

THE COMMENTATOR

The Independent Student Newspaper of Yeshiva University

VOL. LXXXIX

TUESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2024

ISSUE NO. 7

Rabbi Zevulun Charlop, Dean Emeritus of RIETS, Passes Away at 94

BY RIVKA BENNUN AND SRULI FRIEDMAN

Rabbi Zevulun Charlop, dean emeritus of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS), passed away on Tuesday. He was 94.

“Everything we have today at Yeshiva stands on the shoulders of Rav Charlop’s efforts.”

Rabbi Menachem Penner, outgoing dean of RIETS

Born in 1929 in the Bronx, where he spent most of his life, Rabbi Charlop graduated from Yeshiva College in 1951, and received *semikha* from RIETS in 1954. He was appointed Max and Marion Grill Dean of RIETS in 1971, replacing Rabbi Reuven Aberman, and served as dean for 37 years until he stepped down in 2008, after which he became dean emeritus and special advisor to then-YU President Richard Joel.

“At the heart of Rav Charlop was Yeshiva University, [its] students, its leadership, its *rebbeim*,” *Rosh Yeshiva* Rabbi Yaakov Neuberger, who was Rabbi Charlop’s son in law, expressed in his *hesped*. “He was one of the great stewards of Yeshiva University and he believed with the greatest passion

in what Yeshiva University accomplishes.” “Everything we have today at Yeshiva stands on the shoulders of Rav Charlop’s efforts,” outgoing RIETS Dean Rabbi

Menachem Penner told The Commentator. In addition to serving as dean of RIETS, Rabbi Charlop taught American history at Yeshiva College, and wrote numerous

scholarly essays for publications including the Encyclopedia Judaica.

Continued on Page 3



Rabbi Zevulun Charlop at the RIETS Dinner of Tribute in 2008

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

YU Launches New Undergraduate Degree Programs in Israel Set for Fall 2024

BY RUBEN PRAWER

Yeshiva University, in partnership with Bar-Ilan and Tel Aviv universities, is launching a new Israel-based undergraduate program for the fall 2024 semester geared towards new students.

“Yeshiva University in Israel reinforces our global role as the Flagship Jewish University, enabling our students to not only lead lives of great personal and professional success but also lives of impact and meaning, transforming our world for the better.”

Professor Yaffa Zilbershats, academic chair of YU in Israel

The four-year program, which has been in the works for several years, will provide students with one of two YU degrees which will be accredited in Israel. The four years consist of one year at a YU-affiliated yeshiva or seminary and three years on one of YU’s Israeli campuses, the last of which will consist of courses fully facilitated by YU. The

fourth year also requires a summer semester on campus at YU in New York, which will be included in the \$36,000/year tuition, which also covers housing and all course materials. All courses will be conducted in English.

“This new initiative will provide new and exciting options for those who want to live in Israel, while also strengthen-

ing Yeshiva University’s deep bond with Israel for the long term,” Professor Yaffa Zilbershats, the director of the program, told The Commentator. “It will also present additional avenues for collaboration and expand YU’s footprint across the Israeli landscape.”

Continued on Page 4

Judge Tosses Some Charges in YU Sexual Assault Suit

BY SRULI FRIEDMAN

A federal district court judge threw out several charges in the lawsuit against Yeshiva University by a student allegedly raped by a player on YU men’s basketball team in January 2021.

misconduct among students and on campus. The judge denied the motion by YU to dismiss the Title IX claim that it had acted with “deliberate indifference” by not properly investigating the incident, and also upheld several state and local charges.

According to the complaint registered with the court, the plaintiff, identified as

“The safety of our students is our number one priority. We maintain strong policies and procedures to protect all students from harassment and assault of any kind. As expected, Judge Castel’s decision significantly reduced the scope of plaintiff’s claims, and we anticipate full dismissal of the remaining claims in any further adjudication.”

YU spokesman

The 50-page opinion, which was released by Senior District Judge Kevin Castel at the end of November, granted YU’s request to dismiss the plaintiff’s claim that the university had engaged in retaliation against her due to her Title IX complaint as well as several other claims, including that the university had falsified statistics about sexual

“Jane Doe,” was raped in the off-campus apartment of the player. That February, she filed a complaint with the university. The university employed the firm Seyfarth Shaw LLP, which also represents YU in its ongoing sexual assault case against former YU High School for Boys (YUHSB) students,

Continued on Page 4

FEATURES | 7

Unveiling the Atrocities in Kfar Aza

OPINIONS | 12

A Letter to the Freshman Class

BUSINESS | 16

Nippon-US Steel Merger Announced

ARTS & CULTURE | 18

The Poems That Travel With Us

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Where Do We Go From Here?

By RIVKA BENNUN

To say last semester was difficult would be quite the understatement.

In the beginning, I was numb; I couldn't get any work done. I would wander in and out of class, in a stupor, my mind elsewhere. I'll never forget the trauma of those first few weeks, when we all watched with horror the unspeakable atrocities that took place on Oct. 7, and what followed. I couldn't remember anything important that had occurred pre-Oct 7.

But as the weeks wore on and work piled up, I trained myself to maintain

our reality, something we learned to adjust to. It faded into the background of my mind as sleep overtook me and preparation for a new semester began.

Which brings me back to the present. Most curiously, life has moved on. Two of my best friends got engaged; I accepted a job for the summer; I submitted applications for graduate programs next year. While it feels like time stopped for three months, we're back in school and we're moving forward. How do we proceed? Where do we go from here? How can we press play on our lives when Israel has been on pause since the darkest day in our recent history?

volunteering during my breaks.

There may be deeper, more complex answers. For now, I will accept the dichotomy and learn to live with it. The inner conflict and tension we feel should push us to continue doing good, whether that is in the realm of our studies and personal growth, or in further advocating for and supporting Israel.

I continue to admire my peers for their countless initiatives, on the most local and also the broader communal levels, as we all try to make sense of our role during this time. We must continue to strive to do good, and we must continue to be students.

Perhaps this is the new normal, an absurdity which our young minds cannot and have not yet learned to fathom. But we can harness those feelings of discomfort, and allow them to pull us in different directions. We can give of ourselves in whatever ways we can, and we can also continue to attend weddings, and pursue post-grad plans. I have learned that two realities can exist at once. Now I must learn how to properly hold onto them.

Perhaps the absurdity of war is that we learn to hold two realities at once: Our people are on the front lines, and our lives have resumed.

focus in class, channeling all my energy into whatever the discussions and assignments were, and I would block out personal thoughts about Israel. In a way, this was my attempt to maintain normalcy at a time when nothing was normal anymore. It was a way of keeping myself occupied.

Yet as much as I tried, I couldn't keep those thoughts out of my mind. Late at night, when classes and *shi-urim* were over for the day and I had worked to my heart's desire, I'd finally have a moment of quiet with myself — and that's when the war would flood back into my mind. Instead of getting much-needed sleep, I'd obsessively refresh the news, doom-scrolling into the darkest hours of the night. I'd hesitatingly open my WhatsApp to read about soldiers who had been killed that day, and I'd check in on my friends and family, many of whom live in Israel and were called to the reserves.

As the semester wound down, I realized this was not a sustainable lifestyle. Piles of end-of-term papers loomed over my head, final exams and *bechinot* were right around the corner and I had to buckle down and get serious. I pulled three all-nighters to study for finals, and ultimately welcomed the winter break with open arms, ready to collapse and spend two weeks catching up on sleep.

At this point, thoughts of the war were mostly gone. It became part of

I don't know if there's one answer, or if there's any answer, to this question which I'm sure has been on a lot of our minds. Perhaps the absurdity of war is that we learn to hold two realities at once: Our people are on the front lines, and our lives have resumed. Things feel normal again, but they also don't. We find ourselves asking, "Should I feel normal? Is that okay? Should I spend every waking moment thinking about and advocating for Israel?" Realistically, we know we cannot do this, yet we feel guilty doing anything but.

We don't know how the semester is going to progress. The only answer I feel comfortable giving myself right now is that I can identify the discomfort, familiarize myself with it and learn to live with it as long as this continues. There is value to the discomfort we feel. I acknowledge that the tension between living my comfortable American life and constantly worrying about *acheinu Bnei Yisrael* will pull me in different directions at different points in the coming months.

We can embrace the discomfort. I will continue to tend to my obligations as a student, as right now that is my primary responsibility. And, it goes without saying, I will also continue to advocate for my brothers and sisters in whatever way I can — whether that is through political support, *tefillah* or even traveling to Israel and

THE COMMENTATOR

2023-2024

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The Commentator is the student newspaper of Yeshiva University.

For 89 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



1 New Semester!

Wait till you see how long it will get (Purim is in spring this year).



2 Seforim Sale?

Seforim Sale!



3 New Ice Hockey Team!!

Honestly, who cares.



4 Minyan Men Return

Is this actually an "up?" (honestly, sleeping in classrooms in 245 is a major up!!)



5 Tons of New People!!!

We love new people!!! (especially the amount of new dorm space on Beren)



6 Club fair

Besides seforim sale, this is the other alternative way of ~~meeting your match~~ ... getting involved?



7 New Chairs for Glueck!

Can someone explain what was wrong with the old ones? It's only the elevators that are breaking...

7 UP By Commentator Staff DOWN

Caf Prices

Do you have flex dollars left?

1



Bagel Bar Closes

Unlike the Rite Aid two years ago, I hope people weren't stealing bagels. (It seems it will be rebranded as a falafel place)

2



Exterminator in Brookdale

hint not for loud roommates

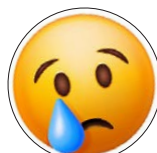
3



Saying goodbye to all the super seniors

Before we know it, we will be gone too

4



Still only 2 elevators in 245

YU's new strategy for student bonding?

5



Swimming Pool on Wilf Remains Closed

Equality.

6



It snowed ... during vacation

7



Condolences to all our friends who never experienced a real snowfall ... and for everyone hoping for a snow day
(Photo is from the old days, when it snowed in NYC; i.e., 2021)

RABBI CHARLOP
Continued from Front Page

"Dedicated to God and to the Jewish people, a scholar of Torah, rabbinic law, and American history, Rabbi Charlop was a role model for rabbinical students, devoting his life to educating future generations of rabbis," Yeshiva University wrote in a blog post Thursday. "His goal was always to create rabbis who could relate to the broadest range of Jews throughout the country and world. With a passion for Judaism and for life, he embodied the ideals of Yeshiva University."

Rabbi Charlop also served as rabbi of Young Israel of Mosholu Parkway in the Bronx, a position he accepted after receiving ordination. He was given a lifetime contract from the shul in 1966 and served as rabbi for 54 years; the shul closed in 2015, upon which he moved to Monsey.

Rabbi Charlop held several other leadership positions in the American Orthodox community, including serving as president of the Council of Young Israel Rabbis, today known as the National Council of Young Israel. Before taking the position of dean, he also taught Talmud at the James Striar School (JSS) and edited *Chavrusa*, a Torah journal published by YU alumni.

Rabbi Charlop was the son of Rabbi Yechiel Michael Charlop, a longtime prominent rabbi in the Bronx and grandson of Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Charlap, *rosh yeshiva* of *Yeshivat Mercaz HaRav* in Jerusalem and disciple of Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook. His family included a long line of Rabbis, who had a tradition that they descended from King David, YU *Rosh Yeshiva* Rabbi Hershel Schachter shared in his *hesped*.

Upon stepping down as dean in 2008, Rabbi Charlop received YU's presidential medallion in recognition of his work for RIETS over his 37 years of service, and was presented with *Sefer Zeved Tov*, a book of essays on Torah topics written by *roshei yeshiva* and students in his honor, and *Sefer Shefa Yamim*, a collection of his own essays published for the occasion.

The *levaya* took place Wednesday morning in the Glueck *Beit Midrash*, where several *roshei yeshiva* eulogized Rabbi Charlop. Another *levaya* took place Thursday afternoon in Jerusalem, followed by the burial on *Har HaZeitim*.

"As the Max and Marion Grill Dean of RIETS from 1971 until 2008, Rabbi Charlop raised generations of Jewish leaders and guided rabbis and developed our yeshiva," President Ari Berman said in his eulogy.

Rabbi Charlop's wife, Judith Charlop, passed away in 1999. He is survived by eight children and multiple grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

MAZAL TOV!
TO ELISHAMA
MARMON AND
PENINA SPEARMAN
ON THEIR MARRIAGE

MAZAL TOV!
TO RAMI LEVIN AND
TZIPPY RUDD ON
THEIR ENGAGEMENT

Yeshiva University Adds Housing Options on Beren as Enrollment Grows and Space Shrinks

BY JONATHAN LEVIN

Yeshiva University opened two new housing units for undergraduate students on Beren Campus this semester as rising enrollment has left less space on campus.

The ten fully-furnished apartments, located in apartment buildings on Third Ave. near Beren Campus, were rented by YU to house many of the over 90 new students who moved in.

Beren Campus's new class of students

is among its largest ever for the Spring semester, with many ranks swelling due to students returning from Shana Bet and transfer students from other campuses. While Yeshiva University declined to inform The Commentator the full breakdown, Director of Admissions Marc Zharnest told The Commentator in mid-November that admissions for the Spring were up over 65% across the undergraduate schools, likely as a result of rising antisemitism across college campuses.

Even before Hamas' attack on Israel,

admission had been rising among the undergraduate schools, and Stern College for Women had its largest incoming freshman class this year, slightly outperforming 2022 numbers, according to data released by YU's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. With rising enrollment, space

is being completed this weekend.

"We're excited to be able to create a comfortable and enriching residence life experience for each of our students across all of our buildings," Feder told The Commentator, "and we look forward to a great Spring 2024 semester!"

"We're excited to be able to create a comfortable and enriching residence life experience for each of our students across all of our buildings and we look forward to a great Spring 2024 semester!"

Director of Residence Life Avi Feder



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Students moving into Brookdale Residence Hall on Beren Campus in 2016

YU IN ISRAEL

Continued from Front Page

The two degrees offered include Psychology and Multidisciplinary Jewish Studies with Bar-Ilan and Business Administration and Management through the Collier School of Management at Tel Aviv University. Both programs will include Judaic studies. Zilbershats hopes to offer more degrees as the program grows in the coming years.

The Psychology and Multidisciplinary Jewish Studies track consists of twice-weekly on-campus classes at BIU together with on-line classes, and the Business Administration and Management degree will consist of on-line courses together with weekly workshops, internships and meetings with leading executives and academics at TAU.

The men will be housed at YU's Gruss Institute and the women's campus will be located at YU's *Chorev L'Banot* Campus, both in Jerusalem. The Torah studies will follow a similar structure to YU in New York, with multiple *shiur* options. The men's Torah learning program also consists of additional options for advanced students, on top of the standard *sefer* in the *beit midrash* and *shiur*. The advanced Gemara *shiur* is being delivered by Rabbi Assaf Bednarsh, a *rosh*



YU's Gruss Campus in Jerusalem

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yeshiva of RIETS who has been teaching at the Gruss Institute since 2004. The women's Torah studies features classes in Tanach, Halacha and Jewish thought, as well as a *beit midrash* option with *chavruta* learning. There will be Shabbat programming and a campus couple to help cultivate a vibrant communal atmosphere, as well as a *beit midrash* open 24/7 at each campus.

YU in Israel will offer *ulpan* for those interested in learning Hebrew, as well as *ti-yulim* (trips) exploring Israel, access to YU's alumni in Israel network and a hands-on experience with Israeli society and individuals. Students will also have access to student guidance through the Shevet Glaubach Center for Career Strategy and Professional Development.

This is not the first Israel-based program YU has launched. In 2017 YU introduced a 5-year dual-degree program with Tel Aviv University for electrical engineering, and in 2022 YU launched an Israel-based program for undergraduate and graduate students in the Sy Syms School of Business. Both programs were ultimately discontinued. The new program, however, is the first undergraduate degree with four full years in Israel that YU has offered.

"We are excited to offer this unique educational opportunity," Zilbershats said. "Yeshiva University in Israel reinforces our global role as the Flagship Jewish University, enabling our students to not only lead lives of great personal and professional success but also lives of impact and meaning, transforming our world for the better."

SEXUAL ASSAULT SUIT

Continued from Front Page

to conduct an investigation.

That May, the university notified the student that the investigation had been concluded and the evidence collected was insufficient to show that the player had violated university anti-sexual harassment policy. She later sued the university and the law firm in June 2022, alleging that her request to appeal the decision was ignored and that investigators deliberately ignored evidence in their investigation, never requesting permission to obtain evidence from a rape kit or to interview medical staff who attended to her.

The basketball player referred to anonymously in the case, who was on the team during at least part of the Maccabees' 50-game win streak, did not play on the team during the 2021-'22 season, according to multiple sources familiar with the 2021-'22 Maccabees.

The judge determined that the facts as presented by the student did not support the claim that YU had engaged in retaliation against her, or that YU had falsified its sexual

assault statistics in years leading up to the rape. Nevertheless, claims that were upheld against the university included breach of contract and discrimination and aiding and abetting under New York City and New York State Human Rights Laws.

"The safety of our students is our number one priority," a YU spokesperson told The Commentator. "We maintain strong policies and procedures to protect all students from harassment and assault of any kind. As expected, Judge Castel's decision significantly reduced the scope of plaintiff's claims, and we anticipate full dismissal of the remaining claims in any further adjudication."

Other defendants in the case, besides YU and Seyfarth Shaw, include Andrew Lauer, YU's general counsel; Chaim Nissel, vice provost of student affairs and former Title IX Coordinator; and Dov Kesselman, one of the attorneys who conducted the investigation. Charges against Emily Miller, another Seyfarth Shaw attorney, were dropped at the end of 2022.

YU's lawyers did not respond to The Commentator's request to comment. The lawyer representing the student declined to comment.



A judge threw out several charges in the lawsuit against YU by a student allegedly raped by a YU men's basketball player in 2021.

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

Operation Torah Shield Winter Mission Held During Winter Break, Among Other YU Programming in Israel

By DAVID CHRIQUI

Yeshiva University students ran another Operation Torah Shield (OTS) mission for students in Israel during the winter break from Jan. 8 to 11.

The program, called OTS Winter Mission, was the continuation of the volunteer work of the previous mission which took place in November. Over 120 Jewish college students from universities around the country

including Columbia, Yale and Queens helped contribute to wartime efforts and aid in Israel.

Bentzy Klarfeld (YC '25), Davi Hazan (YC '26) and DJ Wartelsky (YC '25), along with other students from both campuses, took the lead in planning and coordinating the mission.

"These trips are the latest iteration of the Operation Torah Shield movement," Klarfeld told The Commentator. "The goal of all of our initiatives are the same; when

your family is in a time of need, a time of pain, you do what you can to help. We are excited to continue to be there alongside our brothers in our nation's time of need."

The students engaged in various volunteering activities in Israel, such as assisting

The Sacks-Herenstein Center for Values and Leadership had an 8-day mission of 36 students under the guidance of Vice Provost and Director of the Sacks-Herenstein Center Erica Brown, during which students visited the kibbutzim attacked on Oct. 7, made a

"We came ready with an extended hand, to contribute with all that we have to our people. The resounding lesson we took away is simple yet profound – the only path forward is one of unity: Only together shall we triumph."

Yoni Schneider (SSSB '26)



Students on the OTS Mission with oranges that they picked on an Israeli farm

OPERATION TORAH SHIELD

farmers in picking approximately 3,000 oranges, running carnivals for displaced children, meeting and bringing *chizuk* (strength) to soldiers, preparing food and visiting Hostages Square in Tel Aviv.

During their mission, Klarfeld said, students were keen on making every moment count. While on the bus between segments of the mission, students dedicated their time to tying *tzitit* for soldiers, ultimately completing 30 pairs.

The cost for students to attend the week-long mission was \$50 per day, although students were not required to come every day. Monday was exclusively for men, Wednesday for women, while Tuesday and Thursday were co-ed.

OTS was not the only group of YU students to visit Israel during the winter break.

BBQ for soldiers and helped farmers.

YU's Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought also brought 22 Straus Scholars on a mission led by YU faculty members. Straus Scholars had the opportunity to hear from several prominent Jewish leaders and thinkers and help displaced children, soldiers and their families while in Jerusalem.

YU's men's basketball team, the Maccabees, also traveled to Israel over the break, and played several games against Israeli teams.

"We came ready with an extended hand, to contribute with all that we have to our people." Yoni Schneider (SSSB '26), an attendee of the OTS mission said. "The resounding lesson we took away is simple yet profound – the only path forward is one of unity: Only together shall we triumph."

YU Continues \$20 Million Renovation of Furst Hall, Soon to be The Belz Building; New Lobby and Galleries Nearly Completed

By GAVRIEL FACTOR

Construction of the Belz Collections and Galleries in the newly renovated lobby of Furst Hall, set to be renamed the Belz Building in honor of a \$20 million donation by the Belz family, is nearly complete.

"The renovation creates an appealing environment for academic growth. This is essential for YU and greatly enhances the learning process for students."

Gidon Fox (YC '24)

Future work, including a re-modeling of the entire exterior of the building, is planned to continue over the spring and summer.

The Belz Galleries in the newly renovated lobby of the building features much of the Belz family's collection of Judaica and Jewish art, and is valued at \$6 million. The gallery, set to be on permanent display, is set to open fully to the YU community and the public sometime in the spring, with specific details to be announced at a later date, according to Hanan Eisenman, YU director of communications.

The renovations for Furst Hall on Wilf Campus are financed by a \$20 million donation from the Belz family, and was initially announced January 2022. The renovations will include work on both the interior and exterior of the building.

Changes will include the installation of an entirely new heating and air conditioning system and a "state-of-the-art" glass facade. According to Eisenman, these enhancements contribute to the building's aesthetics while also increasing its energy efficiency. Ongoing fundraising campaigns

are in progress to support additional interior renovation features.

"I think that the renovation creates an appealing environment for academic growth," Gidon Fox (YC '24) told The Commentator. "This is essential for YU and greatly enhances the learning process for students. We truly

appreciate the Belz family's generous contributions towards the execution of this project, and look forward to seeing its completion."

As of publishing, there is no date set for the formal inauguration of the new Belz Building.



A rendition of the projected completed Belz Building

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

NEWS BRIEF

BY CHLOE BAKER AND SRULI FRIEDMAN

YU Introduces New Security Fee in Wake of Increased Security Measures

YU instituted a new \$375 security fee this spring semester due to increased security measures taken by the university since the Oct. 7 massacre.

Although the university has said there have currently been no credible threats against YU, tensions have been rising in recent months with pro-Palestinian protestors blocking major bridges in the city, storming both Grand Central and Penn Station and protesting throughout Murray Hill, in close proximity to the Beren Campus.

Security presence across campuses has

increased with use of the NYPD paid deal program, consisting of off-duty policemen who



YU announced a new security fee for the coming semester.

JONATHAN LEVIN

provide services for the school. Additionally, YU has been working with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), along with conducting daily intelligence briefings.

May 2024 Commencement Delayed a Week

Yeshiva University updated its undergraduate academic calendar late last month, moving commencement for Spring 2024 graduation from May 22 to 29, over a week after the conclusion of final exams.

Many students expressed dissatisfaction with the move, and a petition to move

graduation back to its original date drew 84 signatures. The switch particularly poses a problem for students who rely on university housing, which is scheduled to close May 23. Graduating students will have access to university housing before graduation, Director of Residence Life Avi Feder told The Commentator.

“To me, I don’t care much that it has been moved,” Zev Granik (YC ‘24) told The Commentator. “As long as it is after finals, I’m okay with it. The part that is surprising is that our graduation is going to be in the middle of the week. I feel bad for friends and family who have work or school that day, but at least we got advanced notice about it.”

YU Relaunches Online Certificate Program YU Global

By JOSH MAKOVSKY

Yeshiva University recently re-launched the online YU Global program, which provides online courses on a variety of subjects, with a new series of courses last semester.

YU Global is intended to offer courses in in-demand fields, such as in the technological and business sectors, which can be

developed with the objective of having the program equip students with skills needed to excel in thriving businesses.

The courses, although online and predominantly asynchronous, are facilitated by instructors who are available to engage with students and hold weekly online-live sessions for students to ask questions or touch base.

YU Global is being marketed outside of

advertised a collaboration with YU Global. Nevertheless, Wozniak said that the program is designed for everyone regardless of background, with the aim being to “offer

an inclusive and high-quality product that could be helpful to anyone who is looking to boost their work force skills leading to employment or better employment.”



Yeshiva University recently re-launched the online YU Global program with a new series of courses last semester.

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

“Our guiding principle is to offer an inclusive and high-quality product that could be helpful to anyone who is looking to boost their work force skills leading to employment or better employment.”

YU Vice President for Global Initiatives and Strategy Danielle Wozniak

completed in the span of a few months, as well as career guidance and support. The purpose of the program is to offer certification that can enhance students’ skills and resumes when searching for high-paying jobs, YU Vice President for Global Initiatives and Strategy Danielle Wozniak, who led the development of the new program, told The Commentator.

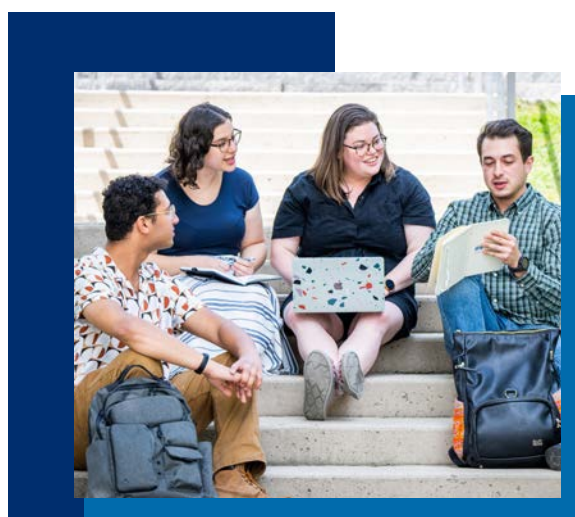
“[W]e will constantly be watching the job market to see where demand is, that is, to see what professions are growing and how we can train people for them,” Wozniak told The Commentator. “We also work with business and industry to see what positions they are trying to fill and create trainings to prepare workers for those markets. And we work with recruiters to see what positions they are looking to fill and refer our learners to them for job placement.”

Courses that YU Global currently offers include cybersecurity, paralegal professional training, a course on real estate investments and even a communications and counseling course for future Chabad *shluchim*. Courses vary in pricing, with the course for *shluchim* costing only \$499 and the year-long cybersecurity course being \$14,000. 16 separate courses are currently being offered.

YU Global was originally introduced in December 2014 under the leadership of then-Vice Provost Scott Goldberg, with the objective being to offer certification in areas such as software engineering, data analytics, law and business. In November 2015, The Commentator reported that YU Global would be restructured to provide revenue-generating online degrees under YU’s new School of General Studies, which eventually became the Katz School of Science and Health. Afterward, it seems that the YU Global brand was phased out.

According to Wozniak, the courses were

the modern orthodox community as well, being advertised in publications such as the Ami and the Flatbush Jewish Journal. Chemdah, an organization which provides remote religious classes for women,



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How CampusGroups is Changing Campus Life

By HANNAH MAMET

For a long time, students have voiced frustration regarding the pile-up of emails from various student organizations and clubs about different events around campus that flood their inboxes everyday. OSL has been working for the last two years on slowly cutting down the amount of emails students receive about club or campus-related events, so that students do not receive an email about every single event that is going on.

“Thanks to a lot of work from our students and office,” OSL Director Jonathan Schwab told *The Commentator*, “We have a lot of events going on on campus and if you are getting an email [about] every one one of those, you are not reading all of them and then you might not be reading ones about events that are interesting to you.”

As of the recent school year, OSL has introduced CampusGroups, a new platform for organizing campus events. Schwab mentioned that preventing this pile-up of emails has been a strong impetus for introducing a new group and event management system, such as CampusGroups.

OSL had been strongly looking into three different types of campus organizing platforms, but CampusGroups stood out in its ability to offer various capabilities. In addition to organizing club activities, CampusGroups is also a formal platform that creates clubs, clearly lists who is in the club and makes it very easy to communicate with all members of that club. It limits notifications to only those who are members of particular clubs. It also does not require a separate account — students can simply use their school login. Activities can also be capped at a certain point and prevent others from registering, a capability Google Forms, for example, does not have.

CampusGroups has been especially helpful for some activities that require payment. Up until now, collecting money had been

a cumbersome and disorganized process. Students pay a small amount of money and the rest is subsidized for their participation. The process would be multi-step, involving students signing-up on a Google Form and then being brought to a payment link. Through CampusGroups, however, students can easily register and pay at once through PayPal.

“It was worth it to have CampusGroups just to make the Israel rally work.”

Dr. Jonathan Schwab, Director of OSL

OSL now has a multi-year plan with CampusGroups. The long term plan is to pilot it for a year for student events and then reach out to other departments in the school so that all relevant student events can be in one place. For example, Schwab mentioned working with the Office of Torah and Spiritual Life and signing up for Shabbos and paying for it there. Essentially, anything related to activities on campus would be found on CampusGroups.

Another future goal is sending out one email at the beginning of the week with a list of all the events that are set to occur during that week with a list to sign up through CampusGroups. This will also help with the overwhelming amount of emails students may receive per day.

When asked about the success thus far of CampusGroups, Schwab pointed to two major events where CampusGroups was very helpful. This year, the entire orientation programming was on CampusGroups and OSL noticed that students who were introduced to it during orientation continued using it throughout the year. Most importantly, Schwab highlighted how significant a role CampusGroups played in organizing the Rally for Israel in DC. Organizing the rally

was a massive project and CampusGroups, according to Schwab, played an invaluable role, such as broadcasting information to students who were attending, students being able to easily pick what bus they want, managing bus switches, start and stop registration at a certain time, cap the busses and have a waitlist. “It was worth it to have CampusGroups just to make the Israel rally

work,” he said. For such a massive task, a system like Google Forms would not have been sufficient.

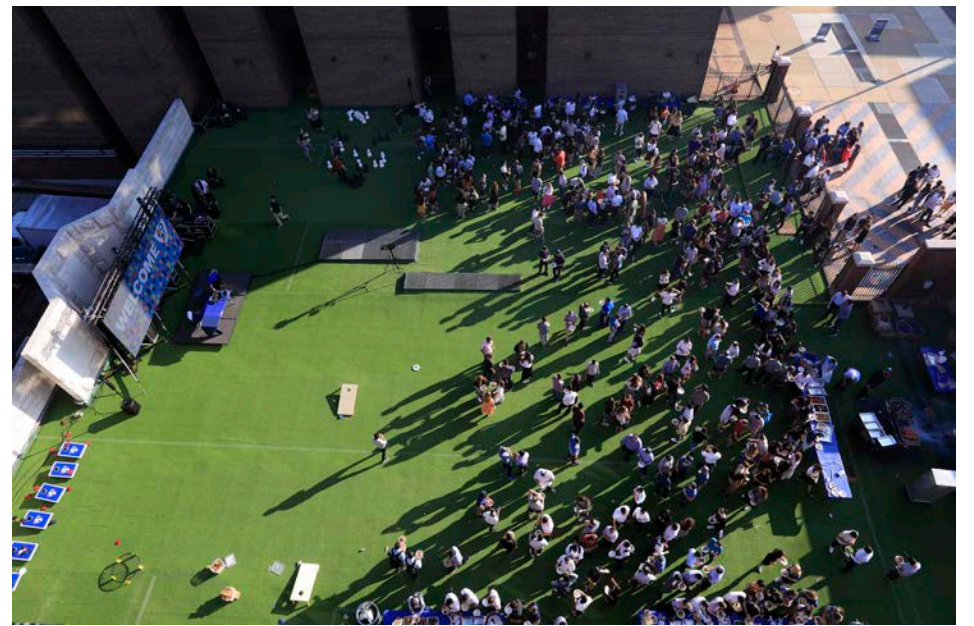
However, despite the advantages to using CampusGroups, it has been received with some speculation from students. Some heads

of clubs mentioned that they find it easy to see who is attending their events, but have not ventured to use the platform any further and some even mentioned that they are not sure how to use it.

Aliza Billet (SCW ‘26), a club leader of the Writer’s Guild, mentioned that during orientation, students were instructed that they should exclusively use CampusGroups, but were not given much further instruction regarding how to use it.

Talia Feldman (SCW ‘26) stated that she does use CampusGroups very often and once she learned how to use it, “events became a lot easier to organize.” However, “The only drawback I’ve seen so far is that it requires people to sign in, then fill out a form in order to RSVP,” she said. “People don’t really like doing that — they like clicking one button in a WhatsApp poll.”

Billet believes that CampusGroups has potential and once students learn how to use it better, “it could be a very helpful resource.”



Students at orientation on Wilf Campus

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

From Peaceful Haven to Nightmare: Unveiling the Atrocities in Kibbutz Kfar Aza

By RACHEL AMAR

The moment our group of 40 Yeshiva University students were instructed to immediately put on bullet proof vests and helmets was precisely when the tone of the visit turned into a serious life-risking reality. The heavy shields of armor, however, would fail to protect us from witnessing the horrors and atrocities which the people of Kibbutz Kfar Aza directly faced. The focus of my story centers on the inhumane barbarity that the small kibbutz experienced on Oct. 7, dialing back to the very day our hearts went to flames. I will try my hardest to provide an overview of the visit, but ultimately no words can do it justice.

With the proper fear and nervousness anticipated for the visit, we walked into Kibbutz Kfar Aza. Our tour guide, Ron, was an IDF spokesperson, prepared to deliver the atrocities of what exactly happened to our brothers and sisters on October 7th. Before starting her tour, Ron stressed the fact that this was not a memorial, up for tourist exploitation. Rather, these are people’s homes, their community, their safe place.

The civilians of Kfar Aza, just like anyone else in Israel pre-October 7th, were living fairly normal lives. Their quiet and loving community strongly believed in and advocated for peace between Israelis and Gazans, as their close proximity to their neighbors served as a testimony to their openness in

political, economic and social affiliations. They were all peace activists — dreamers hoping for a more collaborative and tranquil relationship with the Gazans, yearning for coexistence. The people of Kfar Aza were not looking for a fight, yet terror hunted them.

Our first stop in Kibbutz Kfar Aza was a poster of Ofir Libstein’s political campaign. Libstein was the head of the Sha’ar HaNegev Regional Council from 2018-2023 and was campaigning for his reelection. Libstein had

The people of Kfar Aza were not looking for a fight, yet terror hunted them.

many visions for the south, as he aspired to create the ‘Silicon Valley’ of Israel. A key element in his political career, as reflected in the ideals of the kibbutz, was the promotion of peace across the borders. Libstein called for the integration of Gazans into the Israeli workforce, as he regularly facilitated the transportation of Gazans into Israel for appointments, educational purposes or professional development. When detailing the early minutes of the terrorist infiltration, Ron explained how Libstein had exited his house with the intention of accessing the armory building— he sought to protect his people. To his demise, unfortunately, Libstein was met with a few terrorists, who brutally murdered him in front of his own property.

Ron continued the tour with the Edan household. Roy Edan was a photographer

for Ynet, and upon the earlier wave of news regarding the attack, Edan left his corner house to take pictures and return his four year old daughter back to safety. From his street, you could see clearly and directly into Gaza, which rested only five kilometers away. Sadly, a terrorist had just landed by paraglider from Gaza, hitting the ground right in front of Roy and Abigail Edan. Roy tried to flee but was quickly shot. Abigail jumped out of her father’s limp arms and ran to the

neighboring house. Within her own house, her mother was in the safe room and her older siblings (ages six and ten) were hiding in the closet, remaining there petrified for 14 straight hours. Both parents of the young Edan children were killed that day. Abigail, however, was taken captive, becoming the youngest female hostage in Gaza. After 50 days of barbaric captivity (including her birthday), Abigail Edan was released. The four year old girl returned home an orphan. She now lives with her grandparents and two siblings, forever traumatized from the inconceivable horrors.

The first loud boom from Gaza shattered our speechless walk. Startled and unnerved, all 44 of us jumped at the alarmingly present sound. No one had expected the bombings to have such a rattling impact, despite our

dangerously close proximity to Gaza. It rang loudly in my ears. I could feel the heaviness in my chest as it reverberated along my body. I specifically remember becoming keenly aware of my firm stance on the earth beneath me. That first bombing was jarring, although as the day carried on, our adaptation and desensitization to the blasts deepened, to the point that it became mere background noise.

The final stop in Kfar Aza was a smaller community within the kibbutz known as the “young generation,” which were designated houses specifically for the young professionals and newly weds. Horrified, we all walked through the barren and lifeless homes that were ransacked, streaked with blood, and burned. It smelled of ash. Each house in its entirety was riddled with bullet holes, as the bullets even perforated the ceilings like stars in the sky.

Out of the “young generation,” only five residents walked out that day alive. The rest— their family, friends, and spouses— were either murdered or taken hostage. These gut-wrenching statistics are not mere numbers, however. These are people. Humans. Loved ones. Souls.

We were permitted to walk into the last house in the community. It belonged to Sivan Elkabets and Naor Hasidim, a young couple not much older than I. The living room was relatively cleared in comparison to the havoc it contained just weeks before. There were

Continued on Page 9

Paradise Scarred by Flame

By JONATHAN LEVIN

Lush grass. Manicured yards. Flowering bushes. Palm trees. Sunny skies. Chirping birds.

This is the scene that greets you when walking into Kfar Aza, one of the kibbutzim attacked by Hamas on Oct. 7. Without the loud booms of artillery fire that cause you to jump until, as a soldier, it doesn't faze you, you would be forgiven for thinking that it was paradise. In truth, it once was.

Kfar Aza, like many of the other locations our group of nearly 40 YU students visited

“Without the loud booms of artillery fire that cause you to jump until, as a soldier, it doesn't faze you, you would be forgiven for thinking that it was paradise.”

on a Sacks Center trip to Israel during break, was once paradise. That is, until Hamas terrorists brought bloodshed on the morning of the 7th of October, turning the garden of Eden into the valley of slaughter.

The beautiful lawns where Roe Idan, a photographer for Ynet, and his 3-year-old daughter Avigayil flew kites emblazoned with messages of peace became a grave. The once beautiful home of the Itamari family now was just burnt beams and flame-scarred walls. The idyllic white homes of a section where college-age residents of the kibbutz would receive homes to start their life were left in ruins, pockmarked with bullets and shrapnel, the fridges still containing the food intended to serve as the holiday meals of its residents.

63 people were murdered in Kfar Aza. 17 — including Avigayil — were kidnapped from paradise to dingy, humid and dark tunnels beyond the fence near Roe's home. The smell of the burnt houses and bodies are long since gone. The decapitated babies are long buried. What remains is the destruction and the posters with pictures of the slain at the entrance of their homes.

What was seen at Kfar Aza was repeated everywhere we went. At the site of Nova Music festival, the only things to remind you of the slaughter are freshly dug graves kept as a monument, the rat-tat-tat of not-so-distant machine gun fire, photos of all those slain and posters on trees asking to keep an eye out for human remains.

For us students on the trip, these were jarring images — a far cry from what we have all seen on TV. One could almost experience the lives of those who lived and died there. One could experience a taste of how glorious their lives must have once been. One could feel the sorrow in the air, even if the smoke and smell of death have long since dissipated.

This is what we saw on our mission to Israel. Yet, though we saw the horrors of Oct 7., we also had the chance to partake in the remarkable unity and strength of the nation of Israel, a strength that has long enabled our people to persevere over tragedy after tragedy for millennia.

In Ofakim, we danced for hours, across the town, as the community celebrated the inauguration of a *Sefer Torah* in memory of two soldiers slain defending the community on that fateful day. Despite the sorrow, we and the community, as one, danced joyously, making up for the Simchat Torah that was stolen by death. Personally, as I danced with

everyone on what was effectively my first visit to Israel (I had only spent two and a half days in Israel nearly seven years ago), I couldn't help but recall the levels of joy King

is the best way to spite our haters, whether they live in Gaza or New York, we must not forget. We cannot forget. As 2024 wears on, we must ensure that despite our own

traumas and our dissociative desires, we still make space to help our people in what we can, in the ways each of us are uniquely able and qualified to do so.



A house in Kfar Aza, post Oct. 7

JONATHAN LEVIN / THE COMMENTATOR

David expressed as the *Aron* was brought into Jerusalem just three months after the first attempt ended in tragedy.

Just as Ofakim was filled with the twinning of sorrow and joy, our emotions throughout the entire trip oscillated between joy and sorrow. We could be picking beets and grilling for soldiers one day, and paying a *shiva* call the next. While we could be playing with kids one day, we knew that they would return home — if they even could return home — to a table missing a plate due to a slain relative or a father fighting in Gaza.

As a people, we are used to sadness like this, and many of our joyous occasions are marked by a ritual in the middle as a *zecher le'churban*, a memorial to destruction. Yet the wounds of Oct. 7 are too recent to even be covered with a scab, let alone heal. As a people, we can't even bandage our wounds, as we wait in agony for our brothers and sisters to be returned from the hands of evil.

We have all felt the pain of *shever bat ami*, our catastrophe, in the past few months. As a group of students, we got to see it raw, with our own eyes, beyond the limiting effects of screens and ink. Our own feet touched the ground once littered with glass, metal and blood, not the carpeting of the Wilf or Beren libraries. Our feet touched the blood-drenched soil of the land of our forefathers, not the concrete of Manhattan.

Yet regardless of where we are or how close we saw the horrors visited upon our people, we all have felt the pain of our people. As we start a new semester and the days of this war go past three digits, we all have a psychological impulse to try to move on, to bury the pain and try to live. Yet while living

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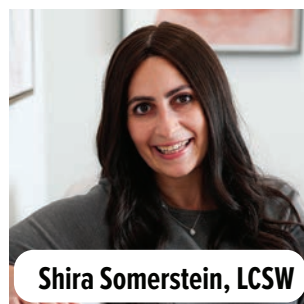
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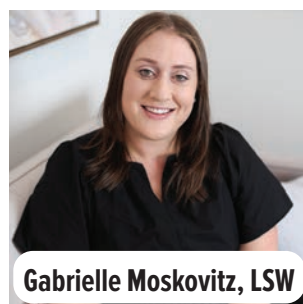
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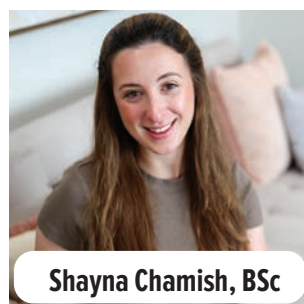
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YU, the 1993 Israel Day Parade and LGBT Inclusivity

By YITZHAK GRAFF

In 1968, Rabbi Norman Lamm published an article in the *Jewish Life* magazine titled “The New Dispensation on Homosexuality.” Lamm, at the time the rabbi of the West Side Jewish Center and a professor of philosophy at Yeshiva College, was responding to developments in progressive streams of Christianity that were beginning to accept “homosexuality” into their churches. The term “homosexuality,” which is vague in comparison to the array of words available today that describe specific elements of sexual and gender identity, referred to a general stereotype of identity and social behavior that was considered to be directly associated with specific sexual activities. I will use this outdated term to capture the vague and almost paranoid nature of its use in writing that attempts to argue against its acceptance.

Though Rabbi Lamm built an extensive case for religious authorities to reject “homosexuality,” he conceded one point to the activists of his day who were working to decriminalize sodomy. Lamm posited that it was not the place of the secular government to control the private sexual behavior of its citizens.

Though sodomy was only fully

decriminalized in the United States in 2003 after the Supreme Court ruling in *Lawrence v. Texas*, in the 1990s proponents of traditional sexual morality were becoming uncomfortable with the increasing social acceptance of LGBT identifying people in general society. Much of the leadership of the Modern Orthodox community felt that it was time to scrap Rabbi Lamm’s perspective.

Working behind the scenes, the major Modern Orthodox community organizations threatened to boycott the parade if Beit Simchat Torah was allowed to march.

Instead, they proposed reactionary political advocacy to reverse the social acceptance of “homosexuality” and to actively oppose legislation that would protect LGBT rights.

This reactionary position was clearly articulated in an article authored by Rabbis Marc Angel, Hillel Goldberg and Pinchas Stolper in the December 1992 issue of *Jewish Action*. They presented a strategy of proactive advocacy to drive “homosexual ideology” out of Orthodox Jewish life. The first target of this strategy presented itself a mere three months later.

In the 1990s and decades prior, the annual Salute to Israel Parade was organized by the American Zionist Youth Foundation (AZYF). The parade was fundamentally a

youth parade, which meant only schools and youth groups could participate in the marching. The minimum size for a youth group to be eligible to participate was 35 members. This included social groups, Hebrew schools and day schools.

In 1993, the Hebrew School of Congregation Beit Simchat Torah (CBST) had grown to 35 students for the first time in

its history. Now that it was eligible to march, it applied to participate in the Salute to Israel Parade that year. Beit Simchat Torah was not a typical synagogue, founded by gay and lesbian Jews to serve as a religious Jewish space where they would be fully accepted.

Beit Simchat Torah openly embraced the “homosexuality” that Rabbi Lamm had instructed the Jewish community to keep out of its spaces in 1968. Combined with the strategy of the *Jewish Action* article, the leadership of the Modern Orthodox Jewish community was ready to make a stand. Working behind the scenes, the major Modern Orthodox community organizations threatened to boycott the parade if Beit Simchat Torah was allowed to march.

To avoid splintering the Jewish community over this issue, the parade organizers sought to broker a compromise between the two factions. The Orthodox community had differing opinions of what they wanted out of the threatened boycott. The most moderate view, expressed by Rabbi Lamm, only wanted Beit Simchat Torah to refrain from expressing in any way that they supported gay rights. A more radical position, supported by many of the RIETS *roshei yeshiva*, demanded the Orthodox community boycott the rally if Beit Simchat Torah was allowed to march at all.

In late April, the parade organizers reached a compromise, in which Beit Simchat Torah would march with the Association of Reform Zionists of America and refrain from publicizing their sexuality. Yeshiva University supported the compromise and authorized its schools to march in the parade, but many of the RIETS *roshei yeshiva* did not, with Rav Aharon Soloveichik declaring it a cardinal sin (*yehareg v'al ya'avur*) to march in the parade.

The compromise did not satisfy the hard-line rabbis who represented the majority of Modern Orthodox schools. The Yeshiva Principals Council voted to boycott the parade shortly after the compromise was announced. The now official boycott threatened to collapse the whole parade since the core population of day school students and their families were not going to attend. With barely a week to spare before the parade, the organizers expelled Beit Simchat Torah from attending, succumbing to the demands of the Orthodox community. Despite the uncertainty of the attendance of the Orthodox day schools, the parade still garnered an attendance of over 70,000 people.

In the long run, the boycott did not prevent Beit Simchat Torah from marching in the parade. In the following year Beit Simchat Torah’s Hebrew school marched under a joint banner of Reform movement youth groups. No one protested, because the Jewish community shifted its focus to addressing the massacre perpetrated by Baruch Goldstein (YC ‘77, AECOM ‘81) in February of that year. The parade organizers sought to prevent Kahanist groups from openly participating in the parade, allowing space for the comparably less controversial Beit Simchat Torah to march. Though the 1993 Israel Day Parade boycott failed to maintain its initial successes in subsequent years, it symbolically bolstered the Modern Orthodox community’s institutional homophobia. The community was now able to legitimize itself as a force that had the power to reverse social movements and restore traditional Jewish sexual morality.



The Pride parade in Tel Aviv, 2008

NIV SINGER / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

KFAR AZA

Continued from Page 7

displays hung around the room picturing the absolute wreck that demolished the once-peaceful living space: photographs of the blood-soaked floor, their couch ripped into shreds and the shattered glass that covered the furniture remains. Elkabets and Hasidim’s home was completely ravaged into mournful ruins.

As I peered into people’s houses, I couldn’t help but notice the normalcy in their lives, buried beneath the thick layer of rubble. One house, in particular, had a ruined poster hanging above a desk in the living room. It was one of those overlooked yet simplistically happy signs that listed various optimistic quotes, such as “life is short,” and “just smile.” I found it painstaking to realize how abruptly that was actualized.

Millions of questions race through my mind when reflecting on this powerful visit.

Am I making the best use of my time? Have I represented enough of what it means to be a Zionist Jew? Have I sacrificed myself in any means for the State of Israel?

One of the main messages on our trip was to bear witness. We were sent on a mission not simply to observe, but to testify. To record and recount the nightmares of Oct. 7. But this was not a nightmare; there was no ‘waking up’ after a horrifying thought or hoping that everything would be okay. The terror and undescrivable pain that this Kibbutz faced was no mere tragedy; it was an agonizing descent into unimaginable suffering, a stark reminder of the necessity of carrying the memory with us.

We are not dreaming. And we are not okay.



The walls of a home in Kfar Aza covered in bullet holes

ZEHAVA SHATZKES

Getting to Know the Stern Librarians Part II

BY HADASSAH REICH

Previously The Commentator sat down with three Hedi Steinberg Librarians. The following is a continuation of our feature project on the librarians of Stern.

Editor's Note: This article was edited for clarity and length with the approval of Emily Apterbach, Hallie Cantor and Hindishe Lee.

Emily Apterbach — Research and Instruction Librarian

Q: What is your role in the library?

A: I feel like I have a dynamic role, meaning I never do just one thing. I can help students with research questions, access materials that they may have difficulty getting to immediately, finding sources, even answering simple directional questions like “where is study room 2?” We encounter students all throughout the semester, so there are times when they are very stressed and times when they are more calm, so I’m happy to help in any way. I help with printing a lot, which is a running joke here [amongst the librarians].

Q: Why did you want to be a librarian? Did you always know that this is what you wanted to do?

A: I think everybody was very shocked when I said I wanted to be a librarian. I think one friend said “all you’ll do is scan books. You just check out books to people. That seems so boring.” I think it’s one of the most interesting and dynamic jobs you can have, because I don’t just do one thing all day. We can work on cataloging, updating the collection, ensuring materials are in the right place, book recommendations, and helping patrons utilize library resources. We interact with faculty, students and staff. It’s really enjoyable and fulfilling.

Q: What draws you to the library?

A: I think libraries in general are about communities, and I love helping this community. When I first decided to be a librarian, I didn’t know which type of library I’d want to work in, whether I’d want to work in a public library, a college library, an elementary school library. There are different types of libraries and librarians. I happened to see this ad online and I was really attracted to the prospect of working in a college library that has a strong Jewish community, and I happened to apply because I thought it would be interesting.

Q: What was your relationship with reading growing up?

A: Ironically, I really hated reading. In Barnes and Noble, they have a gift that comes with a book, like little toys or necklaces. That was the way I started reading. I really wanted the necklace that came with the book. I thought of it as I’ll buy this necklace and the book just happens to come with it. And then I thought if I’m enjoying the necklace, maybe I can try the book. And then, I read

“I think libraries in general are about communities, and I love helping this community.”

Emily Apterbach, Research and Instruction Librarian, Hedi Steinberg Library of Yeshiva University

the book, and I thought wow this is really great. And then, I continued reading, and I stopped buying books that came with little gifts like those necklaces. And then, I just started buying books and taking books out from the library for the sake of reading, so that is how I stepped into the world of recreational reading.

Q: Do you have any favorite genres, books or authors?

A: Right now, I really enjoy reading autobiographies and stepping into other people’s lives, because there are so many things that I wouldn’t know about or experience that other authors do. It really opens my eyes up to what other people go through and a world that I would never think of entering.

Q: Do you have any tips or advice for students?

A: We’re very friendly. We really enjoy meeting students in any way and helping, even if it’s seemingly unimportant to them. We are always excited to see students use the library. If the library is empty it’s less exciting than when there are students here. They bring life to the library. We really enjoy seeing students use the library, so if you ever walk by, feel free to say hi. We love getting to know the students and what they want to research. I know it’s a stressful time, and we are here to help in any way we can.

Chaya Sarah (Hallie) Cantor — Acquisitions Associate

Q: What is your role in the library?

A: I’m officially the acquisitions’s associate, which means I buy the books for

the library, keep stock of what we have in the catalog and what we need. I’ve become familiar with a number of books we have in the library, having purchased them. I also help out at the circulation desk and the reserve desk. I wear several hats. I’m a library assistant, not an actual librarian — no MLS degree. I refer students with research questions to the reference librarians. My main job is buying the books for the library and getting them ready to be cataloged. I have my one main job and from there spring out

and help others.

Q: Is this something that you always knew you wanted to do?

A: Well, I love books... I love the written word and I love languages. I was a language major in college. I also work as an editor. Some of my books are in the library. I worked as a ghost writer. I used to work for the Jewish Reader, a children’s magazine, and my articles and stories have actually now been digitized. They are in the Yeshiva University repository. I was working for a publisher, and I started this job initially part time to supplement myself in writing and eventually a position opened for acquisitions and I took the job.

Q: What was your relationship with books and reading growing up? What is it like now?

A: My parents were readers. I grew up with books. We loved to read, our family. In college, I spent a lot of time in the library. My parents never had to push me to read, just watching them certainly encouraged me to read... I love books. It’s a cherished institution, a valuable one. I feel blessed that I work in both aspects. I’ve done content creation and production in my editing and publishing work, and helping in the dissemination of knowledge and information.

Q: What do you wish students knew about the library?

A: Just how wonderful it is. I really think this library is unique, that we have both Judaica and secular together. It’s like a synergy. Here, it’s so nice that you have access to both quite easily. We have a wonderful staff. All of us love to read, and we love to

help. This library has a lot to offer.

Q: What is your favorite part about working at Stern? What is your favorite part about working in the library?

A: My favorite part about working at Stern is the environment. The girls are really sweet...It’s a very stimulating environment here. What I like about working in the library, like I said, I like the books, but I feel lucky to work with such a nice crew. It’s pleasant. It’s not like I dread coming to work or anything. I’m kind of in awe of everybody’s achievements. It makes me want to continue my own learning.

Hindishe Lee — Reference and Instruction Librarian

Q: What is your role in the Hedi Steinberg Library?

A: Emily, Rina and I, we basically all share the same role. We’re all reference librarians. We can research any subject. My background is science and math.

Q: Is this something that you always knew you wanted to do?

A: It’s very funny...My mom aleha ha’shalom always took me to the public library, and I used to play librarian, but this is not what I wanted to do. I wanted to be a scientist. When I was a little girl, I wanted to be a paleontologist and then I wanted to be a physicist, but things didn’t work out. When I went to Stern, I majored in math and I was a work study in the library. I was pretty good at it. My mom, aleha ha’shalom, said to me you’re very good at library work, so maybe you should try to get a library degree because then you will be able to advance. So, that is how I got into it.

Q: What is your day to day like in the library?

A: Lately I’ve been “hiding” in the office and doing most of my reference questions on the computer. But, this place is full of excitement, so sometimes I’ll be at the reserve desk. Sometimes I’ll be upstairs at the circulation desk. I should mention that besides reference work, I also repair books and look for missing books.

Q: What was your relationship with books and reading growing up?

A: To go back to my mom aleha ha’shalom, she always took me to the public library and I used to take out books from the school library. We used to have discussions. She treated me like an adult. If I didn’t know a word she said “look it up”. It inculcated in me that you look up things. Also, when I went to Hebrew Day School in the Catskills, where I grew up, they had a one room library; I used to fix it up, shelve books...

Q: What do you wish students knew about the library?

A: I wish they wouldn’t be shy. Sometimes students see us behind the desk and think we’re so busy. They don’t want to disturb us, as if we’re designing the next mission to the moon, but that’s why we’re here! Come to us. And we have a policy here: There are no stupid questions.



Hedi Steinberg Library Staff (from left right): Emily Apterbach, Chaya Sarah (Hallie) Cantor, and Hindishe Lee

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY



CLASS OF 2024

UNDERGRADUATE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY CHECKLIST

Graduating This Year? Mazel Tov!

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

STEP 1

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

Visit yu.edu/academic-advising to schedule.

STEP 2

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

Visit yu.edu/registrar/graduation for additional information.

STEP 3

Apply for Graduation by your degree's deadline:

February 15th
(May Degrees)

March 1st
(September Degrees)

The Application for Graduation—Undergraduate Degree can be found here: yu.edu/registrar/forms

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

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

STEP 4

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

STEP 5

Cap and Gown Distribution Events will be held on each campus a few weeks before the ceremony.

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

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

No attire will be distributed at Commencement.

STEP 6

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

If you would like to request additional tickets, a form will be live on yu.edu/commencement in the coming weeks.

STEP 7

Report your post-graduation plans to the Shevet Glaubach Center for Career Strategy and Professional Development (SGC). Whether you have found employment, are continuing your education, are still seeking opportunities, entering military service, or engaging in volunteering.

Complete the First Destination Survey: bit.ly/FDS24

QUESTIONS?

Visit yu.edu/commencement for updates closer to the ceremony, or email commencement@yu.edu

YU.EDU/COMMENCEMENT

A Letter to the Freshman Class

BY SHAYEL CHOCRON

Embracing my identity as a Latina within the Yeshiva University (YU) community has been a deeply enriching and occasionally challenging journey. Joining a cohort of Latinas coming from Panama and engaging with Latinas from diverse corners of the world has provided me with a profound sense of connection and the comforting ambiance of home. The shared purpose that drew us to YU has formed and directed our lives and tied us together. As we have come to know one another, I have felt a genuine sense of belonging, whether through celebrating Shabbat together, participating in various activities, exploring New York City or simply enjoying coffee and attending classes side by side. These shared experiences have consistently reinforced my sense of inclusion within this academic community.

Nevertheless, being a Latina at YU does present certain challenges, primarily revolving around language. Despite having been educated in an American school in Panama City, comprehending course materials and engaging in classroom discussions can occasionally prove more demanding for those of us who did not grow up speaking English as a first language. Communicating effectively and ensuring that one's thoughts and ideas are fully understood can be a complex endeavor, including pronunciation. However, the rewards of studying within a culturally diverse Jewish environment while forging connections with peers from different countries makes the endeavor entirely worthwhile. The journey, though challenging, ultimately offers a sense of growth and self-discovery.

Meeting new people, especially those who do not share a common language, can be daunting. The pursuit of meaningful connections and a deeper understanding of coursework can be intricate when English is not one's native tongue. Expressing oneself among American and international friends

formidable challenge, particularly in a bustling active city like New York. The desire to forge new connections and immerse oneself in the vibrant city while diligently pursuing one's lifelong academic aspirations can create a delicate balancing act. My first semester in this dynamic city presented me

living here provides as well.

Yeshiva University offers an array of exceptional resources to assist students in various aspects of their academic and personal well-being. For those seeking support with their mental health, the Counseling Center provides professional services. The Writing Center offers valuable support to students and academic advising services are available to ensure effective class scheduling and course organization for each major. Each of these departments is overseen by a dedicated faculty member who facilitates meetings and aids students in optimizing their semester schedules. It is crucial to recognize that YU fosters a supportive environment in which both institutional resources and the support of peers, friends and classmates are readily accessible to meet your needs.

My journey as a Latina at YU has been a multifaceted experience, marked by a profound sense of belonging and the occasional challenges that come with it. Sharing this path with fellow Latinas from Panama and encountering an array of diverse Latinas from around the world has enriched my life with connections and a profound feeling of home. YU has become more than just an institution; it is a community where shared experiences, like celebrating Shabbat, partaking in activities and exploring New York City, have cemented our bonds.

The challenges I have faced at YU have only fortified the belief that, in embracing change and challenges we can uncover our most resilient, capable and authentic selves. The warmth of connection, the pursuit of academic excellence and the vibrant energy of New York have come together to create a remarkable chapter in my life's journey, one that I will continue to embrace and celebrate.

The transition to a new environment can indeed be challenging, but it also offers a unique opportunity for independence and personal growth.

who may not speak Spanish can be challenging, as we endeavor to convey our true selves in a foreign tongue. The transition from the familiar comforts of home to the rigors of dorm life, laundry and cafeteria dining can be demanding. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that we are all navigating this uncharted territory together.

Over time, one acquires a greater command of the English language, becomes more adept at self-expression and gains a better understanding of others' perspectives. People readily recognize that we are newcomers and are more inclined to extend compassion rather than judgment. In my opinion, allowing oneself the necessary time to adapt and evolve linguistically is crucial. The transition to a new environment can indeed be challenging, but it also offers a unique opportunity for independence and personal growth. By recognizing that life may not always be characterized by comfort or the company of many, we can embrace the chance to spend time with ourselves, learn new skills and ultimately become the best versions of ourselves.

Effective time management can be a

with a personal struggle in mastering time management.

I soon recognized the necessity of judiciously allocating time to my major. It felt unrealistic to expect the best of both worlds. Consequently, I adopted a proactive approach to complete my assignments promptly, irrespective of my location — be it in the cafeteria, the library, the privacy of my own room or a cozy café. By immersing myself entirely in the task at hand and temporarily setting aside distractions like my phone, I ensured that my academic responsibilities were fulfilled promptly.

This approach, which entailed a commitment to completing assignments on schedule rather than procrastinating until the last minute, significantly contributed to a harmonious balance between my academic commitments and social engagements. Managing my academic responsibilities allowed me to enjoy the vibrant city and make meaningful connections with fellow students, enhancing my overall experience. We are students and we must prioritize our studies, but we are also in New York and should learn to take advantage of the unique opportunities that



Despite our diverse countries of origin and ways of thinking, we all stand unified.

Joy in the Land: My Experience on the Ground

BY MENDY KANOFSKY

Please open your heart and allow it to be filled with joy, courage and real hope on behalf of all of *Am Yisrael*, including the soldiers we visited. While on Operation Torah Shield, YU's student delegation to Israel, I witnessed a lot of reasons to feel hopeful.

On the first day of our trip, we went together to Otef Aza (the Gaza envelope). Driving through the Otef, we saw shadows of burnt cars on the main road in southern Israel, burnt trees and the lot of cars that were destroyed at the Nova festival. On one base, we saw two bikes that were used by Hamas. But please don't allow that to scare you. Our main objective in traveling through the Otef was to help a farmer pick his eggplants, and this farmer signifies the resilience and hope that encapsulates the true lesson to be learned from Operation Torah Shield.

Originally, the farmer believed that his produce would go to waste since most of his workers returned to Thailand at the beginning of the war. This caused him to turn off the water drip irrigation system to all of his produce, and in the ensuing weeks

the produce began growing uncontrollably, making the eggplants unsuitable for proper picking. When he heard that volunteers were coming from within Israel and abroad, he requested that his reserve unit help string

Be inspired, be hopeful and know that the best times are yet to come.

his eggplant plants to the ceiling to allow them to grow properly. He then turned the water supply back on for his eggplant crop to continue to grow. Our job was to finish the process. Together, we picked tons and tons of eggplants that were shipped all over Israel. That is the story of the eggplant farmer and the Jewish strength and courage he embodies.

Later that night, we saw dozens of Israeli flags tied to the side of the highway back to Jerusalem. Each flag represented a spot where one person was killed by Hamas. The feelings that went through my head when I saw those flags are not fully describable. You have on one hand the bloodshed of the October 7th massacre and on the other the fact that Israeli flags fly high in those very spots, representing the almost indescribable

eternity of the Jewish people and our ability to survive.

The second day of our trip was partially spent at the Tel HaShomer Army base hospital. We saw brave soldiers recovering

from wounds sustained during their service undergoing a remarkable recovery. These soldiers were our own age, and had sustained life-altering injuries, many of them missing arms and legs, and one would expect that they had lost their pride and joy along with their limbs. And yet they did not. They found the strength and optimism to continue living. We saw soldiers out on balconies, hanging out with their families, drinking arak and eating sunflower seeds. Most of them were happy to see us despite the circumstances. All of us were uplifted by their smiling faces and positive attitudes.

So, my dear friends, brothers and sisters around the world, please open up your hearts. Be inspired, be hopeful and know that the best times are yet to come. Please continue to do your hard work, please continue

to advocate; please continue to donate and please continue to do good, because love always overcomes hate.



A symbol of Jewish courage and strength

YONI BENSOUSSAN

Reflections on a Day With Operation Torah Shield's Winter Mission

BY SAM WEINBERG

There was no one in the pool when we first came outside. In Jerusalem, from where we had left, it was chilly and wet; in Ein Bokek, where we had arrived, it was warmer, yet a calm, content gray illustrated the sky. Some of the hotel's residents lounged around in the lobby, but a larger crowd met us in the patio and turf area facing the beach. A couple of the older individuals were sitting on the reclining chairs, and yet, the pool remained empty.

I didn't quite catch the name of the little girl who kept on climbing on me. I knew that with her at the hotel was a slightly younger sister (confusingly wearing the same sweater as she), a mother and a newborn sibling. The dog, Messi, was there, too. Her family, like all the others there, had been displaced since the start of the war; the first person I spoke to, an older woman speaking rapidly, had lamented how hard the nights are when her family tried and often failed to carve space in the hotel room that's replaced their home for the third straight month. When I suggested to the girl, after some time running around with her on my shoulders, that we sit down and play with the dog, she gave an emphatic "Lo!" and, even though my Hebrew is wildly imperfect, I felt confident I understood what that meant.

When I first met the girl, she was playing a Hebrew game of Memory, where each word matched with a letter in the alphabet. She had an air of distance, an iron curtain for a face; the handful of our students who had amicably stayed by her side to play, try as gracefully and wonderfully as they did, couldn't quite get her to break out of an apparently persistent solemn temperament.

When I got back to Jerusalem I was thinking about why I had found more success with her; why I, out of the students who had spoken to this girl, had gotten her excited and bubbly. I'm not presumptuous enough to think that I'm particularly great with younger kids, or that I had consciously acted in such a way that made me a more appealing figure to play with, a target to jump on.

This past Shabbos, after I already got back to New Jersey, in that awkward hour between shul ending and lunch starting, I heard my parents welcome in a friend for a few minutes, all speaking about said friend's

recent trip to Israel. From what I overheard (admittedly very little), he had woken up at dawn for two weeks straight, hopped on a bus and worked on a farm, sifting through lettuce for hours on end.

As an American, it was the act of feeling accomplished, not necessarily by my raw involvement in the mission, but the active attempt, and perhaps even struggle, at generating empathy the mission naturally inspires.

In my more pessimistic moments, I'll think about myself as a cog in the white-American volunteering savior complex — that idea that, while attempting to craft an image of charity and righteousness, the white individual, whether knowingly or unknowingly, perverts what may be an objective good deed into an opportunity for self-promotion, both externally and internally. I've seen Instagram posts of people I know working in far-off countries with lower socioeconomic standing, posting pictures with children born into tragic circumstances, attempting both to convince those who follow them (and, perhaps, the poster his/herself) of their goodness, and to bring, in a genuine way, some sort of beneficial presence or activity from someone from an ostensibly more stable background.

It would be easier (and certainly morally less thorny) for me to approach this article from the perspective of that Instagram poster, using an image of me and that little girl and writing about how I'm happy and grateful to have that opportunity to bring some semblance of joy to her life. (Selfishly, I, clearly, still decided on using the photo: I'll say it's ironic.) I found myself using that justification in advance of even going on the mission: when someone I know approached me at Nitzanim that morning and told me what they thought "real *chesed*" was, I found myself, defensively, using my aforementioned line of reasoning.

And yet, when we left the hotel, still no one went in the pool. It was becoming darker and cooler and you could feel the pre-rain condensation in the air. Messi had gone inside; no one wanted to play with him near that patio area. By the bus, a question I hadn't yet thought of roared in my mind:

when was the last time that little girl climbed on someone's shoulders? When will it happen again?

In truth, I don't believe myself to have any novel or insightful thoughts about that

these kinds of missions. More than anything, it's about the act of having met that little girl at all more than what I left with her. As an American, it was the act of feeling accomplished, not necessarily by my raw involvement in the mission, but the active attempt, and perhaps even struggle, at generating empathy the mission naturally inspires. She will, I imagine, not remember me by the next day; yet, even without a name, I remember how she'd try tackling me before climbing on my shoulders, how emphatic her "Lo!" sounded, how she wouldn't come down because she may not have known when she'd go back up. It's hard to forget all of these things, even though, by the time we left, the pool was still empty.

day in Ein Bokek. I don't think there's some hidden undercurrent of a wholly subtle and profound concept that we haven't, as a collective, touched upon in our reflections on



A young girl climbs on me during our day at Ein Bokek

SAM WEINBERG

Death by White Coat

By DANIEL GANOPOLSKY

In the shadows of America's healthcare system, a silent killer claims lives with alarming efficiency. In 2022, 82,998 Americans fell victim to opioid overdoses, thrusting our nation into an epidemic that has authorities scrambling for solutions. The black market obscures these drugs, complicating efforts to trace and halt their devastating impact. What is particularly disquieting is the revelation that opioids, leading to addictions and death, aren't just products of illicit trade. They also emerge from the trusted hands of licensed nurse practitioners (NPs), some of whom turn prescriptions meant to heal into unwitting instruments of tragedy. A recent case in Alaska saw a former NP sentenced to 30 years for illegally prescribing opioids, contributing to five deaths. This harrowing reality prompts us to question not just how it happened, but why our healthcare safeguards failed, allowing tragedy to unfold unchecked.

This is just one example of a morally corrupt and unsupervised NP. Though there are more stories like this, it would not be correct to assume that all or even most NPs are morally corrupt. But unlike doctors, nurses, or even physician assistants, NPs have a unique position in America's healthcare system. In 32 of the states and in the District of Columbia, NPs have what is called Full Practice Authority, meaning that they can work as practitioners without supervision. Practically, nurse practitioners can diagnose

a patient, order tests, prescribe medications and operate their independent practices. In 12 states, NPs have Reduced Practice Authority, meaning that they need a physician's supervision to prescribe medication or run their practice. The remaining states

part-time, online, and finish their degree over five years by just taking a few online night classes every semester while they focus on their other day-to-day tasks. It is safe to say one can become a fully licensed and independent practitioner with relatively little

would be left without access to any primary healthcare. But patient safety has to be taken into account just as seriously and for states to allow NPs to launch their own businesses and prescribe Schedule II – V drugs without any supervision is reckless and dangerous.

A potential solution requires a three-pronged approach. First, NPs must be required to attend full-time school in person like other medical professionals. Their focus must be entirely on medical education; they cannot be distracted and take classes haphazardly. Second, all states should require a minimum of four years of experience as an NP with oversight before allowing them to operate their own clinics. And finally, patients should be informed when they are seeing an NP rather than a doctor, because most Americans do not know the difference. If NPs are banned from wearing white coats and make sure to explain to the patient that they are not doctors, patients will be more likely to critically evaluate the medical advice they receive and seek a second opinion if necessary.

This latter approach would directly confront the issue at hand by ensuring a more trained and experienced NP system and also ensuring a safer medical experience for patients. The American healthcare system needs a boost of personnel and NPs can surely be the answer to the problem, but this process cannot be rushed. All consequences need to be considered and safeguards must be put in place before nurse practitioners are allowed to act as doctors without the same training and experience as other white coats.

But patient safety has to be taken into account just as seriously and for states to allow NPs to launch their own businesses and prescribe schedule II - V drugs without any supervision is reckless and dangerous.

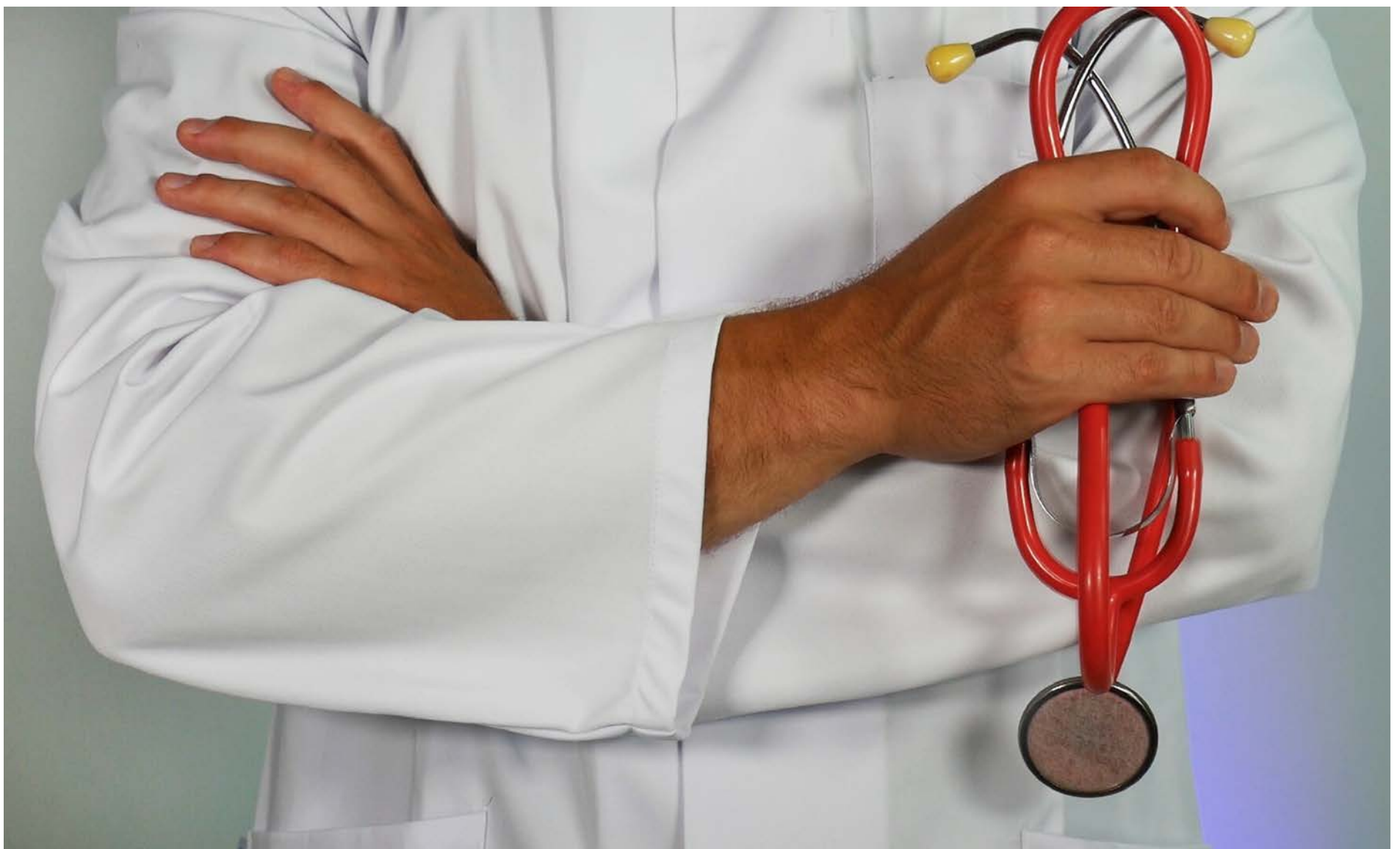
have Restricted Practice Authority, which means that they must work under the direct supervision of a physician at all times. Alaska is a Full Practice Authority state.

There are additional restrictions that can vary from state to state. In New York (which is a Full Practice Authority State), NPs have to complete 3,600 hours of experience before being able to run their practices fully autonomously, which comes out to just two full years of working.

Compare this to doctors who have to go through four years of medical school and then three to seven years of residency before they can work autonomously. This leads to an obvious issue: NPs can earn their degree in as little as one year (and in some schools without any clinical hours), after only working as a nurse for one to two years. Not to mention the schooling itself is significantly lighter than anything a PA or medical student has to go through. An NP can attend school

schooling and experience. Yet, over half of the states allow them to act as doctors by wearing white coats and making independent decisions for their patients.

Demand for doctors and physicians has been ever-increasing since the passing of the Social Security Amendments of 1965. With the development of Medicare and Medicaid, millions of Americans gained new access to healthcare. The need for primary care increased and subsequently, the need for doctors to see all these new patients. The Affordable Care Act, signed into law by President Obama in 2010, had a similar effect by opening up Medicaid to millions of Americans. By allowing NPs to act as doctors, states can supplement the rising demand for doctors through a relatively quick and affordable path since NPs are paid significantly less for the same work. NPs play a vital role in today's healthcare system, and without them many Americans



Unlike doctors, nurses, or even physician assistants, NPs have a unique position in America's healthcare system.

ONLINE MARKETING // UNSPLASH

Got something to share?
Email editor@yucommentator.org



NEVER. STOP.
COMMENTATING.

Navigating the M&A Landscape: A 2023 Recap and Optimistic Outlook for 2024

By ADAM SCHLOSSBERG

2023 wasn't the year that many in the mergers and acquisitions (M&A) industry were hoping for. The value of global M&A deals was only \$3 trillion, the lowest total since 2013. It was an 18% decrease from 2022 that saw a value of \$3.7 trillion and far lower than the 2021 record of \$5.8 trillion. Within North America, although the overall value of deals were down to \$1.46 trillion, it was only a decrease of 12% from the previous year, not as significant a percentage as the rest of the world.

The Fed's aggressive rate increases over the past two years has changed the math around what acquirers are willing to pay.

Since early 2022, M&A activity has been trending down, due in large part to eleven interest rate hikes. The Fed's aggressive rate increases over the past two years has changed the math around what acquirers are willing to pay. Higher rates made debt financing more expensive, especially for non-investment-grade companies. Most companies are acquired with at least some portion of debt, so buyers would rather wait for the interest rates on their debt to come down. The advantage of waiting is a higher return on equity (ROE) for the company making the acquisition as they would then

be able to keep a larger portion of the Cash Flow generated by the company acquired. The good news for those waiting for the M&A market to pick up is that it doesn't seem like rate decreases are too far away.

One reason for optimism around potential rate cuts has been the decrease seen in inflation from the beginning of the year to the end. After beginning 2023 with inflation measured at 6.4% year-over-year (YOY), the number dropped to 3.4% by the end of the year. One of the main reasons behind the slowdown in increasing inflation is that overall, gas prices were down 9.8% YOY. This is largely attributed to the fact that the end of

because the Fed claims that since 2022, the labor market has been too tight. Too many people have had jobs and too many people have been seeing wage growth. This resulted in an increase in demand for goods and services in the economy. Prices were already inflated due to supply chain constraints and the more confident and wealthier consumer is further exacerbating these prices.

The Fed's goal in 2024 is to prevent the economy from falling into a recession, so they are expecting to lower interest rates and target a "soft landing" for the economy to resume to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels

with as few speed bumps as possible. They hope to have inflation down to 2% - their long run inflation target.

To tie this all back to the outlook on M&A deals in 2024, the year looks bright. We've already seen one blockbuster deal with Blackrock's acquisition of Global Infrastructure Partners for an enterprise value of \$12.5 billion. Both economists and bankers expect that their clients will be looking to do more deals with lower interest rates coming as early as March, a slowdown in inflation and a strengthening economy.



Wall St. and Broadway signs

ROBERTO JÚNIOR / UNSPLASH

Nippon-US Steel Merger Announced but Faces Heavy Opposition

By KOBY ROSINSKY

On Dec. 18, the Japanese manufacturer Nippon Steel made a \$13.4 billion offer to purchase Pittsburgh-based U.S. Steel. Nippon Steel claimed that the deal would lead to substantial synergies attributed to sharing technologies and increased expansion opportunities. Yet, soon after the deal was announced, it met strong resistance from powerful political and economic forces. President Joe Biden said that the deal deserves "serious scrutiny" due to worries about national security and the U.S. supply chain. Several other political leaders also stated their opposition to the deal. Among them was Senator JD Vance, who

2023 saw domestic oil production hit a new record high. Reasons for the continued rise in inflation throughout the year were largely driven by housing and food prices. By the end of 2023, housing prices had risen by 6.5% YOY and food prices by 2.9% YOY.

Another reason for optimism around interest rates going down, and therefore hope for M&A activity picking up, is because the Fed expects unemployment to rise. Although this might be received by the American public as bad news, for the Fed, it's a welcome sign. Higher unemployment gives the Fed the ammunition to start cutting interest rates

announced that he would oppose it in a public statement and Rep. Frank Mrvan who described Nippon Steel as untrustworthy and exploitative.

Nippon Steel's offer was \$55 a share, representing a premium of nearly 40%, as of the trading day prior to the merger announcement when U.S. Steel closed at

Nippon Steel's offer was \$55 a share, representing a premium of nearly 40%, as of the trading day prior to the merger announcement when U.S. Steel closed at \$39.33.

\$39.33. Immediately after the announcement U.S. Steel's stock price rose to \$49, representing a substantial premium over the

price pre-announcement, but still not quite as high as the offer by Nippon, showing that investors have concerns about the deal going through, or expect it to take a long time to be completed.

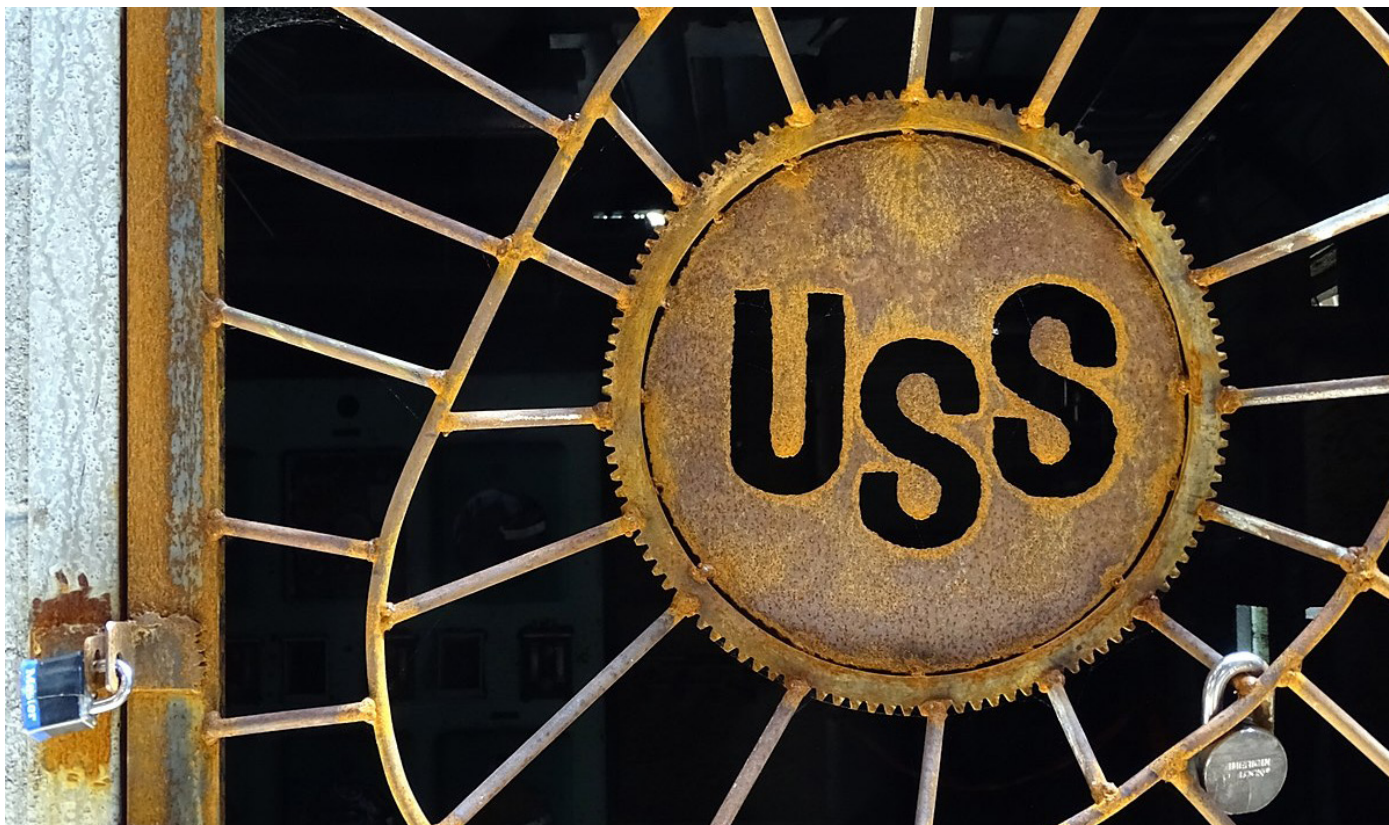
This concern is not unbased, as almost all mergers valued at over \$101 million are reviewed by the FTC and the Department

of Justice. Generally, this review is to avoid companies gaining a monopolistic advantage and being able to exploit consumers. Often,

large companies have to fight against the FTC in extended court battles to be able to complete their intended mergers. A recent example is the merger of Microsoft and the video game developer Activision Blizzard. This merger, which was valued at \$67.9 billion, ended up taking 636 days to complete, after Microsoft, which owns Xbox and Xbox Game Studios and develops video games such as the Halo and Age of Empires franchises, was sued by many international agencies claiming that it would have an unfair monopolistic advantage. This was because it may be able to make popular Activision games, such as Call of Duty and World of Warcraft, exclusive to the Xbox platform. The cases ended with Microsoft negotiating numerous constraints upon themselves, which are meant to keep them from having too much power in the gaming industry.

While the Microsoft Activision Blizzard merger was completed in the end, there are numerous other mergers that the FTC successfully blocked, among them the proposed \$40 billion merger of Nvidia and Arm, which was initially announced in 2020, and Penguin Random House's \$2.2 billion dollar attempted purchase of Simon and Schuster, which was originally announced in 2020. Arm later went public via IPO in September of 2023 at a market cap of around \$52 billion and Simon and Schuster was bought by private equity giant KKR & Co for \$1.6 billion. The two aforementioned canceled mergers were terminated due to concerns of a monopoly and this will be a concern for Nippon's merger with U.S. Steel.

Another concern might be the aforementioned national security risks that several politicians have mentioned. Then Singapore-based Broadcom's \$117 billion proposed merger of Qualcomm was blocked by former President Donald Trump over concerns that the acquisition would help Chinese manufacturers gain an upper hand over U.S. manufacturers and overtake American mobile



The U.S. Steel logo

ADAM JONES / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Continued on Page 18



GET THEM OUT OF HELL!



#BringThemHomeNow

The Poems That Travel With Us

By RIVKA KRAUSE

The NYC subway system seems like an unlikely place for art — smelly and incredibly overcrowded, with no room for beauty. Yet anyone who has ridden the subway knows that despite this landscape, it is a space teeming with musicians, performers, missionaries and more. All those art mediums require interaction with another person — something that most of us try to avoid on the subway. But there is one medium of art in the subway system that is accessible and solitary: poetry.

You have seen one of them before, I promise. Or if you haven't, start looking. Usually over the two-seater right by the door, courtesy of the MTA, rests a poem. Each fiscal quarter, two poems are paired with artwork and displayed throughout the transit system.

Poetry first appeared on the overhead boards of the subway in 1992. In collaboration with the Poetry Society of America, the MTA launched the "Poetry in Motion" project. The goal of the program was to bring poetry into the lives of the millions of daily subway users. After a brief hiatus from 2008-2012, the program returned and was

under the auspices of the MTA Arts & Design department. The new design of the posters imposes the text of the poem over artworks

eleven-line poem felt emblematic of the entire experience. The poem's speaker is grappling with whether they can replace the

The power of poetry is to evoke and name some of the feelings swirling around inside us. It wasn't only the language of the poem that spoke to me, but the uncanny environment in which we met.

installed elsewhere in MTA-governed public transit.

I first noticed the subway poetry this past summer. It was August and everything felt heavy and foreboding. The heat, the end of summer and the start of a new year all loomed over me. Stuffing myself into a crowded car, overwhelmed by the swampy air and my inability to move, I spotted a poem called "Uncertainty Principle by Dawn" by Catherine Barnett on the wall of the car. Reading the poem offered me a minor reprieve from my current environment, but it also caused all the sadness that I was feeling to surface.

Minutes before entering the subway, a summer fling had come to an end, and the

person they have lost with new obsessions. I, having just lost something, felt like the poem was speaking to me. The power of poetry is to evoke and name some of the feelings swirling around inside us. It wasn't only the language of the poem that spoke to me, but the uncanny environment in which we met. As Amy Hausmann, the Transit Museum's senior curator and deputy director, said: "Poetry that is discovered in unexpected places like a crowded subway car or a city bus can provide a window into another way of thinking and feeling about the world we inhabit."

Poetry in an unexpected place can make us feel things that we otherwise would not, Hausmann argues. However, this does not

answer the most fundamental question, which is why should we interact with art while taking the subway? Does reading a ten-to-twelve-line poem lessen the drudgery and mundanity of the experience of commuting? If anything, the presence of poetry on the subway lends itself to an overly romanticized and constructed experience. You almost feel like a character in a movie who reads the right poem at the right time.

But maybe that's the point. We should indulge in a little romanticism to enhance experiences that would otherwise make us miserable. I believe that we are required to do so that we do not turn calloused and closed off. In his iconic commencement speech at Kenyon College, David Foster Wallace outlines his simple life philosophy. Wallace argues that it is crucial to remind ourselves that we are living our lives and that the current moment is not a dress rehearsal for something grander. Wallace emphasizes that we have power in how we react to the mundane things around us. Subway poetry forces us into the now and reminds us of the beauty in the current moment. Even if that moment is smelly and sweaty, you have the choice to experience it however you want. Choose wisely.



Subway poetry forces us into the now and reminds us of the beauty in the current moment.

LINDA FLETCHER / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

NIPPON STEEL

Continued from Page 16

technology. Broadcom has since switched its domicile to San Jose, California.

Foreign entities looking to acquire a U.S. company must also get approved by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS). This step is in addition to a review by the FTC and Department of Justice and provides an additional barrier that Nippon will potentially have to overcome. CFIUS often cites national security as a reason to be worried about takeovers by companies with strong connections to China, but Japan is a U.S. ally. U.S. Steel even made a statement saying that it welcomes and

looks forward to a CFIUS review. As such, several have claimed that any attempts by the Biden administration to block the merger are based more on political motivation than sound economic ones. Wilbur Ross, U.S. secretary of commerce during the Trump administration, described the people arguing against the deal as xenophobic and hypocritical.

There are strong political incentives for the Biden administration to oppose the merger. U.S. Steel is based in Pittsburgh, and Pennsylvania is a swing state in which U.S. Steel employs many people. The steel union, which is considered one of the most powerful in the U.S., has come out against the deal, complaining that they were left in

the dark regarding the merger and are concerned about Nippon honoring their existing agreements with U.S. Steel. David McCall, the president of the United Steelworkers International Union said in an interview that he had many concerns, including pension plans and retiree health care, as well as being concerned that Nippon would close some of US Steel's plants. While Nippon has promised to honor the union contracts, they only run through 2026. As such, it is a strong probability that the Biden administration might want to block the deal to avoid alienating the union members and many people who work in the steel industry in Pennsylvania.

It remains to be seen if this merger will

go through, as there are many factors that could lead to it being terminated. Concerns that the merger will be monopolistic and concerns over national security are the two major ones, both of which are increased when politics get involved. It should be noted that the 2024 presidential election is rapidly approaching, and this could be a factor in the political consideration. The imposing election might prompt President Biden to act faster and block the deal in an attempt to gain votes in Pennsylvania, or the merger might be dragged on past the election, as they do often stretch out for over a year, at which point we will be far from the next election cycle and it is likely the merger can be judged absent of any political motives.

Apophatic Poetry For a Time of Wordlessness

By ZEV GRANIK

On Nov. 30, Yeshiva University's Writing Center held its annual Open Mic event, where students and faculty presented their original writing to a friendly and accepting audience. Anyone and everyone was invited to watch the performances, and/or perform them-

poem or two and perform.

Then Hamas attacked Israel. For a while, it was all any of us could think about. Assemblies. Rallies. Shiurim. Calls. Texts. Media. Social media. Misleading, misinformed media.

Suddenly the poems I was planning to read seemed trite, pointless. Everything did, except Israel and what the Jewish people

and conceptualize the events, but we might never reach an end. Now "*Ein Milim*" almost felt like an apophatic ideal, as if it was a command to be in a state of wordlessness. I realized I had been grasping for symbols and wisdom, trying to put Oct. 7 into some framework so I could keep some safe distance from the reality of it all. Even when I had been at a loss for words, I still struggled

We cope with words
The teachings and the preachings
The multitudinous, plenitudinous pages and pages
Of untold ages of prophets and sages
Writing off of meager poor man's wages
Unfazed as they eagerly explained to posterity

How to deal with pain and tragedy
But how do we apply the fine print
The tiny hints from all we've read
Of all they've said to our newly dead?
Is this the same thread
Of evil we faced in the Wilderness
When they mercilessly slaughtered our defenseless,

The fake sanctimonious Amalek?
Is the sake of God's Name really at stake
When Noble Ishmael
(Who by the well God propelled to fame)
Claims to be fighting for just the same?
How could the wall of an eternal nation fall in flame

And her people be hauled back into exile
And all the while the world calls for her extinction?

Is this "normal" religious persecution,
The fruition of division turned into expectation?

Or are they against the State
A new spin on an ancient innate latent hate

Bubbling up to the surface
Threatening to churn us
Into oblivion?

What do we make of this line of questioning?

How do we candidly understand
God's grand narrative plan
Without demands for bland white-sanded Banners?

This time I can't pretend
To see some line out of this winding
Mind-bending mine

I don't have some rhyme
To tie this all in a tiny little bow
So then I'd know

How to make sense of this violence
The silence is deafening
Echoing throughout my heart

As an entire part
Of my body is cleaved clean off
Heaved off into the belly of a beast
Who feasts on festering preconceived

irate fear
Still I sit here trying to fit
Thousands of years of the swords
Of the hoards of the Lord's Wars
Into a few spoken broken words

"Ein Sof L'Davar"
There are too many words to say
Too many ways to lay it all out
In some sane orderly arrangement
Twisting wordless horror
Into an absurd chorus
Of pathetic noetic polemics
Apologetics
For Das Ding an Sich
The Thing in Itself in the light of day
As the Sages rightly say
Adding unto His praises
Can have no end
Once one speaks on such matters
They cannot, like common flatterers
Stop when they feel the pomp
Of the situation is sated
Rather they must blather on and on unabated

For all eternity
Until they have fallen, collapsed from exhaustion

And so, in an excess of caution
Instead of collapsing this whole discussion
Into a poem for packaged consumption
And with inflated gumption presumpting
To be exhausting all there is to say
Today I won't say anything at all



Wittgenstein says language is a ladder that must be pulled up after it is climbed.

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selves. I sat in awe listening to a series of powerful pieces by so many talented people, from the poignant and shocking short stories of the Writing Center's Micah Pava (YC '23), to Professor Katherine Payne's evocative personal reflection. Avraham Frohlich (YC '24) played an unforgettable original album of love songs, and Benny Klein (YC '24) performed a hilarious comedy set featuring advice for dealing with middle school bullies and awkward family reunions. The imposter syndrome was kicking in. What was I doing there? What did I have that could compare to these performances?

This was the second YU Open Mic I have attended. Last year, it was a much smaller event, which I only heard about from Prof. David Puretz. He encouraged our whole creative writing class to go to this random event no one knew much about, and I was ambivalent about going. It wasn't that I didn't have anything prepared — a couple of poems collected dust on my Google Drive from a few months prior. I just had so much other work to do, and frankly, I was tired. But after some further cajoling from Prof. Puretz, I decided to try out this Open Mic thing, dust off those poems and give them a whirl in front of an audience. It was an exhilarating experience, one I hadn't had in

had endured.

For days and weeks, I tried and failed to write something about Israel. My inability to write was not because I didn't have any thoughts on the situation. I had a lot of jumbled, angry, confused thoughts, and when I tried to get them down on paper, they all came out equally garbled. I had so many feelings, yet nothing to say.

And then I heard about a sentiment which was circulating in Israel at the time—"*Ein Milim*," "*No words*." This perfectly described my predicament. So much welling up inside, but no way to express it. And so, I thought, if I couldn't talk about Israel, at least I could talk about having nothing to say about Israel.

But as I started writing, I realized that really, "*Yeish Milim*:" We do have words to describe national pain and suffering. So much of our tradition discusses exile, war, loss and confusion. Until this moment, I had never really understood Sefer Eicha or the revenge lust of the *go'el hadam*. Far from being at a loss for words, Jewish texts and liturgy are packed with an unending litany of discussions of the *chachamim* of every generation explaining the meaning of and proper response to pain and tragedy.

After this realization, I tried to somehow package the "Jewish approach" to Oct. 7 into

to find them. Then I stopped searching. I just sat with the facts of what had happened, in all their gruesome, heart-wrenching detail. And I cried.

I tried, in whatever incomplete and ironic way, to capture my personal progression in the poem. Poetry is definitionally a linguistic medium, but this is essentially a journey toward languagelessness. Nevertheless, to paraphrase the Jewish Austrian philosopher of language, Ludwig Wittgenstein, sometimes you must climb the ladder of language, only to knock it out behind you.

Below, I attach the poem:

Some Words on *Ein Milim*

"Ein Milim"
A phrase for the malaise of these days
Less than no words to express
The dazed and confused attitude
Of our People who
Fearing a sequel,
Only discuss what has happened to us
The sequence of prequels
Stretching back to our beginning
All the stories of glorious winning
And sinning
And failing and wailing
Up again in victory
Down again in rupture
For three tens of centuries
Never knowing when
God will send
His people home
Home
How far we had to roam
Lugging that extensive tome
Beg, borrow, and loan
In atonement for our baseless hatred
Hanging by the sinews of our Luz bone
From which the One Enthroned Alone
Will rebuild our home

"Yeish Milim"
We do have so many words for all this
Built into a quilt
Over endless millennia
Of one enemy after another
Threatening to smother our hope

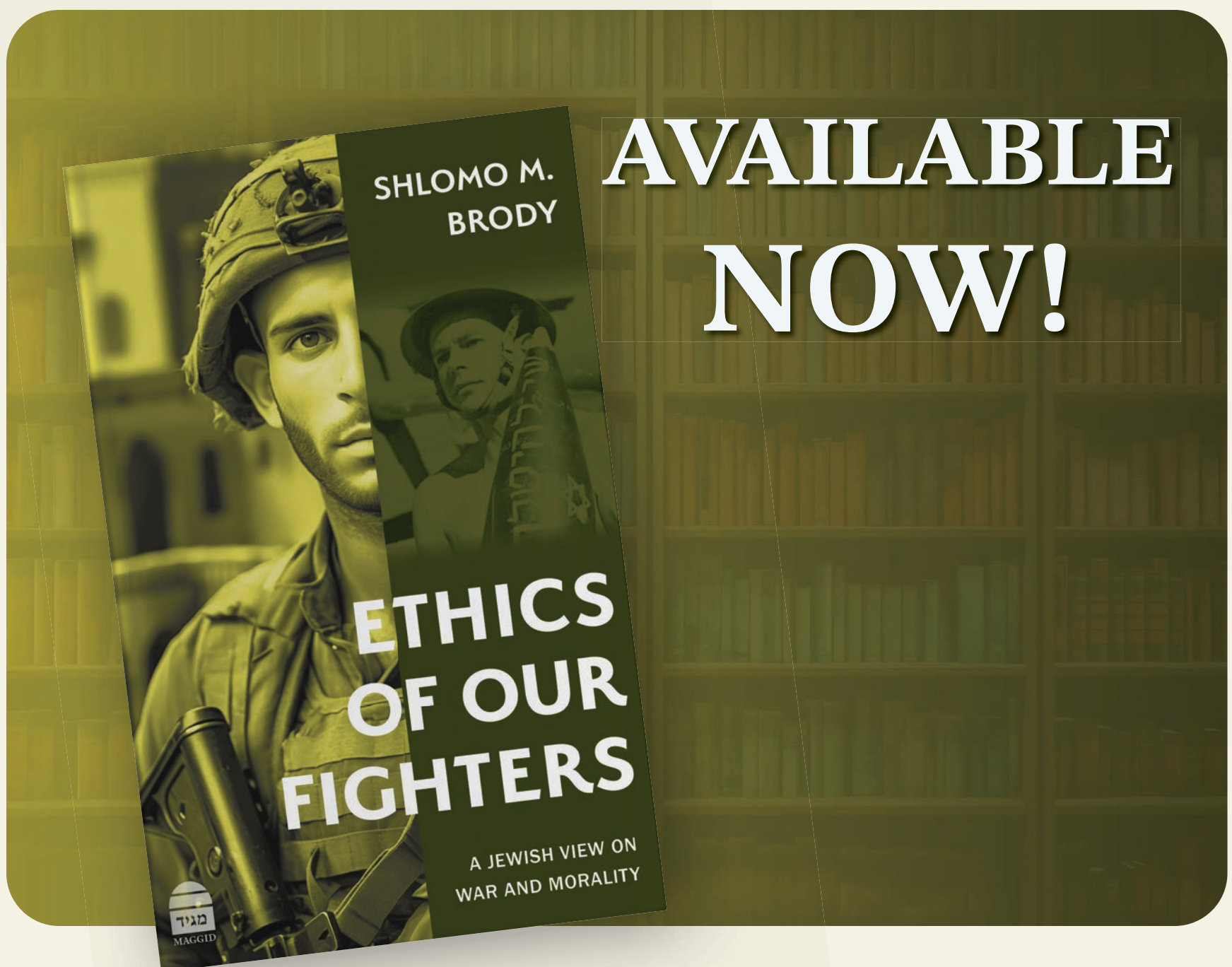
Now "*Ein Milim*" almost felt like an apophatic ideal, as if it was a command to be in a state of wordlessness.

years. I suddenly remembered why I loved writing, and why I loved sharing my writing with others. It was a chance to play around with words, their sounds, and meanings. I felt I could finally express myself and activate a part of my personality that had been lying dormant for a long time.

Fast forward a year to this October. Another Open Mic approaches. Again, the ambivalence I felt last year struck. There was so much other work to be done, and so much relaxation and unwinding that would be interrupted by my participation in the event. But I remembered my experience a year prior, and I resolved to dust off another

my poem. But I quickly realized this was futile. There were just too many discussions and too many precedents and models to pick from. I couldn't reference one of them without my thoughts shifting to another topic or context from our long history of tragedy. I began to feel mute again. There were just too many images to use, and too many words. I was back to square one. I had nothing digestible or presentable to say.

However, this was different from how I had originally understood "*Ein Milim*." It wasn't that we had no way to express our thoughts and feelings. On the contrary, we have too many words. We could try to talk



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