer fit our needs, now that it was being taught at a more introductory level. With the cancellation of the introductory *shiur*, the intermediate class no longer catered to either beginner or intermediate students, and dropped to four members. That left the intermediate level students with no *shiur* to learn in.

This story is not just anecdotal. In fact, the intermediate course, along with two other courses, has now been canceled for Fall 2023 due to low enrollment. Thankfully, right before this article was published, there has been a discussion for the courses to be reinstated. It is still important, however, to discuss the claims that have been circulating that Beren students are no longer interested in learning Gemara. While the enrollment numbers may seem disheartening, I can assure you that there is more behind this story,

and that the women at Stern College and Sy Syms are dedicated to Gemara study in university and beyond. So what is the reason for low enrollment? Perhaps it is not a lack of interest, but a lack of accessibility to these courses, specifically Intermediate Talmud.

A number of factors other than "lack of interest" contributed to the recent drop in enrollment in Intermediate Talmud. First, the Intermediate Talmud course did not transition back to "in person" after the height of the pandemic when most others did. This discouraged many students, who did not have a preexisting relationship with Rabbi Kahn, from joining the course. Second, Rabbi Joseph Schwarz took over in the middle of the Fall semester, it was unclear if he was going to be the long-term instructor, or if a new teacher was going to take over in Spring, and people were afraid to sign up without a guarantee of consistency. Additionally, the cancellation of the introductory *shiur* led to confusion about what the skill level of the intermediate *shiur* would be going forward. With no set teacher and no continuity, there was no one to explain what the course was or encourage students to enroll.

Low enrollment is very unfortunate

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The Complainer's College Conundrum

By SHUIE BERGER

I'm a complainer. Not just in the "I'm Jewish so I complain a lot" sort of way, but more than that. I'm kind of known for it. Being the quintessential pessimist, I tend to look toward the bad in most situations rather than the good. I know that I am pessimistic, but I cannot help it. It's a reflex.

Being the perpetual complainer, I spent my college career ragging on the school for various problems that I had or grumbling about issues I felt strongly about, in line with the theme of Judaism. (I can mention these because I already graduated.) Whether it was certain inconveniences about registration, bad teachers, unfair policies or the many other things I found issues with, I only dwelled on the bad. (I promise it gets better.) However, since I left in January, I have missed school. I am sure that many other editors who write these don't get to say that. This unique opportunity has allowed me to tell all of you that however frustrated you are at the school or how much you think you hate it there, you'll miss it when you're gone.

As I sit here writing, I cannot help but feel a bit weird. Toward the beginning of the year, a fellow student asked me if I would write "one of those end-of-year reflections that no one reads or cares about." I never eagerly waited to read the end-of-year editorials, but I have read those from the last few years out of curiosity. I wasn't even aware that people thought that way. I assume it might be the repetition of the articles and the seemingly aimless direction of the pieces. It might be something like "I wasn't supposed to come to

YU, but I am glad I did," or "I never thought I would be involved with The Commentator, but it improved my YU experience." It could be the inherent egotism of the articles, assuming the readers even care about **your**

unprepared. I was cognizant of my disadvantage and the fact that the path forward would be challenging.

And it was. However, I learned a lot about myself. I learned about my study habits, my

"... However frustrated you are at the school or how much you think you hate it there, you'll miss it when you're gone."

story. Someone might ask, "If the story is a recap of your time here, why should I care?"

This is why I feel so odd about writing one of "these." Each one of us that attends YU has different experiences, and I don't think I could superimpose my own over others'. Unfortunately for you, I am going to do it anyway. I am going to bore you with details of my experiences, irritate you with subjective stories and bother you with unrelatable anecdotes.

I have gained a lot from YU, and I never thought I'd say that. I, the person who would gripe about every little thing, miss YU. I now have the privilege to look back at my three and a half years there and pick out the things I obtained and improved upon.

It started even before I came to YU. All I had known about it came from my brother, who had gone to YU ten years prior, and from YU and Stern Confessions (*Hameivin Yavin*). My brother is like me, so all he told me was the bad, meaning my impression of YU before I even went there was through the lens of a complainer. Additionally, my time management skills and work ethic were not particularly fine-tuned, as I mentioned in an article last year, so even academically, I was

likes and dislikes and where my priorities lie. And thankfully, the teachers I had were, in my opinion, much better than my brother's. I am thankful to the school and the teachers for improving the learning experience to a point in which it taught me well but wasn't overly difficult.

Like everyone else, I came into YU not knowing what I was getting myself into. I am not sure about the numbers, but I like to think that many other students, many of whom are from the tri-state area, visited YU in high school: a tour of the school, a few meetings with administrators, some basic school propaganda, etc. Many high school students have also seen the campus for the many events that YU holds on its grounds. I will also assume that many students applied to more than one school, because why would you limit yourself and put all your eggs in one basket?

I didn't get a chance to visit the school or even see the campus. I also only applied to one school. This meant that I was banking on getting into a school I have never seen and of which my only knowledge came from my brother. I knew it would be different from his, not only because the teachers would probably be different, but also because he started YU with his two closest friends. I was not bringing any of my childhood friends and came to YU knowing very few people outside the other Gush alumni I met in Israel. My network was tiny, and I knew that.

Over the last four years, I have met many new people and made friends with people I would otherwise have nothing to do with. Although I thought the CORE curriculum was unnecessary and overly complicated, it allowed me to cultivate relationships with some amazing professors and friends. It also was responsible for my title as the last music major at YU. I found a mentor and teacher in Professor Belavsky, to whom I credit my love and understanding of music. He is truly

a remarkable teacher and I have YU to thank for his hiring.

I also want to thank Professor Belavsky publicly for his dedication to me and my study of music. He changed the entire music major curriculum for me and took time out of his own week to teach me, just a single student. In my last semester, I took the Intro to Piano class, which ended up being one of my favorite classes I have taken at YU. Professor Belavsky really cares about each and every one of his students, and his devotion to his students is his top priority. I will miss classes with him and learning from him, but I will always have what he taught me with me in life.

I will also miss having many of my friends in one place. I would see many of them throughout the day, over the course of the week, and Shabbos was time to spend with them outside of the few minutes between classes. We tend to forget the convenience of having mostly everyone in our circles being within half a mile of us. I think about the number of people I am able to invite for meals on Shabbos and the friends I ran into daily. Since I graduated, I haven't had those interactions as often, resorting to Shabbos meals to see them. Some of my friends left last year after 3 years, but many more are leaving this summer, meaning that my friends that were within arms reach are dispersing to various parts of the country, leaving me with unread texts and almost non-existent run-ins.

As I and my fellow graduates close out the YU chapter of our lives, I hope we can look back at our time there and realize what we gained. I criticized the school for years before understanding how impactful my experience at YU was. I came in with so little but left with so much. I know many out there felt the same going in, and I am sure most can feel the same leaving. We have an opportunity to appreciate what we achieved while at Yeshiva University, and we shouldn't squander it. After inundating you with my story, I hope you'll look back on your time here in the same way: as a complainer's college conundrum.



Feedback

ATHREE23 VIA PIXABAY

WE ARE INTERESTED IN GEMARA!
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because the Intermediate Talmud *shiur* is valuable for two reasons: it caters to a unique skill level and acts as an afternoon *shiur* for students who are unable to join the 9 a.m. advanced *shiur*. The biggest barrier to entry for students who wish to take Advanced Talmud is a myriad of scheduling conflicts with the class. While on Wilf the time slots for Judaics and secular courses are separate, these types of courses occur concurrently on the women's campus. This forces students to choose between their required secular courses and the beloved Talmud class. Conflicts occur for business, biology, and Hebrew classes, to name a few, and even Jewish Education fieldwork.

Rabbi Kahn valued keeping his *shiurim* open for any number of students and even continued teaching when only one student joined. This legacy should be continued under any circumstances. Still, we would like to assure everyone that Gemara interest is alive and well on Beren Campus. With a

few WhatsApp inquiries, I easily compiled a list of 14 students on campus and about ten more incoming students currently in seminary, who have expressed interest in an intermediate *shiur*, that's 24 students for one *shiur* option. This is a good start, and we can only increase these numbers if the classes are offered in the Fall. The more Gemara learning opportunities that exist at Beren at every level, the more students will be interested in them.

We, the interested Beren Talmud students, would love to partner with the administration, to offer our feedback and support so that we can help keep these *shiurim*. Dean Shoshana Schechter, Dr. Deena Rabinovich and Mrs. Nechama Price have built an incredible foundation of Torah studies on the Beren campus including creating a lively *beit midrash*, brimming with exciting initiatives such as campus couples, graduate programs, Mechina programs and a wide range of classes. We know that increasing Talmud *shiurim*

on Beren fits into this broader goal. We all should certainly continue the conversation about how to create more interest in Gemara on Beren and the community at large. For now, students and faculty alike are interested in making Gemara accessible to more women in Beren. We look forward to the meeting scheduled to discuss this issue. So let's work together and make this happen!



A folio of Gemara

MIRI GRANIK

Demands, Demands, Demands

By REUBEN HARTMAN

I walked into the door at YU already making decisions. Immediately, I declared a major in political science, committed to a shiur in MYP and signed up for housing in Rubin. While I thought that these initial choices would dictate much of my experience at YU, in reality, the choices that I made initially only minimally defined my experience.

Every day at YU, one is met with a myriad of decisions, choices, and pathways they must take. One must choose: “What minyan will I go to today? Whose shiur will I be in? What class will I take?” But these are just simple actions one decides to take. Behind all of these choices are demands one is motivated to address. From nine a.m. to late into the night, one's days are filled with incredible exposure to high-level Torah and academic learning that is coupled with high expectations to match. YU's schedule demands that one fills their whole day dedicated to one's goals. Goals that must fit the complex needs

of one's majors, cores, and Torah study.

But behind all these external requirements the most jarring and important re-

I create there. As I shed the premade narratives that I hold — “I am a YP guy who only has friends from Shaalvim” — the more I

The exposure to the beautiful tapestry of ideas found here in YU, ideas that sometimes even seem to fight each other, demands of me to find a way to balance it all.

quirement expected of us is the demand to face ourselves. Every day I figure out more and more who I am and what I stand for. This affects the small things, like the group I surround myself with; to big ones, like what values and ideas inspire and speak to me. The exposure to the beautiful tapestry of ideas found here in YU, ideas that sometimes even seem to fight each other, demands of me to find a way to balance it all. With this learned skill, I truly better understand what I value and what I cannot.

I will not always be attached to the hip to a yeshiva or a university; therefore, I can't form my sense of identity around the labels

recognize the vastness of our surroundings and begin to understand how I fit into it. Thus, the everyday choices I make shouldn't be about whose camp I wish to join; rather, they should be about discovering who I am.

In a world that raises social capital on a high pedestal, where the pressure to fit into a box gnaws at your mind, Yeshiva University demands one to discover oneself and learn how to be a responsible individual. A thought-out individual knows how to love and be part of a community, fights to uphold its values and needs, and knows one's role in it with clarity. The demands of cultivating this mindset strip the false idea that I

am defined entirely by the external choices I make. Instead, it's what I find out about myself in the midst of these choices that do.

So, my advice to those still here at YU is to break free of the narratives you've bought into. Hear and think about the other perspectives in YU and try to understand the value they add. If you hear the same cookie-cutter talking point over and over again, as if it's a script one is forced to say, question it and try to discover the real complex truth behind it.

Yeshiva University demands, demands and demands. It demands you fulfill its requirements. It demands you make choices about where you want to be. But most importantly, it demands you discover who you are. Don't miss out on the true gift that really is. You won't find many places that demand so much of you because they truly believe so much in you. There is great power to know how much you are capable of and how it can be directly connected to a great truth. So, meet these demands, and you will cherish the results they produce.

Dear Freshmen ...

By JONATHAN MAYER

Dear Freshmen,

College will fly by in a flash. The days are long but the years are fleeting. I still remember my first day. I was seated at a ping pong table and a couch and bed encircled me. I was barefoot; my feet dragged through a plush carpet. I had been home for a few months due to the pandemic and began Yeshiva University virtually from my playroom.

It was a rocky start. Instead of making new friends and experiencing New York City, I was stuck at home. In between classes, I would lie down in bed, walk around or listen to music. Understandably, I didn't enjoy YU at first. To be fair, I don't think I would have liked any college considering the situation; with only a laptop for zoom class and my humdrum homework assignments, there wasn't anything that differentiated my college from any others. I was enrolled in the virtual campus of Zoom University.

After one Zoom semester from across the country and another semester in Washington Heights, I began my normal YU experience (bi-weekly covid testing aside). In September of 2021, I was in NYC attending classes in person and taking part in whatever YU had to offer. I joined a sports team, signed up for a few clubs and even started some of my own. I felt like my college experience was truly underway.

There's a lot that I've learned throughout my time here. Of course, there's the information that I gained from my classes. But that isn't what I want to share with you. Who knows what major you'll be in or if you'll be interested in some obscure topic like Keynesian economics? I certainly learned lessons about how to succeed in school, but more memorably, I gained lifelong lessons beyond the classroom. There really is a bit of truth to that Mark Twain quote that schooling interferes with your education, isn't there?

I know college can be viewed by some as a stepping stone to your dream job, but for others, it is a span of time in which your passions and interests are formed and explored. So, I'd like to share 5 lessons that straddled that line for me; lessons that are applicable to both establishing your credentials for the recruiting process and for life as a whole.

First and foremost, be genuine. This

is perhaps the lesson most apropos to your time in college and the one that will shape the rest of your life the most. College is the time when you lay the foundation for the rest of your life. It is the place where you take the classes that interest you, form the social bonds with lifelong friends and have the

There really is a bit of truth to that Mark Twain quote that schooling interferes with your education, isn't there?

experiences which you reminisce fondly on for years to come. Don't live someone else's idea of what the perfect college experience looks like. If there is a class you want to take because it's something you are genuinely interested in, take it! If there's an experience you want to have in New York City, get out there and do it. You don't need to ask your friends if it's the right thing to do or if it's something someone with “your background” would do. Get out there and do it! Wear your passions on your sleeve. Block out the noise of conformity and do what pleases *you*. Only by pursuing your passions will you find happiness in your time in college. “Okay,” you might be saying to yourself, “but what about the job? I need to prepare for my career and take the classes that will set me up for that best.” I agree! But that shouldn't come at the expense of pursuing other interests you have. You can be a pre-med student and still read the books you want or pursue personal interests. Oh, and if you're still concerned about the job and spending substantial time on anything that doesn't prepare you for it, recruiters love nothing more than a student who's passionate about something besides their required classes. Even beyond academics, you'll want to have something to talk about that genuinely represents you. **Being authentically you is the north star that will guide you through choosing your classes, social circles and career.**

Extracurriculars matter more: Extracurriculars are most important for two reasons. First, this is where you experience hands-on learning. You are able to practically apply the knowledge you've learned in your classes. In line with the first lesson, clubs are the time that you get to explore your

passions outside of the classroom and form bonds with people outside of your degree. Second, extracurricular activities are how you will remember your time in college. Doing something with your time in college other than your classes shows a dedication to expanding your knowledge and demonstrating the traits of a worldly person.

Who you know, not what you know: This is one of those truths of life and the earlier you grasp it, the smoother your time in college and in life will be. Relationships with people are supremely more important than the knowledge at your disposal. Of course you have to be qualified for a job or to be the head of a club. However, friends and connections are the most important asset you will ever have. I don't mean this in just a professional sense; I mean this in a social and educational sense as well. Personal relationships with professors, friends and professionals are valuable sources of often untapped information and guidance. You learn about professionals' hands-on experience in the workplace. Your professors share lessons with you beyond the syllabus and allotted classroom time. Your friends support you in the initiatives you take on. It takes a village to accomplish most things and the more people you are connected with, the greater bank of wisdom and talent you have to work with.

Comparison will be your worst enemy: As you join clubs, get summer internships and ultimately land a job, you will undoubtedly compare yourself to other classmates. You'll rank your job against theirs, their achievements against yours and their future against yours. But the simple truth is: They're not you. You will have your fair share of successes and setbacks. Everyone does. Instead, focus on improving yourself. Work hard in everything that you do not because you want to be better than the person next to you but because you want to be a better version of yourself. It is only through our own narrow lens of self-improvement that we can truly notice our progress. Otherwise, you will always end up finding someone who's better than you. This leads to nothing but despair. Focus on your development and success will find you. As your world expands with classes and professors, world history and philosophy your mind will grasp the great breadth of the world. You'll realize how much is out there and how much competition

there is. It will intimidate you. And that is when you must focus on the personal more than anything: your own character, family and friends. These are the parts of the world we can impact and the ones most receptive to our change.

Learn from everything: This is the lesson I hope has most come across in this letter. I learned the most in college outside the classroom by noticing what my teachers practiced, how my friends acted and how people I viewed as mentors interacted with others. College is a fundamental time for our own development as well-rounded human beings. The flawed idea, however, is that all this knowledge comes from the classroom. Learn from everything — every person, every class, every book, every movie, every encounter. Learn something from it and use it to shape yourself into a better person.

It is with fondness for my time in college that I write these words for my final article. My surroundings have changed entirely since those days of zoom university. I'm now in the 3rd apartment I've moved to. Littered across my room are mementos from my time here. A tennis ball keychain from the time I went to the US Open. Ticket stubs from the YU Broadway club trip to the theater. Movie posters under my bed from that college phase of plastering my walls with favorite movies. Picnic blankets tucked away in the closet from the time I ran a weekly outdoors club. And too many more to count. I'm surrounded by memories of all that I did with my time here and grew to love. I'm a far way away from the carpet of my playroom.

So, dear freshman, I hope you take these lessons to heart. Your college days might be spent in a city or on a campus. You may attend a Jewish college or a non-sectarian college. You may even attend an Ivy League college. But these differences are trivial. The lessons I've learned are ones that can be imparted by any college and will extend far past your undergraduate years. I share these lessons as a precursor to your time in college to prompt you to think critically about what you wish to achieve, but it is up to you to determine how you will best be able to do that. College will fly by in a flash; hopefully this gives you a bit of a head start.

Do I Look Jewish?

By NADAV HELLER

Do I look Jewish? “*Shalom!*” “*Shavua tov.*” “Good shabbos.” And even one time “Say a bracha! I’m Jewish!” These are all things I have heard from strangers who intuited my Jewishness and wanted to let me know that they know. What makes it so obvious that I’m Jewish, anyway?

I asked a number of friends this question. They laughed, and, upon realizing I was serious, pantomimed twirling hair by their temples, indicating the foot-long *peyot* [sideburns] dangling from either side of my head.

It’s odd to me that long *peyot* are one of the most universally recognized symbols of Jewish identity. They aren’t required by Jewish law. Most Jews don’t have them, at least not the ones I know. What’s so Jewish-looking about them? What does it even mean for them to be Jewish-looking?

This is the central question implicit in Frederic Brenner’s “Jews/America: A Representation.” Brenner travels across America, documenting groups of liminal Jews, often with an almost provocative daring, as if challenging us to question the Jewishness of the individuals he captures. He presents a landscape of rabbis and cantors from JTS wearing tallit and tefillin, defiant and searingly austere — all of them women. Another photo, titled “Jews with Hogs,” depicts a steely biker gang parked outside their

favorite synagogue, an enormous recreation of the Mosaic tablets magisterially looming over their handlebars and helmets. A third portrays a Passover seder in a maximum security prison, the inmates celebrating freedom while incarcerated. In fact, most of the photos included in the book are of people I’d never have pegged as Jewish.

This is precisely Brenner’s point — unitary conceptions of who “looks Jewish” fail to account for the breadth of Jewish identity. In fact, forty percent of students tested at a New

Without external, deliberate signifiers, what does it even mean to look like a Jew?

York college mistook Italians for Jews, and equal numbers identified Jews as Italians. As much as we think we can “just tell,” the “Jewdar” we all feel we innately have is apparently faulty.

There’s an old joke, which, in the way old jokes tend to be, is not nearly as funny as it is instructive, that demonstrates this principle. An older woman spots a dapper gentleman sitting across from her on the subway, and, as one does, begins to interrogate his ethnic origins. “Excuse me, sir. Are you Jewish?” The man looks up from his newspaper and gruffly responds “No.” A few minutes later she asks again. “Pardon me for asking, but are you sure you’re not Jewish?” He repeats

that he is definitely sure. Unconvinced, she makes a third attempt. “How sure are you —” “— alright! Alright! You caught me, I’m Jewish! What do you want?” “That’s funny,” the woman sniffs, “you don’t look Jewish.”

The joke sardonically parrots the same question that Jews often ask themselves. Without external, deliberate signifiers, what does it even mean to look like a Jew? This tension has been a source of perennial strife for the modern American Jew. The nearly unendurable questions of “Who am I? What

am I?” plague his psyche, pushing him to hide from others (in insular enclaves) or from himself (by assimilating entirely).

Halacha addresses this tension when it demands that a Jew “must be separate and recognizable in his dress and other behaviors.” We most reliably identify ourselves as Jewish when we *deliberately choose* to appear Jewish. No genetic characteristic or behavioral tendency definitely identifies the Jew. A Jew is most often known only insofar as he allows himself to be. We could just as easily blend in — but we do not want to.

So, for the hundreds of you who ask about my hair before my name or well-being, listen well, because this is the definitive answer

why I grew out my *peyot*.

My *peyot* carry many layers of personal meaning. They are a homage to my Yemenite ancestors, who wore *simanim* [signs] to distinguish themselves from their Arab neighbors, and to my Hasidic predecessors, who grew *peyot* as a kabbalistic embellishment of the Law. They signify my teleological and emotional closeness to modern *charedi* Jews, who are too often stigmatized in our community. They are a part of me, literally built into my flesh and made of my cells. *Peyot* are almost exclusively the province of Orthodox, halachically observant Jews, another statement of personal identity.

None of those things, however, are the real reason why I grew my *peyot*. The capital R reason is because they are universally recognized as Jewish.

The way we visually present gives others cues as to how they should view us, and, perhaps more importantly, how we view ourselves. The ostentatious, swinging ropes of hair affixed to my temples are the statement I make before I ever open my mouth. Before I introduce myself as a New Yorker, college student, booklover, or sibling, be forewarned: I am a Jew.

So the next time a stranger winks at me and proudly whispers, “Mikvah and Lox” or some other tragically misplaced, microaggressive phrase of benign effrontery in my ear, I’ll happily respond with at least as much pride, “Shabbos kosher amen.”

The Kids Are Alright

By REBECCA GUZMAN

Set to the backdrop of a subtly emotive piano theme, clips from a podcast compose a montage with clips from a plethora of social media posts. Then, Truman of The Truman Show makes it to the edge of his sound-screen prison, freeing himself. His hand rests against the wall. “The Internet and technology created an idea of infinity,” cuts

In this terrifying place, our generation searches not for a way out but for a transformation, a way to illuminate the tunnel, not exit it. Despite everything, our generation continues to search.

in actor Hasan Minhaj. “And the reason why life is beautiful is because it is fundamentally limited.” Mark Zuckerberg introduces the Metaverse. The screen fades to black. The caption reads simply, “Wake up.”

The paradoxical nature of this video does not elude me. It’s a Tiktok, ninety seconds long, with exactly two million likes and over sixteen thousand comments. This message to “wake up” exists within the slumber itself, a manifestation of what is being called the “doom scroll,” the phenomenon of continuously scrolling through social media with no imperative to stop and no reward to be found. People in the comments lament their presence on the app in the first place. They feel exhausted and hopeless, disheartened by what they perceive to be the mundanity of their lives. “I’m so tired” is like a mantra being repeated by the commenters.

Most of the commenters are teenagers or college students, fellow members of Gen Z. As I sift through their words, I feel a strange mix of empathy and fear. I worry about my peers and I worry about our collective present and future. Everyone seems desperate for one thing, I notice. Everyone is asking for a way to block out the noise, the intimate

glimpses of others’ deceptively perfect lives, the relentless confrontations with our own deficiencies in the face of unrealistic standards. Gen Z is anxious and weary. Gen Z is scared.

And yet, there are those who are hopeful. “Putting my phone away and going stargazing right now — thank you,” one user comments. “I’ve actually been reading a lot of books lately,” writes another. “I feel like a different person. Less existential dread.”

Despite everything — despite being constantly bombarded with troubling information about the state of the world, despite the degradation of human communication to words exchanged between devices — our generation seeks something better, something simpler and more wholesome. Social media, what we have come to view as a breeding ground for hatred, has built friendships across oceans. It has opened our eyes to its dangers, yes, but it has also shown us the world outside of our own individual selves. People are discovering something new each minute that they scroll: art, literature, poetry, music. People are discovering each other. In this terrifying place, our generation searches not for a way out but for a transformation, a way to illuminate the tunnel, not exit it. Despite everything, our generation continues to search.

I think that it’s easy to yearn for a way out, for the return to an easier time, such as the early aughts of our adolescence. New studies are published each day that lament the challenges faced by Gen Z; adults offer sympathy for the problems created by the divide between our lifestyles and theirs. But how different are we, really? Teenagers are interested in the same things they have

always been interested in; online discourse about films or albums or books continues to reign. Friendships continue to transpire and be nurtured. The feelings that define young adulthood — the highs, the lows, and everything in between — exist with the same veracity and fervor that make them part of the wondrous, hellish process of growing up. Throughout history, human behavior has remained constant. There may not have been social media, but each generation has grappled with its own afflictions. As the ancient Greek historian, Thucydides, wrote: “Human nature is the one constant through human history. It is always there.”

It is always there. On the train, a young man across from me is carrying a bouquet of flowers. To my other side, a toddler peers up from his stroller, hands reaching for something. I smile at him, and he smiles back. A construction worker calls his wife and makes plans for dinner. Two friends talk about their day. Girls share headphones, listening to a pop song so loudly that I can make

out the words. At the next stop, an elderly man enters the train car, roses in hand, the generational divide between himself and the younger man instantly bridged by love. The toddler is singing now. *It is always there.*



The screen fades to black. The caption reads simply, “Wake up.”

The Enablers

By DR. ERICA BROWN

It's that time of year again. We've welcomed spring to campus and are looking toward summer. Faculty are thinking about research and preparing new courses. Students are tweaking summer plans and getting ready to pack up and vacate the dorms. It's generally a happy and hopeful time on the academic calendar once we all get past exams. As a student, I always looked forward to putting down my pen after completing the last question or essay in the blue notebooks that were a staple of my student life and declaring it summer. It was liberating.

But final papers and exams bring with them anxiety about mastering material, being in the right frame of mind to take consequential tests and quieting the inner critic to cross the finish line. The tension can be overbearing because where anxiety lives, it's very hard for learning to live. Research in neuroscience has helped us better understand what happens to the brain at these moments. The amygdala senses a threat and cortisol, a stress hormone, is released. Adrenaline floods us and makes the heart beat quickly. The reaction to stress is not only in the mind. It also resides in the body.

People respond or prepare for these possible reactions in a variety of ways. They may seek therapy for better cognitive behavioral techniques to manage the threat, real or imagined. They may talk back to the inner critic and lessen that inside voice of insecurity and negativity to a whisper to allow productive space for learning. They may

calm the mind through meditation, music or silence. It's not easy work.

For that reason, some people choose what they believe is the easy, expeditious route. They cheat their way through papers and exams. Technology often assists their cause. Despite the measures that professors and proctors put in place, no amount of guilt, reason or even religious shaming will change the person who sees education as merely instrumental, university relationships as merely transactional and their GPAs as inviolable. Maybe a student walks into a test with no intention to cheat, but the temptation becomes simply too strong. There are great risks involved, but even these cannot deter cheaters. The fact that there is data that cheating in school is correlated with cutting moral corners in other arenas such as relationships and workplace conduct is irrelevant to the cheater.

Whatever the excuses are — and there are many — cheaters can con others and themselves into believing that their actions are defensible because they've found a way to justify the outcomes. That students with rich and layered Torah backgrounds continue to cheat despite hearing their own rabbis and educators denounce it is sadly no surprise. Cheaters are going to cheat.

We can do our best as a faith-based institution to alert our students to these costs — often to others in the same class — but we cannot change someone whose goal is not moral or faithful, but utilitarian and self-serving. They may go on to build a life of big and little lies, but if these help them achieve their objectives, they will be unmoved by ethical or religious calls for

academic integrity.

Cheaters may know the verse from Proverbs 3:4 — “Find favor and approval in the eyes of God and humans” — but tell themselves that God is not actually watching. They disregard the momentous words of Rabbi Yohanan, who on his deathbed, left his students with one piece of advice: that the fear of heaven be upon them in equal measure to their fear of other human beings (BT *Brakhot* 28b). The students were puzzled. Is that all? Rabbi Yohanan, perhaps with his very last breath, said, “Know that when one commits a transgression, he says to himself: ‘I hope that no one will see me.’” He forgets that God is the vigilant supervisor, the ultimate proctor.

What we *can* do is to move our focus away from cheaters who are unmoved by exhortations and put a moral spotlight, instead, on the enablers. You know who you are. Maybe you gave someone, who did not attend a lot of classes, all your notes to copy and regurgitate into their end-of-year paper. Or maybe you saw someone look at your test paper and did not shield it from view. You might even have hinted or assisted someone who guilted you into it before the test because he or she needed to pass to graduate. You may have seen someone cheat when you looked up from your work and decided not to mention it to the proctor for fear of being a snitch. Alternatively, you might have heard a bunch of people joking about how they cheated the system in the elevator on the way out of an exam and chose to say nothing. You're not a bad person, you tell yourself. You studied. You're not the one cheating.

Think again. Maimonides states

unequivocally that, “Whoever has the possibility of rebuking wrongdoers and fails to do so is considered responsible for that sin” (See *Hilkhot De'ot* 6:7 and BT *Sanhedrin* 93a). Why should that be? I believe it's because Maimonides understood that morality is more than an individual predilection towards righteousness and goodness. It's about seeing oneself as a stakeholder in and contributor to creating an ethical culture. He raises the bar on what every single person does to shape an environment. To say, “I'm not the one cheating” is not the same as saying, “I did all I could do to contribute to the kind of culture I want and am proud to belong to.” Cheaters need enablers, but I am *not* an enabler.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, in his book “The Great Partnership,” writes that, “We need religion to remind us ... that success, fame, wealth, affluence, the siren songs of today's culture, are trivial in comparison with character and integrity. And we need communities in which the virtues live, are rehearsed and are valued. If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a community to sustain the moral life.” We are blessed to live in a university community that places character above all else, where the way we believe and behave today is a dress rehearsal for a sanctified future.

As we enter these last few weeks of classes, may the words of Rabbi Yohanan and Maimonides be upon us. I wish you the best on your papers and exams. And thank you for holding up the moral fiber of our community.

Glimpses of Goodbyes: Gratitude, Growth, and Getting Involved at YU

By DAVID LIFSCHITZ

It's hard for me to say goodbye.

To the opinions editors, I apologize again for sending this in so late, it's *hard for me to say goodbye*.

A few years ago, a close friend of mine showed me a trick to prepare to say goodbye to a significant part of my life. It goes like this:

Imagine.

Imagine you're on your way back from graduation. You've driving in the car/taking the train back home with those who've celebrated with you, and you get back home.

Embrace the few weeks left as ones that are both the end of an era and ones that now also herald a new and exciting one.

You walk inside your room, walk to your bed and lie down face up, looking at the ceiling fan turning. You take a deep breath and the amazing day behind you has started to settle in your mind as you reflect. You've just finished your undergrad academic career. You're remembering the amazing day you've just had at Madison Square Gardens, the hard work and effort you put into your last set of finals, the senior dinner and those last moments with your friends walking the halls of YU for a final time. And then you realize that all of this is behind you now, and all you can do is relive the moments through your memory.

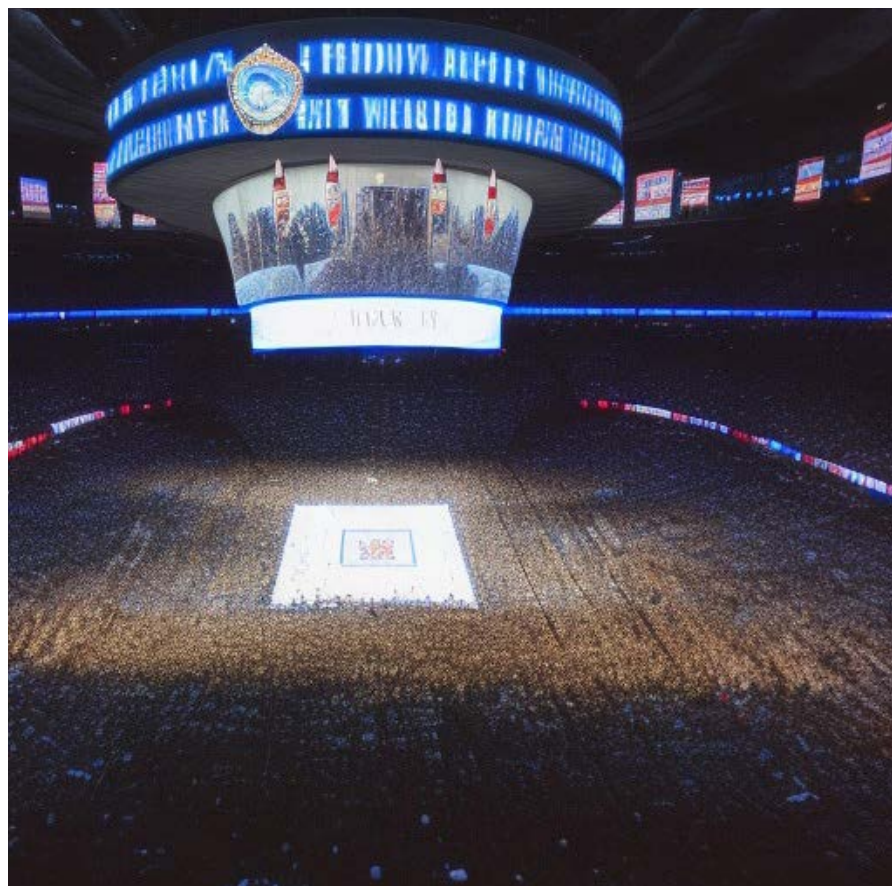
Now stop imagining.

We still have these moments ahead of us. We can still cherish each and every moment and every relationship we've made. Embrace the few weeks left as ones that are both the end of an era and ones that now also herald a new and exciting one.

As I have started to reflect on the time I've spent at YU, perhaps the greatest highlight of the mark I've tried to make at YU has been my involvement with student council. For three years, I had the privilege of serving as a representative of my peers and working alongside a talented and dedicated team to make a positive impact on our campus community. Through this role, I have honed my leadership and teamwork skills, and have learned the importance of communication, collaboration, and empathy. I have also hydrated many individuals with free cases of water. It has been a truly transformative experience, and I will always be grateful for the friendships and memories that I have made through this organization.

There's a powerful idea in Masechet Moed Katan 28a shared by Rav Nachman to Rav in a dream that the greatest of us leave this world like removing a piece of hair from a bowl of milk. I hope I can get to that point eventually, but for now, I will keep saying: *it's hard for me to say goodbye*.

Congrats to the Class of 2023,
David Lifschitz



Yeshiva University seniors graduating at Madison Square Garden

No Caf Daddy, No Problem: Tips and Advice for The YU Cafeteria

By **ARIEL KAHAN**

What you see a person buy in the Caf during the last two weeks of the spring semester is often very telling about their personalities and lifestyle. For example, if you see someone with \$1,200 during finals, you can reasonably conclude that this person goes home after breakfast on Thursday and comes back after minyan on Monday morning. Perhaps their mom sends them lunch every day as well. On the other hand, if you see someone begging others for a swipe even before Pesach, they likely had a hard time avoiding Poke Bowls and Teriyaki Thursday.

Below are tips and advice for those people in the middle, who seek to enjoy their meals while making cost-efficient purchases. In other words, get the biggest bang for their buck.

On the other hand, if you see someone begging others for a swipe even before Pesach, they likely had a hard time avoiding Poke Bowls and Teriyaki Thursday.

Before entering the Caf/Nagels, one should always think about whether there is an opportunity for free food elsewhere. For example, if you look on the hefker table any time between purim and pesach, it is likely you will find a good snack that can save you the \$4 you were going to spend at Nagels. It also may contain boxes of cold pizza from Como which really hits the spot if you're in the mood.

For those who are more "germ conscious" (read: refined), there are ways to be smart in the Caf as well. Feel free to try any of the following ideas:

The Challah Roll/Hummus combo - for under \$15 dollars, you can buy a six-pack of challah rolls (which can last you 2-3 meals) as well as hummus to dip it in (2 meals). This combo allows for one to spend the price

of one meal for the amount of calories and flavor that could last for two.

On the topic of Challah rolls, this trick can also be utilized for a nice fleishig meal with the challah roll-deli combo. Again, for around 15\$ dollars, one can buy a six pack of challah rolls as well as a full pack of turkey and pastrami and make many sandwiches for lunch or dinner. In fact, one may consider splitting the cost of challah rolls with a friend (each person can eat three).

While dinner is hard to manipulate, there are a few things that one can do at lunch that can help ensure a full stomach for low prices.

A slice of pizza accompanied by a container of soup is an \$8 lunch that is both delicious and economic. The soup tends to be filling and nutritious, and with a slice of pizza, it feels like a full meal.

A cheese pretzel is also certainly cheap and filling. While I will not speak to the

health benefits of such a choice, it is certainly delicious and gives one enough calories to survive the afternoon.

On this note, a bagel and some sort of spread (cream cheese, butter, jelly) also contains many calories for a very low price. However, if one wants to maximize what they can get out of a bagel (and FLEX money), I highly recommend a bagel with melted cheese and a few toppings from Grandmas. For \$7, one can get a large bagel with melted cheese and two toppings (I recommend eggplant and banana peppers). This combo of crunch and calories can satisfy one for the rest of the day, and is a great use of FLEX money.

In addition to finding good ways to spend money, it is just as valuable to recognize the dumb wastes of a tight budget. For example,

purchasing water bottles in the Caf can add up in a significant way. If one bought a \$3 bottle of water in the Caf every day five days a week for a semester (around 15 weeks), they could spend over \$200 on water for the semester, which is over an eighth of the money on the lowest meal plan. Instead, one

should consider a trip to Target where they can buy a 32 pack for 8.99, which comes out to 28 cents a bottle. If one carries around one of those bottles every day, they will not lose money in silly ways.



YU Cafeteria

ARIEL KAHAN

Rayley F. '20
ALBERT EINSTEIN
College of Medicine

Nate S. '21
ACCENTURE
Software Architect

Tali J. '21
BLOOMBERG
Data Analyst

Evan B. '20
DELOITTE
Tax Consultant

Zachary L. '21
MORGAN STANLEY
Credit Risk Analyst

Rebecca S. '20
GOLDMAN SACHS
Senior Analyst

Daniel F. '20
DEUTSCHE BANK
Investment Bank Analyst

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