



The Yeshiva University OBSERVER

ISSUE 67 VOLUME V

FEBRUARY 2024

ADAR I 5783



Disorganization at its Core: YU Bureaucracy

BY DALYA EICHLER,
STAFF WRITER

Before beginning this piece, I would like to make a disclaimer on the following: I did not originally think writing a piece on this was necessary. After hearing multiple accounts from other students of their experiences, I assumed the system would be fixed. I thought that these issues clearly would have been brought to the attention of faculty who would have realized change was needed. But, the stories kept on coming, and then I had my own. I realized then that the system was still very much in need of help. My intention with this piece is to make this message heard, recognized, and at the forefront of people's concerns in hopes of creating a fix. If after so many stories, there is still minimal change, I don't see what other choice I, as a member of the community, have rather than to speak up.

I remember being a new student at Yeshiva University. I was told on my first tour of YU that there were numerous resources I could rely on during my time here that

would help me along the way and allow me to thrive. I believed it to be true, and a part of me still does, but part of what I was told that day was flawed. I truly believe that at

"The claim academic advisement makes to 'provide a supportive environment to help you define and meet your academic goals' is not what I had experienced at all."

its core, Yeshiva University aims to create the best and brightest students, helping in whatever ways they can. The issue is that a system that is not well organized in vital departments will fail to accomplish this to its full potential. YU has been around for over 135 years, and though I cannot speak about all the previous years at YU, I can report on the bits and pieces my peers and I have witnessed firsthand.

Yeshiva University: where academic excellence is not just an aspiration but a reality. Here, the educational experience is as enriching and profound as the legendary debates between Hillel and Sham-mai, stimulating minds and encouraging deep thought and analysis. The faculty is outstanding, their teaching methods engaging,

and the courses offered are both diverse and challenging, truly preparing students for the complexities of the modern world. However, when it comes to the administrative side of

things, particularly academic advising, the experience can sometimes feel extremely bewildering. The promise of guidance and support, from enrollment through to graduation, often gets muddled amidst a web of bureaucratic complexities.

The Academic Advisement's homepage states, "From your first registration through graduation we provide a supportive environment to help you define and meet your academic goals." According to the Office of the Registrar's homepage, "The mission of the Office of the Registrar is to provide convenient and effective services to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and others in the areas of registration services, student records, transcripts, and degree certifications." Both of these statements, I have learned, are not completely ac-

curate. I am not here to make any claims that the staff is not competent or dedicated, or aiming to steer us in the wrong direction, because I don't believe that to be true. I believe the issues I have come across point to an underlying problem of disorganization that hampers effective communication and coordination. The result, as I have witnessed, is unnecessary obstacles such as taking courses that do not align with students' academic goals or facing preventable scheduling conflicts, and sometimes a failed course.

I have met with several academic advisors at least once. With each visit, I was always informed about some policy I wasn't aware of previously. During one visit in particular, I hoped to switch a cross-listed course to fulfill a requirement I wasn't signed up for at the time. For example, class A can count towards requirement B or C, and I wanted to switch it from B to C. I was told that after the add/drop date, I was unable to switch it, and since I put in the wrong CRN than

SEE **YU BUREAUCRACY**
PAGE 3

INSIDE THIS EDITION



OPINIONS: SACKS-HERENSTEIN SOLIDARITY MISSION
PAGE 9



OPINIONS: BEREN, ARE WE DOING ENOUGH?
PAGE 5



OPINIONS: LOOKING OUT FOR OUT-OF-TOWNERS
PAGE 8



FEATURES: INTERVIEW WITH HADAS LOWENSTERN
PAGE 12

Say the Things You Don't Want to Say

EDITORIALS

BY EMILY GOLDBERG,
PUBLICATION MANAGER
AND LAYOUT EDITOR

Over the past few months, I have heard multiple people express concern over the proposal of writing about difficult or taboo topics. Unfortunately, I have also frequently encountered the widespread fear of calling out individuals in positions of power. Most unsettling to me, I have shockingly found myself hav-

At the same time, as journalists, we must also hold ourselves accountable to the ethics of integrity and respect. One of the reasons that social media has become such a dangerous entity is because anyone can claim anything without fact-checking their statements first. In the age of the internet, anonymous individuals without journalistic training can make heinous assertions that cannot be further from the truth.

and shape the world for the better at the tip of our fingers. All it takes is one opinion, one profound thought, to bring light to one additional viewpoint that needs to be heard.

Yes, speaking out against individuals and institutions of power is a terrifying endeavor. Bringing awareness to the important topics that many people avoid speaking about can be overwhelming. However, shedding light on the flaws within our communities is the only way to improve society. Change has only come because of those who have had the courage to speak out even when they stood alone.

Journalism requires heroism. The only way to create positive change is by throwing oneself into these difficult moments, knowing that the uncomfortable-now is precisely what will form the better-tomorrow.

What would have happened if John Hargrove hadn't exposed the brutal conditions that SeaWorld is subjecting its animals to? What would have happened if The New York Times journalists Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohy hadn't published an article revealing the horrific actions of Harvey Weinstein, who was convicted of multiple counts of rape and sexual assault? What would the media look like now if Israeli spokespersons such as Eylon Levy and Tal Heinrich weren't constantly reminding the world that the evil terrorists of Hamas were the ones who launched a war against Israel on October 7 by raping, abducting, and murdering thousands of Israeli civilians?

I don't want to know what kind of a world we would be living in if not for these courageous figures and others like them. As a journalist, every day I strive to attain even just an ounce of the energy and bravery that these individuals have dedicated to making the world a better place.

So if there is something that you are too afraid to say, conquer your fear, and then say it. Dare to do what others won't, because change never came from being silent.

"So if there is something that you are too afraid to say, conquer your fear, and then say it. Dare to do what others won't, because change never came from being silent."

ing to encourage those who do not wish to write at all, claiming there is nothing that they are passionate enough about to share with others.

Unfortunately, the topics that many are too afraid to write about are the ones that are most likely in desperate need of discussion. Samuel Gompers, the founder of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), once said, "The freedom of speech and the freedom of the press have not been granted to the people in order that they may say the things which please, and which are based upon accepted thought, but the right to say the things which displease, the right to say the things which may convey the new and yet unexpected thoughts, the right to say things, even though they do a wrong."

Freedom of speech and freedom of the press is a true privilege of democracy. As citizens of democracy, we are obligated to take advantage of these gifts and speak out, especially for those who cannot. The balance of the free world is reliant on us utilizing these privileges to cultivate true change despite our fears.

Writing about the shortcomings of those in influential positions will not only bring about ramifications for their actions, but will push other citizens to think critically and ask questions. Of course, publicly calling out those who need to be is intimidating, but if journalists never took action because of their fears, society would never advance.

Although journalists are far from perfect, we hold ourselves accountable to high ethical standards, such as those outlined in the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics. By ensuring that our reports have factual basis by backing them up with at least two sources, choosing our words precisely, and rigorously editing all our articles, journalists are able to speak on sensitive topics while maintaining a moral code.

While the looming fear of making a mistake can be scary, journalists know that we must eventually put our pen to paper and write what needs to be said. No matter the backlash we may face from those who disagree. In fact, part of our job is to bring facts to light in order to give the very individuals who criticize us the opportunity to address our statements. By fostering meaningful and respectful conversations between those with varying viewpoints, the cultivation of change within society begins. Ultimately, journalists know that there is a light at the end of the tunnel just waiting to be grasped with each and every stroke of our pens.

As long as we hold ourselves to these ethical standards and keep in mind the responsibility that we carry with our words, I truly believe that *everyone* can be a writer. We all have the power to compose impactful pieces



EDITORIAL TEAM

2023-2024

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Aaron Shaykevich

MANAGING EDITOR
Ruchama Benhamou

PUBLICATION MANAGER
Emily Rose Goldberg

OPINIONS EDITORS
SENIOR EDITOR: Shira Kramer
Aiden Harow
Esther Nahon
Shneur Levy

FEATURES EDITORS
SENIOR EDITOR: Rivka Inger
Ally Hadge
Gabiella Gomperts
Chloe Baker

ARTS & CULTURE EDITORS
SENIOR EDITOR: Racheli Jian
David Yagudayev
Uri Kruger

BUSINESS EDITORS
SENIOR EDITOR: Chana Wakslak
Shua Feigin

SCI-TECH EDITORS
SENIOR EDITOR: Yosef Scher
Rochel Leah Itzkowitz
Sydney Hoffman

RANTS & RAVES EDITOR
Ruchama Benhamou

LAYOUT EDITORS
Atarah Mandel
Emily Rose Goldberg
Racheli Jian

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGERS
Miri Granik
Shira Kramer
Sarah Offenberger
Regina Mezistrano

BUSINESS MANAGERS
Chana Wakslak

WEBSITE MANAGERS
Max Friedman
Max Franklin
Noam Ben Simon

ENTERTAINMENT MANAGER
Danny Kutin

STAFF WRITERS

Shneur Agronin, Yechiel Amar, Kiki Arochas, Yosef Bluth, Betzalel Cohen, Dalya Eichler, Andrew Gluck, Talia Halstuch, Marcela Homsany, Rebecca Kalmar, JJ Ledewitz, Sarah Offenberger, Gabby Price, Andrew Warren, Ami Weiss, Daniella Weiss

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

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

Please visit us at www.yuobserver.org.

How to be Both Witty and Original When Answering Classical Interview Questions

BY RUCHAMA BENHAMOU,
MANAGING EDITOR

In the midst of preparing for graduate school interviews, I have been forced to reckon with the question: Who am I? How would I describe myself? How would my friends, family, teachers, and peers describe me? Having a vivid passion for philosophy and its expansive texts, I have thought of this question for far too long.

The truth is, I do not know how to really answer that question. As human beings, we are always evolving in the ever changing world we find ourselves in. Who I was yesterday is not who I am today or will be tomorrow. So how do I answer this pivotal question when asked by my graduate interviewers in the coming weeks?

I have decided to throw them for a loop. Instead of taking the traditional route of answering this

"Yet, buried within the fear lies a flicker of courage, a reminder that within vulnerability lies strength... So, let us cast aside the armor of fear and embrace the power of authenticity."

question by explaining my background and undergraduate career, I open with something more esoteric. "I have been thinking about that question a lot recently, since I need to condense my life story in a neatly packed 15 minute speech for Stomp Out the Stigma." The

wow-factor produced by this response gives me a little more time to come up with a "real" graduate-school worthy clever response.

Although this proved to work well in my interviews, I cannot say the same for when it came to actually writing my speech for this event. As a writer, editor, and lover of words, I thought this would be easy. It's just another

er essay, just another assignment. Simple. Right? But coming face to face with my own journey and the struggles that have fashioned my identity was draining in every way.

Just to sit down and have the mental bandwidth to brainstorm, organize, and plan the flow of my speech was difficult. It felt impossible to put words together to display the intense emotions of my experience. Through countless drafts, dozens of meetings, and many edits, I am still unsure if my speech will truly encompass the essence of my story and the message of Stomp Out the Stigma.

SEE INTERVIEW
QUESTIONS
PAGE 5

YU BUREAUCRACY FROM FRONT PAGE

I had planned to when registering, I was at a loss with nothing to do. Months after this incident, a student informed me that for her that was not the case, and to speak with the Office of the Registrar. I went straight to their office to get this sorted, and to my surprise she was right. The first staff member of the registrar that I approached had no idea how to answer my question, and sent me to the supervisor who explained that until there is a final grade on a transcript, I can switch which requirement my course fulfills. At this point, however, I had my final grade, the transcript was frozen and there was nothing I could do. My issue with this incident is that when I spoke to an advisor originally, there was something I could have done, but I was given incorrect information. When I explained this to the advisor, I was told that they had not known of this rule, and at that point there was nothing I could do. I felt cheated through this process with the misinformation. There was no promise from advising to fix this lack of knowledge and communication between the departments, just an annoyed answer from them describing how I could not feel cheated since it was my fault I had input the wrong CRN. The claim academic advisement makes to "provide a supportive environment to help you define and meet your academic goals" is not what I had experienced at all.

I think that it is in the interest of the registrar and academic advising staff to help the students do their best in the

most efficient way possible. I truly believe that these offices would like to avoid these mishaps just as much as the students do. However, to achieve this goal there must be more communication between all the departments. It must be made clear to students what truly is and is not allowed when registering and what the best methods are to go about dealing with their courses. There must be a way for these unfortunate situations to not occur as frequently as they do right now.

The contrast between the high-caliber education and the administrative hurdles at Yeshiva University is stark. It's a call to action for a tighter administrative ship to ensure the support structure matches the quality of the education. With some retooling and a focus on clearer communication, Yeshiva University can ensure that the administrative journey is as seamless and enriching as the academic experience it so proudly offers. I make a call for this now specifically as I watch those who would never go to a non-secular college enroll in YU. As the applications are rising so immensely, new dormitories need to be purchased to support the numbers. More and more students will be leaning on YU and their advisement, and with issues already happening before all of this, the need for change is absolutely necessary. As a proud YU student, I don't want to be tentative to seek help, but as of now, I am. I am nervous to be told misinformation again, I am nervous to be blamed for a mistake caused by both ends of the system, I am nervous that the future and ris-

ing student body won't be getting the best help they can be given.

With that, I reached out to the Stern WhatsApp chat asking for stories on this topic, and in no time at all the messages came flooding in. Going through them, I was shocked at some of the stories I was receiving. I am fully aware that I am being told the stories from only one side of the situation, and have nothing to say on how the departments of academics viewed these girls' situations. Still, sharing their stories and experiences is crucial in showcasing why many other students want change within the system.

From an anonymous Stern student: "I was in Bio I and II. I asked for medical advancement for a final, to take it later since I had back surgery. They told me no, that it wasn't a legitimate enough excuse, that it wasn't that bad of a surgery. I wasn't allowed to fly, and I had to go back home. They gave me 48 hours notice. I failed the course because I wasn't allowed to take the final later, and I had to go to summer school. It took me six months to get summer school approved, and it was denied four times by different academic advisors. I went to the Dean and my high school principal had to get involved. Once I finally did summer school, I wanted to change my major from nursing to bio, and was told I wasn't allowed to because of the course I took in summer school. They said I couldn't be any science major other than sociology, so now I am a sociology major with a bio minor because I am not allowed to be a bio major."

From an anonymous Stern student: "There's this thing called fundamentals that they introduced in 2020. I was a true freshman in 2021 and no one ever told me about it, so now I can only take fundamentals to make sure I fulfill the requirements. I was told I only needed to take 2-3 a semester to be a Judaics major but that was based on if I went to seminary, which I didn't. I'm overloading on Judaics now. I think they have like a certain outline for people in that major, and it doesn't include people who didn't go to seminary so they didn't calculate it right. I have absolutely no hate towards the advisement center, and I honestly understand that they make so many mistakes. But they are not focused on a few majors, they are each spanning across all majors. I think if they worked similar to the career center, where each of them have a focus on specific majors or tracks, it would function better."

From an anonymous Stern student: "The registrar messed up my Honors status and I couldn't register for a class that I needed for my major. By the time it was fixed, the class had filled. Thank goodness I got off the waitlist, but if I hadn't then it would have been a disaster."

It is integral as a student, who is already in a confusing path of figuring oneself out, to be able to lean on the support of their administration. I am asking you to share this article and these stories. Keep this conversation alive until it needs not to live on anymore.

OPINIONS

BY EDEN LIPPE

Over the winter break, I was fortunate enough to go on the Yeshiva University Sacks-Herenstein Stronger Together Israel Solidarity Mission. Through an incredibly dynamic and powerful week of being immersed in the current reality of our homeland, I was able to emotionally experience many sides of this war. From picking beets, running carnivals, and bearing witness- seeing the atrocities committed in Kfar Aza, Sderot, Reim Forest, where the Nova music festival took place, and Kibbutz Kissufim, and more- we were able to put a name to the face of this ugly war.

Walking into the Reim forest where the Nova music festival took place was eerie. Knowing that just 3 months before, terrorists rampaged the same grounds, brutally murdering hundreds of our brothers and sisters was chilling. Stakes stabbed into the ground held images of those murdered on the very same ground. Bearing witness, all kinds of Jews gathered together to share in the same pain our nation is experiencing.

Upon entering, a large black poster with white writing and the face of a young woman caught my eye: *Eden Ben-Rubi* it read. A 23-year-old woman, originally from Thessaloniki, Greece, had moved to Israel at a young age and lived in Rishon LeZion. She was an artist,

a graduate of Merhavim School of Arts in Rishon Lezion. She is survived by her parents and 15-year-old brother. With Eden being such a popular name in Israel, seeing many of our people killed or taken hostage with the name was, unfortunately, not surprising. *Keren Shemesh*” and was accompanied by a hand-drawn heart and sun. *Keren Shemesh*: a ray of sunshine. I had heard this phrase in songs before but the simple image now brought it to life. The idea of a *Keren Shemesh* is so abstract but simultaneously so tangible. To be a *Keren Shemesh* is to be some-



Staring at this poster felt like a mirror; it could have easily been me. A different Eden: an Eden with just as much reason for terrorists to kill, my Judaism being reason enough. Hanging on the pole of the poster was a white sweatshirt that had the name *Eden* with the letter “D” drawn in the shape of a palm tree. It looked so ordinary, so normal, as though this could have been my own Bat-Mitzvah sweatshirt. This sweatshirt was covered in signatures and messages made out to Eden Ben-Rubi, expressing how much they miss her. One signature in particular stood out to me. It read, “*Eden Ahuva Sheli,*

one who lights up those around you and emanates a joy for life. From the multiple signatures on the back of this sweatshirt, it was clear that Eden Ben-Rubi was an individual who embodied just that.

The Sacks-Herenstein YU Stronger Together Solidarity mission showed me that one of the only things getting our people through this immensely dark time are the rays of light. The rays of unity of our nation, the rays of *chessed*, and the rays of hope. It can be easy to fall into a feeling of helplessness from afar, but we must steer our lives towards a different path.

Every action we do matters whether that means saying hi to someone in the elevator, smiling at someone who looks a bit down, or asking a friend how their day is going. With every one of our efforts, no matter how small we think they may be, we are playing an active role in building up our community and nation. It all starts with our behavior.

In Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks’s book *Celebrating Life*, he wisely says: “To change the world, first we have to change ourselves” (183). In a time like this when we could feel so helpless, we have to remember that we can change the one thing we have control over: ourselves. We can channel our desire to heal a fractured world by making ourselves the best conduits for that repair as we can and lifting up those around us.

I want to live my life by the phrase “*Keren Shemesh*.” I want to try to do everything in my power to lift up those around me, bringing light into the world through *chessed* and inclusivity. As a people, we have to do everything we possibly can to bring a little light into this very dark world. We all must take it upon ourselves to be a unique ray of light, our own *Keren Shemesh*, and to live our lives for those who tragically don’t get to anymore, like Eden Ben-Rubi.

—
Photo taken by Zehava Shatzkes

Stern Journalism Major: Fact or Myth?

BY SHIRA KRAMER, SENIOR
OPINIONS EDITOR AND
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

“I’m a journalism major,” I said timidly.

“Oh...that’s...different,” they all reply. What do you mean it’s “different?” Is it different because it’s not biology or psychology? Is it different because it isn’t the typical *frum* girl major? I know it sounds ridiculous but sadly, I’ve heard all of those things before.

As a transfer student from a world-renowned journalism school, I didn’t know what to expect from the journalism department at Stern. In fact, I didn’t even know if it existed. In order to transfer to a school that I knew I would be happier at, I was willing to forfeit a major that I loved dearly.

Luckily, I quickly learned that

my dreams of journalism at Stern would continue.

After a freshman year filled with exciting journalism class, I came to Stern excited to learn more. Looking at the course catalog, I breathed a sigh of relief as I skimmed the journalism course offerings.

“No, the Stern journalism major is not part of a Pulitzer prize winning program. Regardless of accolades, when the ten of us get together for class on Monday nights, the program has never felt more significant.”

Going into my registration advising appointment, I was motivated to learn. So, when my advisor told me I had to register for English 1100 (more commonly known as English 101), my shoulders tensed. Most YU students are familiar with the school’s strict AP credit policy. However, not only did I receive a high AP English score, but I also transferred with previous journal-

ism credit. Why did I need to go back to basics?

Fortunately, English 1100 proved to be a fun, chill class. Professor Charlotte Fiehn taught the basics in the most engaging way. Throughout the semester, I reintroduced myself to classic literature and creative writing.

Technically speaking, the Stern journalism major is really an English major with a concentration in media studies. After you narrow down your concentration to media studies, you can then specialize even further with a concentration within a concentration called journalism.

This semester, I registered for Feature Writing. The professor, Jason Gewirtz, works as the Vice President of news at CNBC during the day. Then, before returning home to his family, Gewirtz stops by 215 Lexington to enlighten Stern students about journalism.

Currently, he is the only journalism professor. Therefore, only one true journalism course is offered each semester. His class is taught at night which can be seen as a pain for students after a long day of classes. However, aside from the luxury of a once a week class, Gewirtz’s students have too much respect for him to care about the late hour.

No, the Stern journalism major is not part of a Pulitzer prize winning program. Regardless of accolades, when the ten of us get together for class on Monday nights, the program has never felt more significant.

Beren, Are We Doing Enough?

BY CHLOE BAKER,
FEATURES EDITOR, AND
HANNAH WASSERMAN

The week following October 7, students were found in airports, underground parking garages, and massive warehouses. They were organizing, packing, and distributing duffel bags for soldiers with much-needed equipment. Group chats were created, *tehillim* groups were organized, and money was raised... all with young Jewish college students at the forefront. Yeshiva University students stepped up to the plate and blossomed as “leaders in the Jewish community” at home, globally, in-person, and online. Most students have a personal connection to the war, as many students studied in Israel or served in the Israeli Defense Forces. Many of us have family members, friends, and members from our own communities fighting to keep the Jewish homeland. This war hits home in some way for every single Yeshiva University student. Each one of us has been active in *chesed* on behalf of the state of Israel. Four months after the start of the war, the question arises if students on the Beren campus are doing the most that they can to support the Zionist cause.

Five weeks after October 7, the “March For Israel” occurred in Washington, D.C. 300,000 people traveled from all over America to attend. Fortunately, YU canceled classes for the day and provided 40 buses for their students, which transported approximately 50 people per bus. Roughly 2,000 YU administration, faculty, and students traveled to D.C. These participants woke up at 4:00 a.m. and traveled four hours there and back, all while standing for seven hours at the march. The Yeshiva University dedication that was shown was truly inspiring, and something to be very proud of. But did that dedication continue in the months following? On Thursday, February 1, the organization “Bring Them Home” held a peaceful rally in

front of the United Nations at 8:00 a.m. on a Thursday to bring attention to the remaining hostages in Gaza. With the United Nations being a 15-minute walk from the Beren Campus, there was ample time for students to attend the rally, which lasted for roughly half an hour, and be back in time for the day’s first classes. While standing at the rally and looking around, the unfortunate truth was shown: only three Beren students were in attendance. The rest of the attendees were middle-aged adults, family members of hostages, and a few high schoolers from Yeshiva

“Why is convenience a primary factor for not participating in tangible activities regarding this disastrous war?”

of Flatbush. Considering the proximity to campus, the lack of attendance from Beren college students was arguably appalling, all the more so due to the fact that a flier was sent for the rally twice in the famous “Stern in the Know” chat.

Another example of the Beren campus students uniting to support the chayalim was at the *tzitzit* tying event on Tuesday, November 28, at 7:15 pm. The amount of students who came to learn how to tie *tzitzit* was incredible, with about 40 girls in attendance. Everyone was so enthusiastic to help be a part of the impactful event. Due to the students’ response, another *tzitzit* event was scheduled for Wednesday, December 20, at 7:15, following a *shiur* by Rabbi Burg. The thought process was obvious - because of the continuous large turnout at *shiurim*, it was expected that the attendance for the *tzitzit* event following would be just as significant, if not more. Surprisingly, that statement could not have been further from the truth. There were less than ten students in attendance. Multiple flyers were sent

out on Beren campus chats, along with reminders when the event started and throughout the event. Due to the minimal turnout, a third *tzitzit* event had to be scheduled for *Motzei Shabbat* to complete the tying process of the remaining hundred *tzitzit*. Knowing that relying on Beren students to tie the *tzitzit* was no longer an option due to the poor turnout on Tuesday, and subsequently, *Motzei Shabbat*, a senior student had to take the remaining untied *tzitzit* home for her community to complete tying. Undoubtedly, students who have such a strong relationship to Israel, and

care so deeply about doing our part in this war, would take an additional 20 minutes out of their day to help. The need for such actions is still extremely high, as the demand for *tzitzit* has increased as the war continues. The usual excuse that the students have homework, are busy or are too tired did not apply here, considering the number of students who take time out of their day to attend *shiurim* and *tehillim* groups. The excuse of lack of convenience is not a valid excuse for lack of action. Therefore, the question needs to be asked: why is convenience a primary factor for not participating in tangible activities regarding this disastrous war?

Weeks later, Beren students had the incredible opportunity to hear from Rabbi Leo Dee about his life following the devastating murder of his wife and two daughters in a terrorist attack last *Pesach*. Since this event was on December 3, a Sunday night, the turnout was not nearly as strong as it should have been. Why is it that our beautiful Beit Midrash can fill up with hundreds of seats for a Monday night *shiur*, but

when a Rabbi who lost three family members in a disastrous terrorist attack comes to give us *chizuk* and tell his story on a Sunday, the crowd is not nearly as big as it should be? The argument of convenience is what first comes to mind. Due to most of the students being “in-towners,” it’s not “convenient” for them to return to school on Sunday; instead, they take a 7:00 a.m. train Monday morning to return for classes. Convenience seems to be the only reason the students were not in attendance. On Wednesday, January 24, Roi Assaraf spoke on the Wilf campus as a survivor of the Nova Festival massacre. Due to this event being so high profile and essential, YU provided busing for Beren Students to attend. The school ensured a massive turnout for such a vital and impactful event was as easily accessible to attend as possible. Again, the question arises: What would have been the turnout from Beren students if it had been on a less “convenient” day?

Just because we are four months into the war and have seemingly settled down and gotten more comfortable, doesn’t mean our fight in the West is over. If anything - it’s just begun. It’s essential that we keep showing up whenever we can - and give the same respect and dedication to events like rallies and physical action as we do to *shiurim* and *tehillim*. The Yeshiva University community is very fortunate to have so many of its students participating in events regarding the war. As soon as the war broke out, the immediate response from the students was unprecedented and exhilarating. The Jewish community could not have been more proud of the YU students taking charge in this crisis. However, has the same amount of effort continued? The Beren students have continuously shown up and put in effort towards this war. But is there more that could be done? Is the matter of convenience a deciding factor in aiding the war effort? Is it a valid enough excuse? We will let the readers decide.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

FROM PAGE 3

Beyond that is the worry of actually giving the speech. To be vulnerable and open unapologetically is not something I have ever truly done. It is like no other speech I have ever given.

The prospect of standing before a crowd, baring one’s soul, feels like stepping onto a tightrope stretched across an abyss. It’s a balancing act

between the fear of judgment and the desire for genuine connection. Yet, perhaps therein lies the beauty of vulnerability – in its rawness, its authenticity. It’s the willingness to expose the depths of our humanity, flaws and all, in pursuit of a deeper understanding. And though the thought may be daunting, there’s a glimmer of liberation in the idea of shedding the layers of pretense and embracing our true selves. But as the moment draws near, doubts creep in like shadows cast

by the spotlight. Will they understand? Will they accept? It’s a dance of uncertainty, accompanied by the rhythmic pulse of a racing heart. Yet, buried within the fear lies a flicker of courage, a reminder that within vulnerability lies strength. For it takes resilience to lay bare the innermost chambers of our hearts, to share our stories with unyielding honesty. And so, as I stand on the precipice of vulnerability, I am reminded that true connection is born from the willingness to be seen, to be heard,



and to be understood. It’s a testament to the human spirit’s capacity for empathy and compassion. So, let us cast aside the armor of fear and embrace the power of authenticity. For in the vulnerability lies not only our humanity but also our strength.

Why Is Haley Still Running?

BY ARIEL AZAR

After the Iowa caucus was held on January 15, 2024, former President Trump won the vote with a 30% lead over the other candidates. Following this, almost all of the GOP candidates dropped out of the race and endorsed the former president.

However, former South Carolina governor Niki Haley, who oddly enough was the only candidate not to pledge that she wouldn't become the former president vice presidential nominee if the former president would formally clinch the nomination, is the only candidate still in the race. Haley has the ignorant confidence and delusion of believing she can still win. For voters like me, the path that she claims she has to win is not visible.

According to FiveThirtyEight polling averages, as of February 5, 2024, the gap in national polls between Trump and Haley is 56% and in the former governor's home state of South Carolina, polling shows Trump is also leading Haley by 32%. This is a horrible sign for Haley as no candidate has ever won a GOP primary that included all 50 states has ever gotten the GOP nomination without winning their home state. An even worse

sign for Haley is that in every state recent polls have shown that she is behind by at least 20%.

After the New Hampshire primary race, the former president beat



Haley by double digits. Many national GOP figures which include Senators, House Reps, and RNC officials have gone out to endorse the former president. Many public figures have called for the former governor to drop out of the race for the sake of party unity and to defeat President Biden. Some RNC officials felt so strongly about Trump becoming the presumptive nominee that one filed a motion for the RNC to name Trump the presumptive nominee and shift fully into general election mode. The motion was withdrawn, not because Haley proved she could win, but

because a Trump Truth social post stated that he felt that for the sake of party unity, the primary should be decided by the ballot box.

It's a horrible sign to be down

30% in your home state, but it is a campaign-killing sign that the primary race is still going solely because your campaign rival wishes it to continue.

This all begs the question: Why is Haley still in the race? Why does she believe she has a way to win the nomination?

First, she has a decent amount of donors who may provide her with enough money that may carry her through the race. For example, Haley raised \$16.5 million in January, according to her

campaign. Regardless, money can't buy you elections no matter how much you raise and no matter how many donors you have. In 2020, Mike Bloomberg spent 500 million dollars in his campaign and still lost the democratic nomination to President Biden.

Secondly, Trump has an uncertain fate with his pending court trials which could make him ineligible for the race and she would win by default. However, even if Trump is convicted of a crime, 63% of Republicans would still vote for him. He may not win the general but he'll still win the primary election.

Finally, she could become the "I told you so" candidate whether Trump wins and not much changes or he loses in an even worse way than 2020 and runs in 2028 on that slogan. But, with the satisfaction of most Trump voters in his first term and Biden's approval rating at 40% as incumbent, it is unlikely this will occur. Finally, like what she did New Hampshire, Haley is trying to use open primaries to her benefit and is trying to attract independent and democrat voters to vote for her. While this may earn her more votes, it also alienates many Republicans, decreasing her chances further in the primary.

Terrorist Attacks and Loss

BY REGINA MEZISTRANO,
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

In memory of Elan Aryeh Ben Avraham Feivel.

Last Spring semester, specifically February 27, 2023, at 1:23 PM as I sat in class, a slew of notifications appeared from a chat called "News For the Jews." My curiosity got the best of me and I clicked on the messages.

It read: *MORE TERROR: Another shooting has taken place, this time near Jericho, with a 25-year-old Israeli man being critically injured.* I read, swiped, and pressed on other texts, unphased.

3:02 pm: *UPDATE: We are sad to report that the man who was heavily wounded in the Jericho shooting has died, and that he is an American.* I thought of my older brother, cousins, and friends that live in Israel, but the thought never actualized into real worry. I am mortified to admit, but again, I had zero reaction.

Fast forward 4 hours: My mom calls

me and says, *are you sitting... is a friend near you... can you go find a friend...* Then she uttered the words, *Elan Ganeles was shot and killed in Israel.* My mind and body overflowed with disbelief, sadness, anger, and pain. Within a few minutes, I experienced all the stages of

those who knew Elan, were living a nightmare that thankfully not many had gone through. But now the unimaginable has become normality.

It is frightening how news that doesn't pertain to us can go in one ear and out the other, leaving

horrors sink in when something doesn't personally affect us? I don't believe there is a simple answer. But what sets humans apart from other animals is the complexity of our emotions. We can sympathize with others even when what they are dealing with is unfamiliar to us.

"It is so easy to pretend that the war in Israel is something distant or non-concerning to our lives. But since February 27, I realized it doesn't matter if we don't know the victims personally, it is personal."

grief. My life halted for months. Months were spent crying. Months of staring blankly at the wall. Months of sleepless nights. Months passed on, but I was stuck living the same day perpetually.

Before October 7, 2023, it was almost unheard of to know someone, or know someone who knew someone, who was killed in a terrorist attack. October 7, 2023, began for me about 8 months prior. I, and all

us unfazed. Maybe it is a defense mechanism? Who can really internalize and feel all of life's calamities? It is so easy to pretend that the war in Israel is something distant or non-concerning to our lives.

But since February 27, I realized it doesn't matter if we don't know the victims personally, *it is personal.* It is an attack on our home. It is an attack targeted at a fellow Jew. It is an attack against a human being. But what is the balance of letting life's

It is a few days shy of a year since Elan passed away. 365 days without Elan Ganeles. It hits me at random times that Elan is gone. Other days I am convinced he went to Israel on vacation and will be back soon. The difficulty is finding a balance between moving forward, but not forgetting the past. The first 6 months after Elan passed, I flinched at the thought or mention of his name. I had let his sudden departure cloud the amazing life he lived. Elan was fun, smart, caring, and full of life like no one I had met before. He was truly one of a kind.

May Elan and those whom we personally and collectively lost since October 7, memories be a blessing for all who knew and loved them.



From Fear to Sanctuary

BY BETTY KHIRMAN

On October 7 2023, I found myself overwhelmed with gratitude for being part of a tight-knit Jewish community. Surrounded by classmates who shared the same heritage, in the presence of teachers who showed deep understanding and sensitivity towards the terror unfolding in Israel, and within the arms of a community that fully embraced, supported, and understood my Jewish identity and the struggles I was experiencing.

This sense of belonging was not always the case for me. I was no longer one of the few Jewish students in the room, or at school. Attending a Jewish college wasn't an easy decision - given my upbringing and past experiences. I was set to attend a secular college in California, but on October 7, and in the days that followed, I am glad to say I felt safe within my own school. I did not have to hide my Star of David necklace beneath layers of clothing, or cautiously avoid anything that hinted at my Jewish heritage. During moments of crisis in Israel, I no longer had to grapple with the unsettling question of whether it was safe for me to attend school. These were the precautions I had grown accustomed to in a secular and public school setting, especially during times of heightened tensions in Israel. Instead, I felt understood within my school community, where my concerns were met with empathy, my tears were met with understanding, and my desire to support Israel was met with encouragement. For the first time, I witnessed the President of my school speaking out, engaging in difficult conversations alongside teachers and fellow students. Together we prayed, and together, we took meaningful action.

Yeshiva University's Sacks-Herenstein Center understood the emotions felt by students and recognized the fact that we wanted to take action. As a result, thirty-seven students, including myself, embarked on a solidarity trip to Israel, driven by a shared purpose: to bring comfort, strength, and to bear witness to the trage-

"Yeshiva University's Sacks-Herenstein Center understood the emotions felt by students and recognized the fact that we wanted to take action."

dies unfolding in our homeland.

On the third day of the week-long trip, we bore witness to the worst of humanity—words fail to convey the horror our eyes witnessed. From the first minutes of our arrival in Kfar Aza, we clipped in our helmets, strapped on our bulletproof vests, and linked arm in arm with one another, bracing ourselves for the anticipated horror. It struck me in that moment—realizing that the people on this trip aren't only here with me for a solidarity trip to Israel but they are also my classmates, professors, and Rabbis. As I adjusted my helmet I questioned: why do I get protection, but the people of the Southern Envelope don't? Quickly I was startled hearing a loud boom, much closer than expected.

With an IDF spokesperson, the group went through the kibbutzim, learning about the family lives before October 7 and the terror which occurred that morning. As

we walked we encountered ashes from houses on the ground, walls riddled with bullet holes, and spray-painted markings of the lives lost inside each home. The number inside the circle varied. These were not just numbers within circles; they were people, families.

At one house we stopped, the IDF spokesperson told us about

the family's Saturday afternoon tradition. The father and the kids would send kites bearing words of peace on it like "*shalom*" and "*salam*" and fly them over the fence into Gaza only a few feet away from their home. All they wanted was peace. The family had their kites ready for Saturday, October 7, but terror hit them, leaving their kites remaining on their kitchen table still ready to fly.

Unfortunately, this was one of many heart-wrenching stories we encountered that day and throughout our trip. We continued walking towards the "future generation," an area reserved for children of the families who become adults and newlyweds. The houses were built like a community, two streets facing each other. Now it's deserted. We continued to hear loud explosions. We walked through the lifeless streets. Our minds were not prepared for what we saw. The "future generation" had chairs and couches outside their homes ar-

ranged for communal gatherings. These homes now stood as memorials. Burned, ransacked with gunshots, they stood frozen in time. There were beer bottles left on the floor—celebrations of Simchat Torah disrupted by terror. Laundry left in washing machines—where gunshots were also seen. I paused to peak inside one of the homes of a young boy, the same age as most of us. A sign above his computer caught my eye: "Life is short, brake [misspelled intentionally] the rules, forgive quickly, kiss slowly, truly love, laugh wildly, never regret, what made you smile." The walls bore witness to hundreds of bullet holes, the sign remained, a reminder of a life cut short by violence. An innocent young life was taken by Hamas. *Life is short* but it shouldn't have ended the way it did.

We gathered in a circle at the end of the street, not understanding why, not understanding how someone can do this, just not understanding anything. We still can't fathom it. Bringing comfort to one another we began to sing *Acheinu*. Together we prayed for the lives taken too quickly, grieving families, for the captives, and for the safety of everyone. And together we cried.

The processing continues today. We share their stories, fueling our activism. As students of YU, we don't have to compromise our values for our education. So we can continue telling their stories, and we can continue our activism. Secure in the safety of our school and community.



Looking Out for Out-of-Towners

BY ESTHER NAHON,
OPINIONS EDITOR

“Anyone uber-ing to LGA tonight, anytime between 3 and 4 AM?” I shook my head as this message lit up on my screen last Thursday night, wondering why a student would be taking a flight at such an inconvenient time. Unfortunately, red-eyes are all-too-common at Stern.

There’s no doubt that the overwhelming majority of Stern College students, and students from YU as a whole, are from the tri-state area. Logically speaking, though, that means that the rest of the students are simply *not* from such areas. True, some may live a few states and others a few oceans away, but far or near, we all bear the same title: the out-of-towners.

Though we may stand out socially and bring diversity to the school, it doesn’t come at an easy cost. The days that should bring us joy and excitement actually tend to be the ones that stress us out the most: travel days.

Unusually so, the undergraduate Stern College for Women calendar has chosen to designate Fridays as no-class travel days for the 2023-2024 academic year. This has posed a tremendous challenge to the out-of-town and international community in terms of traveling home to their families for seasonal breaks and religious holidays. Many of these students must endure long flights ranging anywhere from three to even 18 hours in order to go home for holidays and vacations. When factoring in the time it takes to pack and commute to and from the airport, boarding such a flight becomes nearly impossible before Shabbat. “I have to fly across the country on these travel days which is so difficult,” one anonymous Stern student shared. “I live in Seattle which is a 5-6 hour flight and is impossible to do on a winter Friday.”

One of the largest resulting struggles students face is being forced to miss class. Left with no other

choice, many students must begin their journey home on the Thursday preceding travel day, during which classes meet as usual. This obviously poses additional academic stress on out-of-town students as they must catch up and make up the work they’ve missed on their own time due to circumstances that are beyond their control. “Labs are especially difficult to plan around,” one out-of-towner noted. Many science courses at SCW require a co-requisite lab credit which takes place once a week. Per the syllabi of the different science departments, two or more lab absences may result in failure of the lab credit, posing a large issue for students enrolled in Thursday lab slots. Not only must they constantly explain absences to their professors, but they need to consequently find time to join another lab section in order to conduct and collect data from the experiments they’ve missed. Such work is extremely time-consuming, difficult to complete independently, and usually comes at the cost of missing yet another lecture, fueling a never-ending cycle of class catch-up.

In addition, this often creates an inconvenience for the university’s professors as well in terms of attendance, scheduling, grading, and providing virtual options. One anonymous Stern student shared, “Everytime I go home to Argentina, I end up missing classes and sometimes teachers are not so understanding and don’t want to provide a zoom option even though I have no other choice.”

Another anonymous international student shared that she always ends up missing her Thursday classes in order to catch her 18-hour flight home to Uruguay. She thinks that though her “professors are usually very understanding, the University should also be understanding of the people who are out-of-towners and take more than 10 hours to go back home.”

Being confined to a singular travel

day also poses a financial burden to the university’s out-of-towners as they are limited to purchasing airline tickets available during the wee hours of Thursday night and Friday morning. A Venezuelan student shared that she must take a minimum of two flights in order to get home and that there is only one connection flight a day that provides this option for her. “The entire thing ends up being a costly 15-hour ordeal and it’s not like I have many options to choose from,” she says. Having had to miss multiple days of school in order to travel, she feels as though “no one understands or is looking out for [her].”

Students have voiced their frustration with this inconvenient system, especially due to the fact that it is being mandated by an Orthodox Jewish school. “You would think that Yeshiva University wouldn’t make a travel day on Fridays,” said a student from Argentina. Another student from Canada shared similar frustrations in returning to school the day after Purim. “Last year I had to miss my family *mishte*,” she said. The lack of consideration and reasonably adequate travel time Yeshiva University grants out-of-towners actually caused her to lose out on performing the mitzvah of Purim.

Of course, putting these unfortunate and inconvenient scenarios into perspective is not so easy, as I do recognize how fortunate I am to be given days off for the respective Jewish holidays in the first place. With that being said, this calendar system has put us in a difficult position as we are forced to choose between our education, academics, families, and religion. I know that I and many others decided to attend Yeshiva University specifically because of the accommodating calendar schedule which would not force us to sacrifice our religious traditions for our academics. However, given this poorly planned system, it seems as though only in-towners get to truly feel and

experience this privilege while out-of-towners must still decide whether to prioritize critical class material or holidays with family.

Additionally, there have been many instances during the 2023-2024 academic year in which classes resumed on a Thursday. Myself and many other students have had trouble understanding the logic behind this decision, as the majority of YU/Stern students do not have classes on Fridays. Beyond the silly-sounding nature of boarding trans-atlantic flights for one day of classes, I can say that as an out-of-towner, it feels as though I am being robbed of potential precious family time at home. Though it may not seem like much, homesickness is something that really catches up with out-of-towners, especially during the long stretches of the semester. To us, spending an extra four days—an extra Shabbat—in our hometowns, surrounded by our loved ones makes all the difference in our attitude and outlook as we return to campus to conquer the next chunk of the semester.

Yeshiva University prides itself on its diverse student population and welcomes Jewish students from all sorts of cultural backgrounds. Yet, it is these unique students who end up paying for this prestigious status, both literally and figuratively. Though we are exceptionally lucky to attend a Jewish institution that inherently recognizes and respects our religious holidays in addition to seasonal breaks, it should just as well respect and consider all of its students so that all are given fair and equal abilities to celebrate and enjoy this experience. Despite the fact that out-of-towners make up a minority, we are a crucial part of the YU community, and deserve the same rights and privileges as everyone else. As such, we shouldn’t be put at a disadvantage just because, as one student put it, “we can’t just take a bus to Teaneck.”



Sacks-Herenstein Stronger Together Solidarity Mission: A Call To Action

BY REBECCA KALMAR,
STAFF WRITER

“How was your trip?” they ask. As we walk through Kfar Aza where the sun is shining and the sky is blue, somehow, it seems peaceful, but wrongfully so. We tread somberly along the path throughout the kibbutz and BOOM!!! An explosion rocks the silence and for one moment I am filled with nothing but fear.

“How was your trip?” they ask. People stream into the streets of Ofakim clapping, singing, and dancing with the Torah held high. The energetic crowd makes their way through the city until they come to a sudden abrupt halt. The announcer's tone shifts as he informs the crowd this is the exact place where the brothers died. Tears fill the once happy faces, and joyful dancing is now mixed with sadness.

“How was your trip?” they ask. What can I say?

Over winter break, the Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks-Herenstein Center for Values and Leadership, with the guidance of its founders Terri and Andrew Herenstein and support from YU Trustee Elliot Gibber, took a group on the Stronger Together Solidarity Mission to Israel. The mission participants included four Yeshiva University educators and staff members as well as 37 students. The trip lasted from January 7 to January 14, with mission members traveling all throughout Israel to show solidarity, volunteer, and bear witness. As a student who was fortunate to participate in the mission, I have struggled upon

my return from Israel to communicate the depth of meaning and emotional significance of my experiences to others. One core idea that was strongly emphasized, particularly towards the end of our trip, was that those of us who participated in the mission need to share the messages we gained from our experiences in order to make a broader impact. The question is not what can I say, but what can I **do**? What can **you** do? What can **we** do? The following is a list of ways that each of us can make a difference, inspired by lessons from the Sacks-Herenstein Center Mission:

1) Tell Their (Our) Story

The third day of the mission was devoted to bearing witness to the atrocities in Otef Aza. Unfortunately, there are too many stories to tell, but I will share just one of the many narratives we bore witness to that day. While we were in Kfar Aza, Ron, a soldier and our guide, told us to share that she “doesn’t want to live a life where this is okay.” The “this” in her message was the story of the Idan family. On October 7, Roe Idan, a photographer, walked outside to take photos and managed to capture images of Hamas terrorists paragliding into the kibbutz before he was brutally murdered. His little daughter Avigayil managed to run away and was found by another member of the kibbutz who brought her to his own family's safe room. When the man returned from getting a weapon to defend his family, he found that they had all been kidnapped, including Avigayil. Thankfully, Avigayil has returned to Israel, but she came home an orphan. Residents of Kfar Aza were advocates

for peace who flew kites into Gaza which said “Shalom” on them, and they were mercilessly slaughtered. It is our duty to share the messages and stories of the people of Israel, our people, with the world to raise awareness for both the hostages and the atrocities suffered by those who were murdered. Link to the Hostages and Missing Families Forum: Bring them home now: Israeli hostages taken by Hamas

2) Wage the Media Battle

During the trip, Gil Hoffman, a journalist, political correspondent, and the Executive Director of Honest Reporting, gave us a presentation on the war in Israel and the media response. He explained that Israel is fighting the war on multiple fronts and discussed the importance of advocating for Israel on the media battlefield. This message was crystalized for me during the group’s visit to the city of Ofakim. Through the generosity of the Herensteins and Rabbi Shai Graucher, founder of the Standing Together/Chesed V’Rachamim Campaign, a *hachnasat Sefer Torah* (Torah scroll instillation) was organized for Ariel and Roi Guri, *Hashem Yikom Damam* (may Hashem avenge their death), two brothers who were murdered defending their city from the terrorists. During a pause in the dancing, we were able to speak with some of the girls who live in Ofakim. When mission participant Zehava Shatzkes (SCW ‘26) referenced the rally for Israel in Washington D.C. she was met with blank faces. Quickly taking out her phone, Zehava shared videos from the rally with the girls, and it was incredibly powerful to see how moved they were by this show of support. By advocating for Israel on social media, we send a message to our nation and the world that Israel is not

alone, and we stand behind her. Link to Honest Reporting: [HonestReporting | Exposing anti-Israel media bias](#)

3) Laughter and Legacy

Sergeant First Class (res.) Gavriel Bloom, *Hashem Yikom Damo*, was a combat engineer in the 36th Division, who lost his life in the war against Hamas. At the Bloom *shiva* (mourning period) we heard from Gavriel’s mom Jennifer Bloom. She told us that Gavriel was the type of person who always made other people laugh. If you said a word the wrong way, he wouldn’t let you forget it, and it would become an inside joke he would constantly remind you of. She told us that there is a black hole where his *simcha* (joy) was, and asked us to share jokes to make others laugh and bring more happiness into the world. I would like to share the joke she told us at the shiva, and hope you share it with others in honor of Gavriel’s memory. An owner’s parrot continuously used foul language, and the embarrassed owner asked the parrot to stop, but it just wouldn’t stop cursing. Eventually the owner got so frustrated that he snapped and stuffed the parrot in the freezer. When the owner took the parrot out the bird said, “I’ll never do it again, but can I just ask, what did the chicken do?” In our short time with Jennifer, she shared a second important message with us. Once Gavriel died, she was surprised to learn that he owned a motorcycle which he used to deliver pizzas. She asked



Graduation Anxiety

BY MARCELA HOMSAANY,
STAFF WRITER

College is said to be the best years of your life. Countless songs, movies, TV shows, and even family members recount their university days fondly, reminiscing on the creative, social atmosphere that allows young adolescents to strive. With graduation approaching in late May, graduating students are left with an array of questions and emotions surrounding their post-college plans. “For many students, graduating college is the first time in their lives when they really can’t picture what the next stage will look like. For the first time they may be asking themselves questions like: Where will I live? What will I do every day? Who will I live with? How will I support myself financially? Unknowns are generally somewhat anxiety provoking. For many students, this is the first time that so much feels unknown all at once,”

says Dr. Alper, assistant director at the YU Counseling Center.

Over 35% of college graduates suffer from graduation anxiety as students often find themselves taking a rigid, perfectionist approach in an attempt to reach their post-graduation goals and expectations. They attempt to reach the societal standards of success, not taking into account external factors, like the job market, that prohibit them from reaching these potentially unattainable expectations immediately after graduating. In turn, students become consumed by anxiety and depression, which manifest themselves into behavioral and emotional symptoms that dictate everyday life leading up to graduation. These may include low mood, restlessness, a persistent feeling of worry, low motivation, social withdrawal, and an inability to enjoy once

pleasurable activities or hobbies. “It’s like I can’t breathe,” a graduating student, who wishes to remain anonymous, describes, “I’m extremely overwhelmed just by the thought of graduating. My life has always been linear; I went to a Jewish school growing up and always knew I would graduate highschool, then go to Seminary, then Stern College. Now that I’m graduating, I’m lost. I don’t know what the next steps will look like and I’m anxious.”

Luckily, there are an array of healthy strategies that will help this transition move smoothly. “Remember that you have successfully made transitions in the past, and this is just another one,” Dr. Alper explains, “Don’t feel pressured to make all the decisions right now. Start with smaller choices that are easier to make, and eventually, the larger questions will also

fall into place. Allow yourself a gap year if that is what is right for you. There can be pressure to keep moving without taking a break, but this is not right for everyone. A gap year, if spent well, can offer an opportunity to reflect and eventually commit to a decision that is really right for you.”

As the day to walk across the stage approaches, it is important to remember that everybody is on their own timeline, so it is essential to maintain a positive mindset, celebrate the milestones, and reach out to the resources on campus like the Career Center or Counseling Center on campus as needed.

To contact the Counseling Center, please visit: <https://www.yu.edu/student-life/counseling>

To contact the Career Center and Services, please visit: <https://www.yu.edu/sgc>

SACKS-HERENSTEIN
FROM PAGE 9

us to call our mothers and let them know something we had never told them, highlighting that they might understand more than we think they would. So take the time to call your mom or another family member and tell them something new about you, or tell them a joke to make them laugh. Help perpetuate the legacy of the life of an incredible young man which was cruelly and tragically cut short.

4) Support our Warriors

After helping run a carnival for *milluim* (reserve) families in Carmei Gat, we were blessed to hear from Benjy and Eliana Goldstein about their life since October 7. Benjy spoke to us about his experience in *milluim*, while Eliana spoke about what it was like to be a “*milluimma*.” I was inspired and awestruck at the strength, courage, and resilience of this family. They fought to keep their country safe

and persisted for their children. This resilience was also the theme of our visit to Achim L’Chaim. Achim L’Chaim is an organization that provides support for soldiers affected by the mental and physical harm of war. Wounded soldiers are paired with a mentor with the same disability who helps them through their challenges. We toured their facility and heard personal stories from soldiers of their recovery journeys. Once again, I was struck by the incredible resilience of these soldiers, one of whom even returned to fight after recovering from an injury. I was also amazed at the level of thought and care that went into the facility. Every potential need and want of the soldiers was considered and provided for. We must support our warriors who are battling and have battled for our country, as well as our warriors who fight daily so that their families can live their lives in peace. Link to Smiles for the Kids- the organization that ran the Carmei Gat carnival: [Smiles for the kids](#) Link to Achim L’Chaim: [Broth-](#)

[ers For Life](#) – Injured soldiers helping injured soldiers

5) Spread Unity

The most impactful moment for me from our day in Otef Aza was the time spent at the Re’im forest, the site of the Nova Music Festival massacre. We wandered around in a daze between dozens of stakes stuck in the desert ground with pictures of those murdered or taken hostage from the festival. Standing in a circle, arm in arm, we sang from the depths of our hearts, tears streaming down our faces, as the notes of Shifchi, Acheinu, Ani Maamin, and Hatikvah soared heavenward. As I took a moment to look around, I noticed that our circle had grown significantly. Young and old, secular and religious, soldier and student, all united as one nation, strengthening each other. Dr. Erica Brown, Vice Provost of Values and Leadership and Director of the Sacks-Herenstein Center, called on us to spread the feeling of unity that we felt in that moment to

our Yeshiva University campus. Whether it be by taking a few moments to have a genuine conversation with someone you have not met, or committing to stay on campus for Shabbos, we can all contribute to fostering a greater sense of community here at YU. Link to sign up for Shabbos on campus: [Log On \(yu.edu\)](#)

On our last day in Israel, we heard from Fleur Hassan Nahoum, a deputy mayor of Jerusalem. She told us that we don’t need to save the world to have an impact, but we all need to do something. Whether it’s prayer, charity, or a challenge from the list above, everyone can use their strengths to fulfill their mission. As President Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman continues to remind us, we were all called up to battle on October 7. Let’s answer that call, stand strong, and win this war together.



Israel's Media War: Everyone Is a Journalist

BY CHLOE BAKER,
FEATURES EDITOR

It's been four months since Hamas waged war on Israel, and while Israel has advanced on many fronts, one front in the West remains a hotbed for antisemitism and ruthlessness - modern day media. It's hard to say if Israel will ever win this war with information constantly traveling faster than the speed of light and most of the general public misplacing their moral compasses. However, we as a generation have the power to fix what is broken and pave the path to a more just future.

While it's easy to shed light and dwell on the countless wrongdoings of major media outlets since October 7 (such as CNN referring to the infamous hospital blast as being "shrouded in uncertainty," when a USA Today Op-Ed called the murdering of babies "an old fake news trope," NPR drawing a parallel between Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners, and The Guardian referring to Hamas's heinous acts as "resistance"... These are just a few that come to mind, that were originally exposed by HonestReporting) these acts are in the past. If anything, they just further emphasize what it takes and means to be a proper journalist. With the pen in your hand, and the words sounding perfectly on paper, you have the power to tell a story; but where your intentions lie is what can make or break a great story.

Despite the fact that many believe journalism is a dying profession, journalists still carry a heavy load. They bear the responsibility of tell-

ing a story in an unbiased and ethical fashion. They really are the hand that rocks the cradle of the world. This is especially true in times like today when journalism is more widespread and accessible than ever before. It's no longer just newspapers, radio, or television. It's Tiktok, Instagram, X, Facebook, and much more. Anyone can tell a story on any subject. It's not despite, but rather because

"If anything, they just further emphasize what it takes and means to be a proper journalist. With the pen in your hand, and the words sounding perfectly on paper, you have the power to tell a story; but where your intentions lie is what can make or break a great story."

of this reality that an emphasis on informed, unbiased, and ethical storytelling should be made.

A few months ago, it was exposed by Honest Reporting that local Gazan journalists—some employed by companies such as CNN, The New York Times, and Reuters—were involved in the October 7 massacre. The border was breached "not only physically, but also journalistically." While Israelis were being kidnapped

from their homes on golf carts and motorcycles, these "journalists" remained still, documenting these war crimes as if what they were doing was business as usual. Before being a journalist, you are first and foremost a human being. Your presence matters, and who you are should always come before what you do. These "journalists" were not taking photos and telling a story to the public; they

were proudly documenting war crimes and relishing in the success of "Palestinian resistance" along with their terrorist peers.

The meat of what makes a good journalist is the ability to differentiate between telling a good story and causing more damage to a situation. Rabbi David Fohrman puts it perfectly: "When you are witnessing great suffering, history may laud you for reporting the suffering - but as

a human being, what integrity do you really have left if you choose to stand apart from it?"

While the term "journalist" may mean nothing to you or seem far away - as if in another world, the truth is, we are all journalists whether we want to embrace it or not. We all have the power to tell stories and do what's right. We have the power to inform the world of injustice when we see it. We have the ability to share our interests and opinions with each other, and we have the privilege to be able to do it all freely. As the ever-so-talented journalist, Lucy Aharish, said, "as a journalist this [my microphone] is my only weapon." Sometimes, in situations as dire as this one, our only ability is to speak, write, inform, and make sure the truth gets out to the best of our ability. We can't control the misconduct taking place on these major news networks, but we can control how we react to it. We can call it out, condemn it, expose it and do the best we can to stay informed.

We are all journalists. This title comes with privilege and a duty to continue using our voices in the most honest and influential ways we can.



Hadas Lowenstern: A Model of Emunah in Dark Times

FEATURES

BY DANIELLA WEISS,
STAFF WRITER

I had the privilege of interviewing Hadas Lowenstern, the wife of Elisha Lowenstern, Hy”d, who was killed in Gaza on December 13, 2023 by an anti-tank missile fired by Hamas. Her husband was a testament to the courage and determination of *Am Yisrael*, and volunteered to fight even though he was exempt because he had six children.

As I sat down with Hadas, she explained that although she believes many people see her as a source of strength for others, she views herself as simply a representative of Hashem, and that the strength she finds comes entirely from Him. She explained that she cannot carry the suffering she has gone through on her own, and hopes that all of *Am Yisrael* will hold on to her suffering with her. Hadas told me she had no idea that the video of her that went viral online, where she talks about her husband and gives *Am Yisrael* words of strength, would reach so many people and have such an impact on others.

Hadas described how she works very hard on her *emunah* (faith) and *bitachon* (trust), noting how she listens to shiurim on *emunah* often. She then compared the effort that must be put into improving one’s faith in Hashem to sports: just as one needs to practice and work out in order to improve in a sport, so too they must put in time and effort to develop a deeper connection with Hashem.

In the past, Hadas tried to look at the bright side of everything, avoiding recognizing the negative aspects of life. Now, Hadas relates, she sees that the good and bad both exist in every situation that we find ourselves in, and it is up to *us* how we view every aspect of our lives. For example, instead of focusing on the mess your children make in

“Oftentimes, it is easier to dwell on the bad rather than the good, but you are a Jew, and therefore you cannot take the easy route.”

the house, thank Hashem for the gift of having kids. Oftentimes, it is easier to dwell on the bad rather than the good, but you are a Jew, and therefore you cannot take the easy route, explained Hadas. It is not easy to be *tznua* (modest) and keep Shabbat, but it is what we must do as people who seek out and value truth. We will always face challenges in our lives, but it is our responsibility to view those challenges as opportunities for growth, a chance to thank Hashem even in the face of hardships.

After being asked what she would say to someone who questions where Hashem is in the world at this time, Hadas responded with an analogy if there is a child who is given food and toys and once, when he asks for candy, does not get it, he says to his father, “you never give me anything.” That is ungrateful. We have so much good in the world. We just have to recognize it. Hadas acknowledged

that, even though Elisha is gone, she still tries to see the balance in what Hashem has given her. She always ends up saying thank you to Hashem, and believes that every Jew must stop focusing on what they don’t have and start saying “thank you” for what they do have.

Hadas added what we in the USA can do to help end this war. She

shared that if one individual decides to smile at someone, even such a seemingly small action can affect the entire *klal* (community). The Jewish people are one people. Many of us in the US cannot go and fight in Gaza. Every Jew has to fight their own war and they all know what it is they can do to make the world a better place. Hadas emphasized that when antisemites want to kill Jews, we should be ten times more of a Jew. This way we can keep the memory of the soldiers alive. “If I would give up, [then] they [would have] killed two - Elisha and I.”

In addition, after asking about Elisha and what lessons we could take from him, Hadas explained that Elisha would call each of his siblings, parents, and in-laws every Friday. It was not a short Good Shabbos and bye, rather, he gave so much thought into every conversation that he had with his family.

I was so impressed with Hadas’s

emunah. At the end of our conversation, I asked her how each of us could build our own *emunah*. She explained that if someone needs to lose weight, you do not tell them not to eat any sugar at all, but rather, you tell them to drink one less sugary beverage and take the stairs twice a week. Similarly, we should start with little moments of *emunah* and build on them slowly. If an egg falls out of the fridge, stop and realize that it is not a big deal. Choose something very small and use that to strengthen your *emunah*. Every day, write down two things that you are grateful for.

Hadas concluded our conversation by highlighting how she only became religious fifteen years ago. She emphasized that one must not take big jumps when attempting to grow their faith. Rather, one should stay true to themselves and start with something very small. Once a day, give someone a compliment, say thank you to *Ima* (mom). Over time, through these small endeavors, you will begin to see your connection to Hashem grow in inspiring ways, in ways you could not even have imagined. In Hadas’s eyes, *Am Yisrael* is holding up pretty well despite these difficult times, coming together as a community and supporting each other. We only need to do a little more to bring Moshiach.

Donations can be made to Hadas and her family here: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/peer-to-peer/b19e505e-b2a2-4e10-beb6-3278a7795765>

Looking Forward with Rabbi Fine: Torah Activities on Beren This Semester

BY EMILY GOLDBERG,
PUBLICATION MANAGER
AND LAYOUT EDITOR

From Shabbat on campus, to nightly shiurim, to teaching classes, Rabbi Fine is looking forward to the Torah activities on Beren this semester.

As Rabbi Fine walked into the Beren Beit Midrash for this interview with the *YU Observer*, numerous students approached him with questions or simply waved hello. Rabbi Fine, Yeshiva University Beren Campus Rabbi, joined Yeshiva University along with his wife Rebbetzin Ellie Fine in Fall 2022. They currently work alongside Rabbi Avrumi and Rebbetzin Michal Schonbrun, who serve as Resident Scholars.

As Rabbi Fine arrived, the sounds of students learning Torah could be heard across the Beit Midrash. He reflected on the past semester, relaying that, “we had, thank God, an amazing Elul...and then obviously since Simchas Torah, it's been very very different, definitely not a typical semester,” because of the impact of the Israel-Hamas war. Yet, “looking back at it, just to think of some of the powerful moments that we had” was very impactful.

Looking towards the future, Rabbi Fine is hopeful that the Torah programming planned for this semester will be meaningful for students as well. The Torah activities this semester will include many classics as well first time events.

The War in Israel's Impact on Torah Programming

The war in Israel has been hard for many living in the US who are not in close proximity to Israel. “The more that we can connect to [Israel] and hear from people” actually living there “the more powerful we will be able to experience everything that is going on and to help in the ways that we can,” said Rabbi Fine. For example, students will have the opportunity to hear from Roi Assaraf, who survived the Re'im Supernova Music Festival and at a separate event, from Jennifer Airley, whose son Benjamin Airley was killed fighting in Gaza.

Shabbat on Campus

Many of the Shabbat guest speakers that were canceled because of the war in Israel have been rescheduled for this upcoming semester. Students will also have the opportunity to hear speakers from

Israel at seminary alumni Shabbatons. “Every single Shabbos is going to be something, which is really really exciting, definitely after a very not usual semester this past semester as far as Shabbos goes.”

In addition, Shabbat programming for this semester will include the coed Sy Syms School of Business Shabbaton, the Stern College Dramatics Society Dramaton with Leah Gottfried and her husband Rabbi Isaiah Rothstein. Other Shabbatot will host guest speakers from the Beren campus and from outside YU.



Rabbi Fine also confirmed that there will be a minyan every Shabbat this semester after unclear circumstances prevented this multiple times last semester.

Rabbi Fine appreciates Shabbat at YU because “it's a great opportunity to hear from different voices, to learn from people in a more informal setting” and “to spend real quality time with the community.” His upbeat announcements regarding Shabbat scheduling and the best-tasting dipping sauces are famous and appreciated by those who stay in for Shabbat often.

Daily Shiurim

Along with speakers who give regular shiurim on the Beren campus, including Rabbi Mordechai Willig, Rav Moshe Tzvi Weinberg, and Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz, who are all scheduled to come to the Beren campus this semester, Rabbi Fine is also working to bring “new voices” to Beren's Beit Midrash.

Torah Activities Committee Pres-

ident Gaby Rahmanfar initiated two new series for seniors: a workplace *halacha* series, and senior seminars, which will address issues students might face once they leave college. “Having a consistent rabbinic [presence] is huge for our campus,” said Gaby. “Their efforts and presences really gels the community on campus.” She continued, “Whether that's through the late night schmoozes in the beis or hanging out at a Shabbos oneg, they bring so much to our campus.”

The first week back from the break will also include an event

giving his daily chaburot on Alei Shur, Shearim Bi'Tefillah and Sefer Ayekah (Where Are You).

Holiday Programming

“We highly encourage everyone to stay in for Purim on campus because it will really be, *b'ezrat Hashem*, a very powerful experience,” said Rabbi Fine. He is “hoping to have an amazing Shabbos Zachor on campus,” along with megillah reading and a chagigah Motzei Shabbat. On Purim day there will be “a really amazing *mishloach manos* event” with different breakfast foods in the lobby of each dorm building.

For Pesach, Rabbi Fine plans to once again hold a mock *seeder* where students will hear Divrei Torah on the Haggadah.

Nancy Alexander, Judaic Representative on the Torah Activities Committee and Student Council, appreciates “all of the Torah programming going on [that] has made Stern a place of honest and genuine spiritual growth.” She continued, “Rabbi Fine invests so much in making sure that the *yiddishkeit* of all the women at Stern is thriving and alive!”

Rabbi Fine also expressed deep gratitude towards Dean Shoshana Schechter, Associate Dean of Office of Torah and Spiritual Life, Haviva Tirschwell, Program Coordinator, Rachel Ciment, Director of Spiritual Guidance, Gaby Rahmanfar, Torah Activities Committee President, and the entire Torah Activities Committee board, who all work immensely hard behind the scenes to enhance Torah life on the Beren campus.

Rabbi Fine finds “all of the aspects of [his] job incredibly meaningful...even just to see people in the morning and say hello; even something as small as that is incredibly meaningful, just to give someone a smile at the beginning of the day.”

At the same time, looking towards the future, Rabbi Fine emphasized how “every institution and furthermore each faculty member, student, and member of this community always has to be thinking about...how do we improve? How do we get better?” He continued, “Each member of our Beren campus community is important and helps create the special and unique place that we are.”

for the *yahrzeit* of Rabbi Moshe Kahn zt”l, with Beren alumni, the Graduate Program in Advanced Talmudic Studies, Dr. Nechama Price, Rabbi David Nachbar, and Rabbi Gedalyah Burger.

“There is, thank God, a ton going on, and hopefully it will be a really powerful semester,” relayed Rabbi Fine. “The reason why we are able to have so much programming is because [of the students] who are interested in it.”

Weekly Chaburot with the Campus Couples

Chaburot with the campus couples will also resume this semester after some inconsistency last semester caused by programming for the Israel-Hamas war. Chaburot will include Nesivos Shalom on the Parsha with Rebbetzin Fine, Rav Hirsch on Sefer Tehillim with Rebbetzin Schonbrun, Mussar on the Parsha with Rabbi Fine, and Ramban on the Parsha with Rabbi Schonbrun. Additionally, Rabbi Fine will be



Club Profile: Sephardic Club

BY RIVKA INGER,
SENIOR FEATURES EDITOR

Each month, the *YU Observer* aims to highlight one club available to the YU undergraduate community. For the February 2024 edition, the *YU Observer* is highlighting the Sephardic Club.

Club Name: Sephardic Club

Head(s): Sara Elyassian and Gilad Menashe

Relevant Campus(es): Wilf and Beren

What is your club's mission statement? To create meaningful and inspiring events for the Sephar-

dic community, and of course the greater YU community as a whole. We try to include everyone in our events and like to have a diverse crowd. We have these events for the sole purpose of inspiring people, and to help them connect and really have an enjoyable time on campus, whether it be a Shabbaton or a guest speaker from America or Israel.

Why is this club important?

Sara: Because there needs to be a safe haven for Sephardic students on campus. I've been working this year as president to bridge the gap between Ashkenazi communities and Sephardi ones, since we don't want to create a divide, but rather a safe haven. Most minyanim here are Ashkenazi and so

are most Rebbeim, and we really try to help a little extra to bring our light into the community.

What inspired you to get involved in/start the club? Sara: I'm Iranian and first-generation American. Both of my parents were born in Tehran and spent their teenage years in Iran, and I have very very strong Persian roots and I'm really passionate about my heritage.

What are some plans you have for this semester/future semesters? On the women's campus we're bringing in Rabbi Beni Rofeh once a month to talk about happiness and Torah. We had our first one just last week and girls loved it! We're also planning a pre-Pu-

rim bash, and we also have an off-campus Shabbaton every year.

What is your advice to someone looking to get involved on campus? Don't be afraid to ask for help. You can ask upperclassmen how to get involved, and be sure to always go the extra mile and try new things because before you know it you'll lose the opportunity. The Office of Student Life is always there to help you find a solution to a problem if you don't think that something will work, they're very accommodating!

Anything else to say about your club: We hope to continue to expand the club to the greater YU community and make a positive impact on YU students.

The Seforim Sale is Back at Belfer

BY GABRIELLA GOMPERTS,
FEATURES EDITOR

Newly erected bookshelves and tables line Weissberg Commons, stacked to the brim with Jewish books of all genres as Yeshiva University's annual Seforim Sale is officially back in action. From February 4 to 25, individuals from all walks of Jewish life have the opportunity to visit the sale and peruse the wide selection of Seforim and other excellent reads that the sale has to offer.

As the Seforim Sale continues to grow, CEO Yosef Silver (SSSB '25) has decided to expand and promote the sale by hosting various events and promotions featuring YU *Rebbeim* and other guest speakers. These events take place almost every night, drawing crowds of individuals who come to enjoy the lectures and exclusive discounts. These events include Shiurim given by well-renowned *Rebbeim*, promotions by authors and editors, and even book launches. Additionally, different Jewish organizations such as Bnei Akiva, NCSY, and OU-JLIC have exclusive discounted nights for members and host their own *Shiurim*.

In an interview with the *YU Observer* on opening day, Silver explained that the sale aims to provide more opportunities for outreach. "We're trying to have daily events because we felt it's a good way to really bring in all different kinds of



people from all different places." Some of these events include Rav Daniel Feldman's book launch of "Letter and Spirit," Rabbi Manning and Bracha Poliakoff speaking on their book "Reclaiming Dignity," and a Divrei Torah and book talk with Rav Herschel Schachter. In this way, Silver hopes to draw and bring together a diverse crowd of people all uniting together through their love of Torah.

Silver told the *YU Observer* that the biggest challenge the sale has faced this year is the overall lo-

gistics and dealing with problems that suddenly arise, such as vendors that change their mind or rising costs. Such challenges are rare, but when they do arise, the staff handles them with swiftness and professionalism.

Section Manager Rivka Inger (SCW '25) described one of the bigger setbacks for this year's sale. She told the *YU Observer* that, "One of our major vendors raised their costs on us before the sale began, meaning that we needed to go through hundreds of books and relabel them. It was definitely one of our most time-consuming challenges in the days leading up to the sale."

This year's Seforim Sale has been in the making since last March, when Silver was asked

to take charge of the planning and execution of the sale. It is apparent to all who walk through the doors of Belfer Hall that the sale is only made possible because of the amazing team working extremely hard behind the scenes who ensure that everything runs smoothly. From the ordering team, the marketing team, and the general staff, everyone puts in an immense amount of dedication and effort in order to make the sale as amazing as it is.

All those who attend the Seforim Sale appreciate the impact it has on the wider Jewish community. "The environment at the Seforim Sale is really amazing. It is a place where Jews from all over the area can come together while searching for all different types of books," said Stern student Gittel Friedman (SCW '26), who works at the sale as a Section Manager.

To Silver, the main goal of the Seforim Sale is to foster a community built on a love for Torah and the unity of *Klal Yisrael*. "We want to spread as much Torah [as we can], so the more people we bring in, the more we're able to give out to other people."



Featuring MACS Athletes: The Soccer Team

BY KIKI AROCHAS,
STAFF WRITER,
AND RUCHAMA BENHAMOU,
MANAGING EDITOR

In the YU Athletics community, the term "team" often transcends its literal meaning, evolving into a tight-knit community where players and coaches become more than just colleagues - they become family. Both the men's and women's soccer teams represent the true notions of friendship and reliance that form the strong bonds between players. Whether it be at practice, a game, or even within the halls of the Wilf and Beren campuses, players feel a true sense of community within the diversified population of YU.

Nowhere is this sense of community more evident than in the Macs men's and women's soccer teams at Yeshiva University. Maya Aronson (SCW '25), a Sociology major, emphasizes, "I might not be working as hard as science majors but, I definitely put my all into everything." Maya finds comfort in the team dynamic, stating, "I also find that it is a good break [from school] and mentally it is relieving to exercise with other people around, as we are all friends."

For the women's soccer team, after a long day of rigorous dual-curriculum academics, these dedicated athletes gather for practice every evening, committing themselves, fine-tuning their skills, and supporting their teammates. Maya reflects on the team's resilience, saying, "Honestly, we lose a lot of our games, except the non-conference ones...[sometimes] we are just ready for the game to end, but we always play through it." Despite

facing challenges, the team perseveres, fueled by their unwavering support for one another. "I am happy to be with my friends and we are cheering each other on telling each other to keep going even when we are injured - I love it," added Maya. Behind the scenes, the coaching staff plays a pivotal role in fostering this sense of community as well as hard work and resilience. Led by Head Coach Jose Maria Aberasturi, along with assistant coaches Marc

"There is a ton of brotherhood on the team. I hope it can serve as an example to all of YU, showing that we can have connections with people of all backgrounds and truly reach across the aisle."

- Dov Jacobson

Zharnest, Anjelica Feig, and Giselle Luow, the team benefits from a wealth of expertise and dedication.

For the men's soccer team, practice begins at 9 PM in Votee Park, Teaneck. Once they finish warming up through jogging and stretches, players get started with passing drills for the first thirty minutes. "Passing drills have a way of synchronizing the team, amping up the chemistry," explains defender Dov Jacobson (YC '24). "It establishes the key skills for the game: passing, timing movement, the weight of your passes, and taking good touches." The next drill is a key part of the team's play style and identity: possession drills, in which the players are divided into two teams and practice maintaining possession of the ball. "We take pride in our possession," explains Captain Josh Ziarno (Syms '24). "As a bunch of Jewish kids, we don't really have a size advantage over other teams, so we need to make sure that game in and game out we are dominating the possession." After the first

hour, the practice slowly builds to simulating real game conditions. One net stays in its usual spot while the other is brought to midfield, and the players play a miniature game to practice. This ends at around 11 PM, when the players retire for the night.

In previous years, the program struggled to piece together successful seasons. In the past three years, however, there has been a stunning and welcome turnaround. Two seasons

ago, the team had its best regular season, and made it to overtime before falling in the finals. This season, they broke their own regular season record, finishing third in the conference. Josh credits this to the team's efforts to go international. "We started recruiting players outside of the U.S. Most of the guys went to the Macs games, and got several international players." The current diversity of the team is remarkable, sporting players from countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Mexico, Chile, Panama, South Africa, France, England, Italy, and the Netherlands.

identity among the team. "Major props to [Co-Captain] Alejandro, who is a major voice in big games. Him and the others provide great leadership, experience and maturity." He further commented on the culture the team cultivated. "We know we can win a championship if we play our best game. Winning breeds more winning, it builds that momentum and winning culture." In the Fall of 2023, the Macs women's soccer team proudly represented our college in the Skyline Conference, with standout performances from athletes like Sophie Dubin. Sophie Dubin as well as Dov Jacobson showcased their talent and effort, with Dubin emerging as a standout defender. Starting all 11 games she played in, Dubin's remarkable 33 saves during crucial moments underscored her pivotal role in the team's success, while Jacobson's contributions further solidified the team's formidable defense.

Having played his last season as a Mac, Dov reflected on his YU soccer career as a whole and what the program means to him. "YU soccer will always be in my heart. The team highlights a diverse conglomerate of players that are at different levels religiously - some players will even bring snacks so others can make *brachot*. We play a beautiful game, representing Jews, as we are the only Jewish soccer NCAA team in the world. There is a ton of brotherhood on the team. I hope it can serve as an example to all of YU, showing that we can have connections with people of all backgrounds and truly reach across the aisle." The year's successful run was particularly impressive in light of the graduation of *nine* players from the previous year's team, seven of whom were starters. Josh believes this comes down to the example set by the veteran players who did return. "It speaks to the leadership of the returning players. Guys stepped up, and the new players bought into the system we ran." Jacobson similarly credits it to the veterans, while also citing a united sense of

There is a ton of brotherhood on the team. I hope it can serve as an example to all of YU, showing that we can have connections with people of all backgrounds and truly reach across the aisle."

There is a ton of brotherhood on the team. I hope it can serve as an example to all of YU, showing that we can have connections with people of all backgrounds and truly reach across the aisle."



RANT: Those chats where one person gets Mazal Toved

Those chats where one person gets *Mazal Toved* and then every person under the sun responds *Mazal Tov*. I don't understand why I need 600 of the same message just so you can feel like you fulfilled your social obligations.

RANT: To the awful orange and green spinny chairs on the Beren campus

To the awful orange and green spinny chairs on the Beren campus. You would think that after the poky red chairs with broken tables that we would appreciate some new desks. But no. These are not desks! They move everywhere, and you constantly feel like you are on top of people. Also, the table part for our computers (the most important part by the way), is slanted so that everything else on your desk, like your pens, pencils, notebooks, or food fall and spill everywhere causing chaos and distraction. Rather than getting a bunch of "fancy" spinning chairs as desks, next time just get plain stationary ones. Thanks.

RANT: To the fact that we aren't allowed to use "admin" elevators

To the fact that we aren't allowed to use "admin" elevators. The elevators on the Beren campus and dorms barely work as it is. There is always, and I mean always a bell ringing, someone getting stuck, and at least $\frac{2}{3}$ that are broken. We should at the very least be able to use these so-called "admin" elevators. It is ridiculous that we pay so much tuition to go here and can't use certain elevators to get to class on time. They even skip certain floors that are "non-admin" floors which are just wild. Also, have you been in a Beren campus elevator? They are packed to the brim. Having another elevator would help the foot traffic and allow us to stress less about making it to class.

RAVE: To the late market heights cafe.

To the late market heights cafe. Although very overpriced, you did supply me with much needed tahini paste, which I greatly appreciate. RIP.

RAVE: To the cashier at Trader Joe's

To the cashier at Trader Joe's who gave me a discount on my favorite dip! PS - their dips are not just for Shabbat, but good all week round.

RANT: To all those people who take the elevators one floor up or one floor down

To all those people who take the elevators one floor up or one floor down. Unless you have an injury please do not crowd the elevators! The elevators on Beren are always broken and/or full, and people need to get to class on time. But if you are taking it one floor up, when your friend is trying to get to the 10th floor in 245, she is never getting there. This also goes for the elevators in Brookdale. If you are going to the Package Center on floor two - WALK IT! To be honest, if it was up to me, everyone who lives on floors 5 and below have to use the stairs.

RANT: To the lack of transportation between buildings all day

To the lack of transportation between buildings all day, every day. It's nice and all that we can take the local shuttle between dorms and 245/215, but what about during the school day? What if someone can't get to the other building physically or because the street is blocked and the light takes forever to change? There should be an underground tunnel connecting the 245 and 215 buildings. This time of year is freezing in New York and a tunnel would help us stay warm. I know that Jews are starting to be known for their illegal tunnels so what better time to dig when they're already ex-

RAVE: To the people who run the big events in and out of YU.

To the people who run the big events in and out of YU. Y'all are awesome! It takes a whole lot of work to get fun social events for the rest of us. Thanks for all the hard work you do!

RAVE: To the BCSG for always having drop-in office hours

To the BCSG for always having drop-in office hours with food like every other week! No other student government in my time at Stern has really cared to listen to its students about what is wanted and needed on campus. I really appreciate you just giving us your time and care to make us feel seen and heard and to truly make things for the better. Also free food?! I'm in! Everyone look out for the emails from BCSG for more information on their next drop-in!

JQY IS HERE FOR YOU!

GET SUPPORT FOR YOUR
JEWISH QUEER COLLEGE EVENTS
AT [JQY.ORG/JQYU](https://jqy.org/jqyu)

Join us at our weekly Drop-In Center in Times Square on Thursdays for pizza, activities, and access to licensed mental health professionals.

Join the JQY App to meet other LGBTQ+ Jews around the world!

Needing support?
Call or text our warm line at 551-JQY-HOPE
(551-579-4673) and a social worker will
respond within 24 hours.



[JQY.ORG](https://jqy.org)

Faculty Profile: Dr. Jill Katz

BY GABRIELLA GOMPERTS,
FEATURES EDITOR



How long have you worked at YU?

20 years. I started in January of 2003.

What do you like most about working at YU?

I like my colleagues, I really, really like the students, and I like the *hashkafa* (Ideology). Especially now, post October 7th, it's a place where I can be myself and have my reality confirmed by the world around me. I enjoy the Jewish environment, and it's easy to incorporate that background as a biblical archaeologist or when I'm teaching Jewish history. The people, the values, the vibe, certainly not the cafeteria, though. I think we all agree there.

What made you passionate about archaeology?

I was always interested in histo-

ry. I naturally gravitated towards it. I like stories, and I consider history a grand story. I became more interested in ancient history through some travels. When I was in high school, I went to Israel and Greece and visited ancient sites. I realized in both places that while most of the other participants enjoyed them, I seemed to really enjoy them. And I still do! Whenever I travel, I always go to the ancient sites and look at antiquities, and I love museums. I like the physical aspect of excavations, being outdoors, and the sense of discovery. You never know what you will find. Doing research in archaeology is easy - all you have to do is dig up something that no one has dug up before.

"It's really reshaped how I think about even the Babylonian destruction in Jerusalem or the Roman destruction of the Second Temple. I have a greater sense of the immediacy and the horror. It's one thing to read Eicha, it's another thing to go to Kfar Aza and see Eicha."

Is there anything interesting that you're currently working on?

I went on a Scholars' trip to Israel over intercession and had a chance to meet with the archaeologists from the Israel Antiquities Authority to understand the work that they're doing now in the kibbutzim and near the music festival. They're applying archaeological techniques to try to identify people who up to that point were

considered missing. I am working on a piece about that because destruction is the bread and butter of archaeology but up until now it has always been the distant past for me, not just a few months ago. It's really reshaped how I think about even the Babylonian destruction in Jerusalem or the Roman destruction of the Second Temple. I have a greater sense of the immediacy and the horror. It's one thing to read Eicha, it's another thing to go to Kfar Aza and see Eicha.

Do you have any advice for students interested in a career in archaeology or if they're majoring in sociology?

I think a sociology major can

is very close to my heart, and for students who are interested in archaeology I would encourage them to get as much experience as possible. There's no substitute for field experience and for working hands on with a material culture.

If you could bring any guest lecturer, alive or deceased, who would it be and what would they speak about?

In archaeology, the one person I'd want to bring in is Howard Carter, who discovered King Tut's tomb. To hear about that experience and have him describe that moment of discovery would be fascinating.

What is one thing you want students to know?

I want students to open themselves up to the many opportunities Yeshiva University offers, such as overseas research and travel. These are immersive and transformative experiences that will enrich you for the rest of your life. On campus, there are lectures, shiurim, clubs, teams, and so forth that offer new experiences. You are at the time of life when you don't have much responsibility, so take advantage of as many of these opportunities that you possibly can.

What book would you recommend everyone should read?

I'm teaching the Sociology of Food right now, and I do think *The Botany of Desire* by Michael Pollan is a wonderful book.

Staff Writer Profile: Kiki Arochas

BY ALLY HADGE,
FEATURES EDITOR

What year are you in YU?

This is my 2nd year here!

What school are you in?

Yeshiva College

Where did you go to high school and yeshiva?

Heichal for high school, Yishrei Lev for Yeshiva

What is your major?

I'm majoring in English with the Creative Writing concentration (Prof. Poretz is the G.O.A.T!)

What do you want to do after college?

I'm planning on being a therapist, but nothing is written in

stone yet.

What is your favorite section to write for?

I love Arts and Culture. I can write whatever I want. Opinions scare me.

Why did you decide to join the YU Observer?

Yitzy asked me to apply to be an editor and I chickened out so I became a writer instead.

What is your favorite article that you have written?

"Skillet's Lucy: The Story Behind the Song." It was one of my favorite songs and being able to write about it was awesome, plus the surprising amount of readers!

Why should someone join the

YU Observer?

We have Noam Ben Simon. Enough said.

What is your favorite part about Yeshiva University?

The Caf lunch of rigatoni with cheese and broccoli. Holy hell.

What is your favorite pie flavor?

(Dunno if anybody said this already but) *PIE FLAVOR*, PEEWWWWWW

If you had to have strawberry ice cream, would you want it with chunks of strawberries or without?

Definitely with strawberries. Never tried it before but it sounds like a good idea.



Finding Strength Amidst Tragedy: Roi Assaraf's Story of Survival

BY RACHEL LINCER

On January 24, 2024, Roi Assaraf, a survivor of the Nova Music Festival, visited the student body of Yeshiva University to share his inspiring story of survival that changed the course of his life. The event, attended by hundreds of students, left an undeniable mark on the university. "It was inspiring to hear his story and how his Emunah was strengthened even after everything he went through," said Stern student Devora Malichy (SCW '24).

Before October 7, Roi wasn't too concerned with his level of observance, or keeping *mitzvot*. He loved to attend festivals and parties, he has many tattoos, and he owns a barbershop that originally wasn't Shomer Shabbat. But after October 7, his life was forever changed. Consumed by the responsibilities of parenting two daughters, Roi and his wife Yona, rarely went out but made an exception for the Nova Music Festival. An invitation was extended by their friend, Elchanan, that prompted them to attend what was meant to be an evening of celebration.

The alarm Roi set for 3 AM never went off, causing them to arrive later at 6 AM to the festival. Noticing the amount of cars, they placed a milk carton on top

of their antenna to be able to easily identify their vehicle amongst the sea of cars. They then entered the Mushroom, a private pre-event along with his brother, Dan.

At 6:28 AM, a pivotal moment occurred, that Roi will never forget, as he began recording the festival. It was then when he noticed two ominous shapes in the sky, which he initially thought were clouds. As he zoomed in, these two shapes revealed themselves as missiles. Panic ensued as security guards declared a code red situation, urging the festival attendees to disperse or seek refuge.

With his daughters' faces flashing in his mind, Roi knew he needed to act smartly. He and his wife were among the first to escape through the emergency exit. Without thinking, Roi began recording a video for his daughters, but his wife reassured him that "Hashem is with us."

As Roi, his wife, and two friends frantically ran to their car, Roi woke up a man who was sleeping in their car. Later on, he learned that this man saved 27 lives at the Nova festival. Roi called his brother Dan to warn him, and after six long hours of hiding, he survived.

Reciting the *Tefilat Haderech*, Roi's instincts once again led him to ignore Waze instructing them to turn

back to the festival and continue driving in the opposite direction. What they saw ahead was nothing anyone could have ever prepared for. Roi and Yona were confronted by a jeep filled with terrorists aiming towards their car. Amidst the chaos, Roi began screaming *Shema Yisrael* and from his rearview mirror, saw the jeeps heading to the Nova Festival. Roi's friends in the back seat noticed an IDF base and questioned whether they should go or not. Again, Roi followed his gut and continued straight. Later on, they learned that this base was full of terrorists disguised as IDF soldiers.

After 5 hours of driving, they finally arrived safely at home.

Devastatingly, Roi lost 13 friends that day, and many of whom, including Elchanan, are being held hostage at this very moment.

Following this traumatic event, Roi discovered newfound strength and faith, embracing religious observance and *mitzvot*. On the fifth Shabbat following the festival, Roi felt that making *Kiddush* at home wasn't enough and wanted to go to shul. Although Roi froze on the walk there and turned around, he refers to this moment as the first step on his religious journey. The Shabbat after, he went to shul and has been attending ever since. Additionally, Roi dis-

covered *Hitbodedut*, a meditative and unstructured form of prayer, and finds this to be a comforting way to connect with Hashem. Roi has declared that the last tattoo he ever received was in memory of all the lives lost on October 7th.

Roi's perspective on life shifted entirely. He went from worrying about life's everyday challenges such as affording rent and childcare, to completely placing his trust in Hashem to resolve all his challenges. As Roi states, the Hebrew word for problem, *Ba'aya*, stands for *Borei Olam Yiftor Hakol*, the Creator of the world will solve it all.

As Rabbi Dan Cohen (Sephardic S'gan Mashgiach at YU), who translated Roi's speech said, "There are a lot of intense emotions felt right now by Am Yisrael, but there is also unity and happiness." Roi's story underscores the gratitude he feels towards Hashem, and how unity should occur even without a tragedy.

Now, Roi is spreading awareness through his Instagram, @assarafroi, in hopes of inspiring others. He is also writing a book on his friend's survival stories that aren't being publicly shared. He began wearing *tzitzit*, and he now only serves male clients at his barbershop.

Israeli National Security with Dr. Freilich: A Unique Perspective with an Expert Professor

BY CHLOE BAKER,
FEATURES EDITOR

In a semester marked by tumultuous events in the Middle East, Dr. Chuck Freilich (adjunct professor of political science) brought a timely and insightful perspective to Stern College. Teaching a course last semester titled *Israeli National Security*, Dr. Freilich addressed crucial topics such as the threat of Iran, the intricacies of the peace process, and the inner workings of Israeli politics. As events unfolded in real-time, students had the unique opportunity to explore these issues with a seasoned expert who seamlessly blended academic rigor with practical insights. Dr. Freilich's distinctive approach undoubtedly left a lasting impression on his students, fostering a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics shaping the Middle East.

Dr. Freilich grew up in New York and made Aliyah with his family when he was a teenager. He spent over 20 years in the defense establishment as a Deputy National Security Advisor, and has since led a successful career as an academic. He teaches in both the U.S. and Israel, and has written multiple books and influential articles on Israeli national security. In an email conversation with the *YU Observer*, Dr. Freilich stated that he has taught at Harvard, Columbia, and NYU, as well as Tel Aviv University, and Hebrew University, but feels that YU is special because of the "students' involvement in the issues that I teach, and the never-ending challenging questions they ask."

From a young age, Dr. Freilich knew his path would lead to Israel and a focus on national security. He was heavily influenced by

growing up in the post Holocaust era, the heroic early years of Israel's history, and the aftermath of the Six-Day War. Not to mention the books his mother encouraged him to read as a kid. "Israel's trials and tribulations, and its successes, have been an incurable lifelong passion of mine," he told the *YU Observer*.

Having recently released a book on Israel and the cyber security threat from its enemies, Dr. Freilich is now working on a new book about the U.S.-Israeli strategic and military relationship. He recommends that students wanting to learn more about Israel's history read "any one of the excellent books by Anita Shapiro."

Dr. Freilich's advice to students interested in pursuing a career in his field is to "follow your passion." There are countless oppor-

tunities in this realm. He emphasizes this variety by explaining the options such as, "government (Department of Defense, the military, intelligence agencies), academia (requires a PhD or coming in from a senior government position), and the commercial area (major corporations, consultancies)."

If Dr. Freilich could bring in any guest lecturer for his students, it would be David Ben-Gurion to talk about what it was like to reestablish a Jewish state after 2000 years in exile.

Dr. Freilich brought an unmatched level of knowledge to Stern this fall. Students who have an interest in Israeli national security, Israeli politics, or anything in that field would extremely benefit from his expertise and intelligence.

What She Carried, What She Missed

ARTS & CULTURE

BY THE YU WRITERS' GUILD

Each month, the YU Writers' Guild accepts submissions for a short story following a specific theme. This month's theme was "Secrets, Secrets Are No Fun!" featuring stories that revolve around a secret. Members of the club voted on a short story to be featured in the YU Observer. For the month of February, "What She Carried, What She Missed" written by Rachel Gilinski was selected.

If it were an option, Claire would carry nothing at all. She would pry her fingers out of their clenched fists—they had frozen stiff there, long ago—and lift her bare palms in surrender, the muscles of her forearms loosened, holding her breath as the tacks once held in her tight grip fell in a quick pitter-patter around her bare feet. She would unzip herself, at the tippy-top of her spine, and step out of her smooth skin, blood and bone and sinews falling into an indiscernible heap of gore and grief. She would float, weightless and unencumbered by any of the trinkets she had carried for too, too long now, if it were an option.

Above her hips, weighing her down, slowing her down, Claire carried a bulging belly with still-unfamiliar heft. She had never liked mirrors, the visual reminders of the way the rest of the world perceived her; she had never recognized her own appearance, and it blurred at the edges all the more now, now that it was a body so different than she'd always had. The belly she carried—she still couldn't bring herself to call it a baby, what she carried—was patterned with branches and roots, silvery slivers where skin had stretched and split to accommodate the growth within. She covered herself in shirts too large even for this new body she carried, trailing the ends of her too-long sleeves along the ground, wondering what would happen if she melted down and joined them.

The bag she carried on her shoulder more often than others was a beige canvas tote bag, with a pink floral design winding and twisting around itself. The bottom was lined with crumpled receipts, each carrying its own story, of late-night drugstore cookies, of the haircut before last, of the same pink test that had brought her the news.

Claire carried a royal blue lighter,

though she couldn't smoke now; she liked to be prepared, to have a flame to offer if some stranger asked for a light. She and Alan had invited friends over, months and months ago; someone brought a joint and passed it around, someone left their lighter behind when they left. In the back pocket of her jeans, she carried a half-crumpled, half-smoked cigarette butt. She must have put it out halfway through, months ago or longer still, and saved it for later. When she remembered it was there, she wondered how long her pants had gone unwashed.

Around her long, bony finger, its nail cut short, Claire carried a

"Claire carried an empty space in her heart. Nothing could permeate the emptiness; it was fenced off by grief and guilt. No one ever talked about how heavy emptiness was to carry."

small-stoned promise to Alan. The ring was a substitute, a stand-in. At first, her pregnancy was a secret that only she carried; when she handed it to Alan, he walked out of their apartment to find something to give her in exchange, to replace her secret with, to thank her for sharing her future with him. He was embarrassed about it, sliding his love onto her expectant finger; he had already been saving up, but he wished he could have gotten her a grander declaration; he promised Claire his future self would replace it with one the size she deserved.

Claire carried chewing gum in her tote, and she burned through it like it were paper, purchasing a new package the moment she started running low. This week she carried sugar-free wintergreen. She liked the fruity flavors too, maybe even more than the minty ones, but the taste of mint tended to linger on her tongue for longer.

Her friends, her family, all thought her load was light, but Claire carried a burden around her bones so heavy it hurt. She carried too much cushioning around her organs. It

made her soft, and weak. She carried around too much adipose tissue. It was supposed to store energy, but she was always tired, and weak. She carried around an overwhelming amount of scientific knowledge about this burden, the terminology pertaining to thermodynamics and the calculations that could cure her of her lipid-stuffed cells, the result of countless sleepless nights spent on the internet while Alan snored softly beside her.

Claire carried grudges, resentment she had no intention of releasing, against the people no longer in her life, old friends lost to time and space and cir-

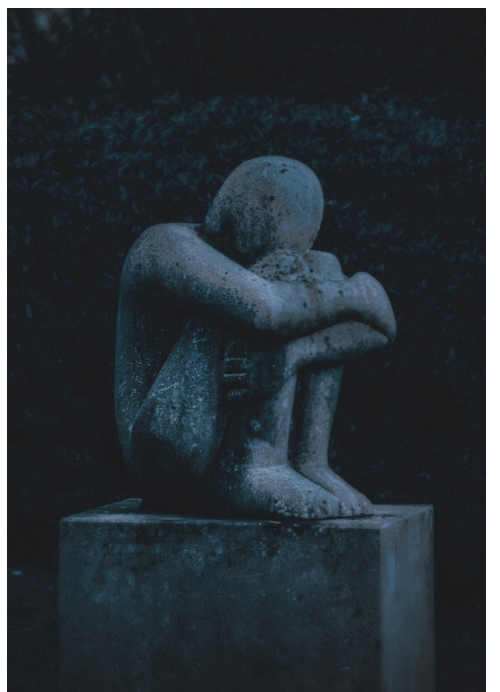
terrified she was the real danger to its safety. She carried venom in her stomach lining. She unspooled her fear and wound it around her belly like bubble wrap, as if solely wanting it to be safe was a productive protective measure.

Claire still carried something she carried years ago. She carried it, though she never met it; she carried it, since she could never forget it. She carried it until she miscarried it, and now she would forever miss it, and now she would forever carry it. Claire would carry to her grave what she couldn't carry to term. Claire would always be carrying the baby she never got to hold.

Claire carried a nugget of guilt at the base of her throat. She was almost certain it had once been smaller; it must have grown, since it had never been so heavy as to hinder her breathing until recently. If she asked Alan, he would gladly stick his fingers down her esophagus and yank the guilt out. She couldn't ask Alan, because then she'd have to tell him why her guilt haunted her. She could barely admit to herself—and even then, never out loud—that she worried she was to blame for the empty space in her heart, where she would have kept the firstborn Alan didn't even know he didn't have. She couldn't tell Alan, because he would look at her differently afterward. She suspected she'd never tell him, and that she'd never tell the baby she carried now—was it still too soon to call it a baby?—she'd killed its older sibling, who hadn't asked her for much, but felt like too much to release at the time.

Claire carried an empty space in her heart. Nothing could permeate the emptiness; it was fenced off by grief and guilt.

No one ever talked about how heavy emptiness was to carry.



Alan, excited to become a new parent, was already searching up how to babyproof everything they owned, every stick of furniture and kitchen appliance. Claire, carrying cynicism and hopelessness and the awareness that nothing was guaranteed, was

“Some Nights” by fun.: My Story Behind the Song

BY KIKI AROCHAS,
STAFF WRITER

In the past, I’ve analyzed songs that represented a central occurrence or feeling in an artist’s life. These tended to be tragic events that the artist wished to bring alive through song. But, “Some Nights” is different. There isn’t truly one focus; it’s more of a combination of scattered thoughts and feelings throughout a lifetime of fame and pain. For that reason, I wanted to approach this song differently than in the past. Rather than focus on what the song means to the artist, I will be focusing on specific verses that I believe have universal applications, explaining why the lyrics hit me hard on every listen. Rather than mentioning every single line, I will instead pick out parts in particular that spoke to my own life experience.

*Some nights, I stay up cashing in my bad luck
Some nights, I call it a draw*

Some nights, I let negative thoughts and feelings overwhelm me. Sometimes in spite of all my blessings, I stay up reflecting on the things I feel insecure about, or otherwise upset

me. Other nights, I just let it go.

*Some nights, I wish that my lips could build a castle
Some nights, I wish they'd just fall off*

Some nights, I wish that my words could move mountains, start movements, change the world; I wish that I could truly make a difference. Some nights,

"Some nights, I wish that my words could move mountains, start movements, change the world; I wish that I could truly make a difference."

though, after I’ve said something stupid, messed something up, I wish I couldn’t talk at all.

*But I still wake up, I still see your ghost
Oh Lord, I'm still not sure what I stand for*

No matter what thoughts I had the previous night, I still wake up. Life still goes on, and each day I’m faced with that same question: what do I stand for?

(Oh-ooh-woah) what do I stand

*for?
(Oh-ooh-woah) what do I stand for?
Most nights, I don't know anymore*

I just don’t seem to know anymore. When I was young, everything was simple and straightforward. However, with each passing night, as I age, I learn new things about myself and the

world, and realize a lot of the things that I thought were simple aren’t so simple anymore.

*Well, some nights, I wish that this all would end
'Cause I could use some friends for a change*

Some nights I wonder if I’m loved at all. If any of my friends and family really understand me. More so, if I really understand myself. If everybody is fake to a certain extent, do my friends only like the me I present? Or do they know me for who I am?

*And some nights, I'm scared you'll forget me again
Some nights, I always win (I always win)*

It comes in waves, the good feelings and then the bad. Some nights my confidence is boundless, I see no hurdle I can’t jump; and other nights the pettiest of things keep me awake, drowning me in an ocean of self-doubt and nihilism.

*But I still wake up, I still see your ghost
Oh Lord, I'm still not sure what I stand for, oh-oh
(Oh-ooh-woah) what do I stand for?
(Oh-ooh-woah) what do I stand for?
Most nights, I don't know*

But again, life goes on. Whatever thoughts, epiphanies, or emotions I had the previous night, I trudge forward, still struggling to answer that most basic of questions. Who am I? What do I stand for? What will I fall for?

Most nights, I don't know. I still don't know.

The Return of Chinese Chess

BY YOSEF BLUTH,
STAFF WRITER

The Tata Steel Chess Tournament is the first major chess tournament of each calendar year. Held in Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands, the tournament attracts some of the world’s top players and is sometimes called the “Wimbledon of Chess.” The tournament follows a 14-player single round-robin format, wherein each participant competes against each other over the course of 13 rounds. This format leads to some very exciting games, especially towards the end where players know they have to defeat a specific opponent in order to catch up in the standings. One aspect of the event that is important to note is its two separate sections which occur simultaneously - the Masters section and the Challengers section. While the Masters section commands the most attention, the Challengers section offers its own allure due to a unique feature - the victor of the Challengers section earns the opportunity to compete in the Masters section the following year.

The 2024 Tata Steel Masters Tour-

namment featured a remarkable lineup of players. It included the defending Tata Steel champion, Anish Giri, three young superstars from India— Rameshbabu Pragganandhaa, Vidit Gujrathi, and Dommaraju Gukesh— along with the former two-time World Champion Challenger, Ian Nepomniachtchi, women’s World Champion Ju Wenjun, and last year’s Tata Steel Challengers winner, Alexander Donchenko, among others. The competitors formed a very strong group, with an average Elo rating of 2712. To put this in perspective, to achieve the Grandmaster title requires an elo of 2500. The top players in the world are informally referred to as Super Grandmasters once they achieve a rating of 2700, a rating that currently has less than 35 players in the world. This tournament’s average rating was even higher than that. Two interesting contenders, Chinese Grandmasters Ding Liren and Wei Yi, joined this already stacked field.

Right from the beginning of the tournament, Ding Liren’s participation was significant. Ding Liren, the current World Chess Champi-

on, entered the tournament with the 4th highest Elo rating in the world at 2780. He became the world champion by beating Ian Nepomniachtchi in the 2023 World Chess Champion match in a closely contested match that was decided in the 4th and final tie-breaker game. However, he had not participated in any tournaments from then until the Tata Steel tournament - an 8-month period where the World Champion didn’t play a single game. Right from the start, there were questions about his performance. Would he maintain the same level as when he won the championship, or would he struggle against the top players in the world?

Wei Yi’s participation received much less fanfare. Wei Yi was one of the most exciting players in the mid-2010s. He became a grandmaster at the age of 13, making him the 9th youngest person in history to achieve this. He is the youngest player to reach a rating of 2700, accomplishing this feat at the age of 15. He has won the Chinese Chess Champion multiple times and is also the former champion of the

Asian Chess Championship. However, he has been inactive since the beginning of 2020. Chess experienced a surge in popularity in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the popular Netflix series “The Queen’s Gambit.” However, those who started following chess during that time might not be familiar with Wei Yi up until this point. This tournament is the first major classical tournament that Wei Yi has participated in since 2019.

In many respects, the stories of these two players mirror each other. Both are Chinese Grandmasters, they are the number 1 and 2 rated players in China, and they have even worked together in the past, with Wei Yi being part of Ding Liren’s support team during his World Championship match. Both were making their return to competitive chess after an extended hiatus. Both were looking to make statement wins to demonstrate their ability to compete at the highest level. So how did they do?

SEE CHESS
PAGE 24

Manhattan Vintage

BY GABRIELLA GOMPERS,
FEATURES EDITOR AND
RACHELI JIAN, ARTS AND
CULTURE EDITOR AND
LAYOUT EDITOR

On February 4, 2024, in the Chelsea Neighborhood, New Yorkers were able to see the future of fashion by shopping for clothes from the past. The Manhattan Vintage Show, an “iconic vintage experience,” is like an indoor bazaar, displaying and selling pieces from over 90 vendors.

Amy Abrams and Ronen Glimmer, two Israeli Jews, founded the pop-up store with the aim to bring a beloved aspect of the fashion culture of Israel to New York: the Shuk. This was achieved through the abundance of fashionable clothing, jewelry, the smells of food carts, and the hum of friendly conversations. As revolutionary as this show is, it is not the first time this show is occurring. Abrams and Glimmer, a married couple, open their doors on 18th Street to vendors and customers four times a year, with the next event being in April. In addition to the Vintage Show, they have a few joint ventures in other parts of New York. One such venture is Artists & Fleas, which is what the model of the show is based on. This market has locations in Williamsburg, Chelsea Market, and even Venice. With a goal similar to the show: providing merchants and materials a chance to be in the spotlight.

Enthusiastic vendors and shoppers from all over flock to events like The Manhattan Vintage Show in

their shared love for thrifting and style. Many vendors got their start in other areas of the fashion world before starting their businesses. Chris, the founder of Moonbaby Vintage and a Fashion Institute of Technology alum, felt it was important to take a more sustainable approach to fashion for environmental and ethical reasons. His niche involves salvaging and reselling clothes from the 19th and early 20th centuries. He loves searching for curated pieces online, in flea markets, and estate sales.

Aileen from 22PrintStudio approached fashion differently. She began her career working for a label company but eventually got bored and left. Subsequently, she

"Whether the issue is the degradation of high fashion or the dire consequences of fast fashion, Chris and Aileen may approach fashion differently but are coming to the same conclusion: something needs to change."

started selling vintage pieces to designers that would use them as sources of inspiration for curating fashion lines. When asked about her experience with this side of fashion in recent years she related, “I showed Michael Kors a beaded decoration on a vintage piece [I thought they could incorporate] and they said ‘Oh we can’t make that, we can’t afford it.’” She said the rising costs of material and labor in recent years has severe-



ly affected designers' ability to create quality and interesting pieces. Whether the issue is the

than ever before. Consumers seek trendy clothes at low prices and quick availability, so designers and manufacturers are forced to acquiesce to these demands to stay relevant. However, this results in clothing that won't last materially or remain “timeless.” This directly translates to the imminent death of vintage. Without good materials and care for clothing, the fashion of a generation will only last for that generation, with the clothing itself left to pollute the planet. It will be worn and there will be no “vintage clothes from the 2020's.” However, when people attend vintage shows like the one that took place this month, they are shown a new way to look at fashion. A more sustainable, cost-effective, and revolutionary approach.

degradation of high fashion or the dire consequences of fast fashion, Chris and Aileen may approach fashion differently but are coming to the same conclusion: something needs to change.

4\$With the advent of social media and the accessibility to cheap clothing through online shopping, fashion trends cycle in and out of style much more rapidly

The Ozempic Crisis

BY SARAH OFFENBERG,
STAFF WRITER

You have most likely heard of what seems to be the latest easy fix for weight loss: Ozempic. The media surrounding Ozempic has attributed weight loss transformations of celebrities like Mindy Kaling and Oprah Winfrey to the drug. While these are just rumors, it has sparked within the public, a raging need to get the drug. Once people got wind of celebrities and other public figures using this “secret weight loss drug,” it spread like wildfire – with people scouring everywhere for it, faking medical reasons and getting it through unreliable sources.

Ozempic is classified as a weekly injection drug set to help people with type 2 diabetes or other

weight related issues and diseases.

One of its major effects is that it can help those on it lose a substantial amount of weight. However, because of the spike in public interest, those who *actually* need the drug to function are being denied access to it, due to increasing prices and decreases in rations.

"This crisis highlights the great risks that come with celebrities and public figures sensationalizing certain things that should not be sensationalized."

An anonymous junior at NYU who has been impacted by this crisis shared her opinion, saying, “I’ve been on Ozempic for half a year and my dosage is 1 mg. However, the doctor is only able to get me a higher dose because the lower doses are considered “titrating doses” according to the insurance

company. I haven’t even gotten the higher dose and the insurance company is being very stingy [by] denying my doctor’s claims.”

Other than the mass chaos that has ensued surrounding the drug, because of its relative newness,

we don't have much of an idea about the long term effects and ramifications of using Ozempic, especially if taken by someone who doesn't have diabetes or weight related health issues. There are already reports of the drug (which is typically meant to be taken life long) having

possible negative effects on muscles, with more potential impacts “including, thyroid cancer, pancreatitis, and pancreatic cancer, hypoglycemia risks, acute kidney injury occurrences, gallbladder events, gastrointestinal disturbances, and cardiovascular effects.”

The craze for Ozempic, which could have originally been kept as an accessible drug for those who genuinely need it, has ultimately been turned into a crisis of availability and a source of extreme stress for those who need it. This crisis highlights the great risks that come with celebrities and public figures sensationalizing certain things that should not be sensationalized.



YU Competes in First New York Intercollegiate Chess Championship

BY DAVID YAGUDAYEV,
ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR

On Sunday, January 28, 2024, college students from over 10 universities competed in the inaugural New York Intercollegiate Chess Championship (NYICC) held at Macaulay Honors College. The tournament was initiated by student presidents of chess clubs to create a space for students to come together and play chess in a fun, competitive and social environment. The tournament's format consisted of two rapid games (15+5 time control) followed by two blitz games (5+2 time control). The tournament also featured four sections to accommodate all types of chess players. Over 19 students from Yeshiva University partic-

ipated in the event, and had two student winners: Jaden Jubas won 1st place in the Novice Section, and Uli Stechler won 2nd place in the intermediate section. Students from many different colleges competed in the event, including City

Uli Stechler, Vice President of the YU Chess Club at Wilf Campus, stated: "It was a great event, and I really enjoyed competing, meeting new people, and I hope that the YU Chess Club can also

"I really believe that this has great potential to grow and develop in-person chess amongst NYC college students." - Uli Stechler, Vice President of the YU Chess Club at Wilf Campus

College of New York, Queens College, Baruch College, Hunter College, Lehman College, Fashion Institute of Technology, Macaulay Honors College, Fordham University, Yeshiva University, New York University and Pace University.

host such an event on campus at some point. I really believe that this has great potential to grow and develop in-person chess amongst NYC college students."

Andrii Shypachov, the organizer

of the first event, did an amazing job running the event and is optimistic on the future of NYICC events. "Despite some difficulties, the tournament was a great success. We are already working on future tournaments as well as some other events and can't wait to see more people interested in in-person chess!"

The NYICC has plans to host more events on various college campuses across NYC, and organizers believe the future for in-person chess collegiate events will only get better.

Creative Writing: Pondering

BY GABBY PRICE,
STAFF WRITER

An infamous hill on Summerset Avenue slopes aggressively upward. At the peak of its incline sits an old Gothic Revival-styled home obscured by tall foliage. Twin lion statues ostentatiously rest atop two fluted stone pedestals that decorate the entrance to the house. Each lion holds a knight's shield with its front paw. These antique sculptures stare the girl down as she makes her way up the steep road.

At the end of the street, a certain lamppost casts a warm amber glow onto the pavement. It has rained all day, and the asphalt concrete glistens like sequins in the night. As she walks on, a curious impulse pulls her into standing atop a passing sewer grate. She peers down into the obsidian abyss, feeling unsteady and unusual with no foundation beneath her feet.

Stray thoughts run aimlessly around her mind. She recalls an idea she had for egg-flavored chips, which seemed perfectly fine in the moment when it had come to her. She recalls pieces of her dream too. Last night she dreamt of a grotesque swollen blister. It sat in the space between her thumb and pointer finger, obscenely apparent, bulging and fat. From

within the skin of the blister had emerged a round, shiny, wet eye.

Without her realizing it, the shuffling of her coat and the pattering of her footsteps create a steady and soothing palate of background noise. From amidst the foreground of her thoughts, she hears distant chewing accompanied by a breath

of heavy bubblegum that wafts by, lurching her back to reality.

In a recliner chair tilted back, she faces the grandfather clock, watching the minute hand inch its way to 1:35 pm. From the window, a gust of December wind topples a trash can onto its side. The sky is cloudy and gloomy, appearing smooth and

milky white like a bride's veil. Today she wears the same outfit she wore yesterday. Her thoughts twist in knots, and she leaves them there, all tangled with no desire to unravel them.

Several of her friends sprawl themselves out naturally on the lobby couches. To her right on

the couch, she watches her friend stare cross-eyed at her gum as she blows a bubble that expands and pops. They all lie there wrapped in a thick blanket of time. The room is simple. There is no elaborate narrative full of anticipation or tension. There is no romanticized plot full of drama and embellishments. They all exist there for the sake of existence, embracing the ordinary with no need for embellishments.

"They all exist there for the sake of existence, embracing the ordinary with no need for embellishments."



Movie Review: Argylle

BY ANDREW WARREN,
STAFF WRITER

Valentine: You know what this is like? It's like those old movies we both love. Now, I'm going to tell you my whole plan, and then I'm going to come up with some absurd and convoluted way to kill you, and you'll find an equally convoluted way to escape.

******(name hidden for spoilers): Sounds good to me.*

Valentine: Well, this ain't that kind of movie.

*[shoots ***** in the head]*

- *Kingsman: The Secret Service*

This scene from Kingsman came to mind when viewing Argylle. Both films, directed by Matthew Vaughn, are action-comedies centering on spies. Kingsman is a sharp take on the old-fashioned espionage genre, a mashup of Guy Ritchie and James Bond with enough self-awareness to subvert some of the worst cliches, yet Argylle is decidedly ambivalent towards its place in the genre, making the same mistakes as all the mediocre spy movies to come before it. In stark contrast to Kingsman, Argylle is “that kind of movie.”

Ellie Conway is a novelist who has just finished her fifth novel in the wildly popular Argylle series. While the characters in her

books lead very exciting lives, Ellie is content to spend her nights at home with some wine and her cat, Alfie. Her life is shaken up by the arrival of Aiden, a secret agent who tells her that she's in danger. To her surprise, the stories in her books are all based on true events, and the real life counterparts are after her to discover what will happen next. Aiden needs Ellie's help to take down an evil spy agency, but does an overly cautious writer really have what it takes to live out a real-life spy adventure? It's a pretty original hook for a movie and the first act delivers on the premise. Ellie and Aiden have very good chemistry and watching them learn to work together while outrunning endless armies of evil spies is fun. However, the movie works a little too hard to outsmart the audience and the second act bombards the viewer with twists, surprises, reveals, and fake-outs to the point of exhaustion. The third act picks up again, with some cartoony and one-of-a-kind set-pieces, but by that point, the characters and their allegiances have undergone such radical transformations in such a short time, that they're unrecognizable to the audience.

The talented cast is largely underserved by the writing. Henry Cavill, John Cena, Dua Lipa, and Ari-

anna Debose play the characters in Conway's novels. Their shallow characterizations could be excused as intentional, perhaps a satire of older spy films. The real-life characters don't have that excuse. They are just as shallow and two-dimensional as the characters in the book. The contrast between the real and the fictional is almost non-existent, which severely undercuts the point of even depicting scenes from the novel.

Sam Rockwell plays Aiden and is the only actor to rise above the material. He's played similar parts before in films such as Mr. Right and Seven Psychopaths. This character is right in his wheelhouse, and he nails every aspect: the humor, the action, the frustration, and the romance. Rockwell isn't breaking any new ground for himself as an actor here. He just plays the hits, keeping the film lively and moving.

The action set pieces vary wildly from the first act to the third. In the beginning, the action is pretty conventional, shoot-outs and hand-to-hand combat in a contained location. It's well choreographed and accompanied by witty banter, but oddly interrupted with footage of Henry Cavill in place of Sam Rockwell, as Ellie imagines her fictional spy

in place of Aiden. This concept is ineffective, overused, and weakens the excitement of the scene.

The action of the third act feels much more like the Matthew Vaughn of Kingsman. The violence is now a lot sillier. There's a lot more CGI. An upbeat pop song plays in the background for comedic effect. For some people, it might be just too out of left field, but I found it all to be really enjoyable. There's a lack of restraint in the last 40 minutes that exposes how lifeless the first 2/3 were.

Not every Matthew Vaughn movie is great, but even at his worst, there is a level of vision and effort that is lacking in Argylle. His past works dealt with themes such as socio-economic commentary, class disparity, and antisemitism. And Argylle concerns itself primarily with CGI cats.

Not every movie has to be a brilliant think-piece or some kind of genre deconstruction. Some movies need to exist in those genres. But if someone like Matthew Vaughn is going to direct two hours of mindless entertainment, he can do better than Argylle.

5/10

CHESS FROM PAGE 21

Ding Liren had a promising start. After drawing the first two games, he beat Gukesh in the third round. However, this momentum wouldn't last. In the next round, Praggnanandhaa would get revenge for his fellow Indian grandmaster by taking down Ding. Ding's performance declined from there, with Ding dropping games to French prodigy Alireza Firouzja and Ian Nepomniachtchi in their first encounter since the World Chess Championship. Ding secured a second win in round twelve, followed by a draw to close out the tournament. However, he still finished with a losing record overall. His performance earned him a 9th-place finish, finishing half a point behind 8th-place Nepomniachtchi.

Wei Yi's tournament unfolded quite differently. His tournament began with some ups and downs, with a win in round 1 immediately followed by a loss in round 2. He won again in round 4 but suffered another loss in round 6. However, he would pull it together for the

end of the tournament, with 4 wins and a draw in the last 5 rounds. He finished the main tournament with 8.5 out of 13 points, which put him in a 4-way tie for first with Gukesh, Anish Giri, and Nodirbek Abdusattorov. Tiebreaks were decided through a blitz knockout tournament. In the semifinals, Wei Yi faced Abdusattorov, who was the strongest blitz player of the four players remaining based on Elo rating. Furthermore, Wei Yi hadn't played a ranked blitz tournament since 2019. Despite this, he would go on to beat Abdusattorov 1½ - ½ and advance to the finals. In the finals, Wei Yi faced Gukesh, whom he had lost to in round 2 of the tournament. Once again, Wei Yi would go on to win this match 1½ - ½, earning himself a victory over Gukesh and winning the Tata Steel Masters Championship.

This tournament was somewhat disappointing for Ding. While he didn't perform terribly, many had hoped for Ding to make a triumphant comeback and prove to everyone why he is the World Champion. Instead, it highlighted how rusty he is, showing that he needs



improvement for future competitions, and definitely needs to improve if he hopes to keep his title in the next World Championship match.

Over the Tata Steel tournament, Wei Yi exceeded expectations. With low initial expectations due to his extended break, his impressive performance surprised many. His break, lasting 5 years, was significantly longer than Ding's, lasting nearly half a decade. Despite that, he came back and showed everyone why

he's the youngest player to ever reach 2700 Elo. Because he was so young when he started, Wei Yi is still a relatively young player, despite his long break. Although it's too late for this year, if he can keep playing at this level we might even get to see him make a push for the World Championship title in the next cycle. And if Ding Liren can get back on form and defend his title, we might be seeing the top two Chinese players going head-to-head in a match for the World Championship.

The Wonderful World of Verbs

BY SHNEUR AGRONIN,
STAFF WRITER

Were I to begin my conversations when meeting new people with the question, “Have you ever heard of the subjunctive mood?” I’d likely find myself friendless. Yet, setting aside the gross breach of social norms, allow me this opportunity to explain why I often feel a temptation to ask this question – especially to speakers of Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, and many other languages which prominently feature this incredible component of grammar. Nevertheless, even those who only speak English may come to appreciate the subjunctive mood and what it tells us about our brilliant minds by the end of this article. In fact, you use the subjunctive mood almost certainly every day and understand how it works without any conscious mental effort. You probably didn’t even realize that the very first sentence of this article contains it. Soon enough, you’ll understand just how amazing our brains are in their abilities to express extremely subtle yet critical nuances effortlessly.

Defined simply, the subjunctive mood is a class of verbs which express opinions, desires, emotions, or hypothetical actions which may or may not take place. As described above, the Romance languages inherited it from Latin, in which nearly every verb possesses a distinct subjunctive form. Consider the following sentence: *I want you*

to come to my party. In English, we use the infinitive (or unmodified) form of the verb “come” to express this idea; in other words, nothing fancy. Now, let’s try saying the same thing in Spanish: *Quiero que vengas a mi fiesta.* “Vengas” is the subjunctive form of the verb “vienes,” meaning “you come.” If you speak Spanish, saying “*Quiero que vienes a mi fiesta*” sounds quite incorrect, but before reading this article, you may never have understood why. Here’s another example: *Were I to have a fork, I’d eat the cake.* In English, we use the subjunctive form of the verb “was” (which we normally use with the pronoun “I” in the past tense) to describe a hypothetical scenario. In Spanish, one does the same: *Si tuviera/tuviese un tenedor, comería el pastel.* Instead of saying “*tuve*” or “*tenía*” (the “standard” forms of “had”), one says *tuviera/tuviese*, the past-tense subjunctive form. Reread the first sentence of this article. Do you see now how your brain understood the subjunctive mood without a second thought?

At this point, you might be thinking: *How did I get this far into an article about an obscure grammatical concept without falling asleep?* Well, if you find grammar as fascinating as I do, you may have already begun to understand just how amazing the subjunctive mood is. In essence, our brains unconsciously differentiate between concretely observed actions and those in the hypothetical. They

distinguish verbs modified by opinions and desires from those which have taken, are taking, or will take place with assumed certainty. You effectively ask and answer numerous questions such as, “Am I expressing a feeling about this? Will or did this happen? Do I want this to occur and am I forming an opinion about something that may or may not occur?” within a fraction of a second and convey these questions’ answers with a simple shift from “was” to “were.”

In English, we most often express actions with a *progressive* tense. For example, compare “I’m eating” to “I eat.” The first sentence expresses an ongoing, current action, while the latter only practically describes a habitual action – “I eat fish for lunch and chicken for dinner most of the time” (as most of us who eat in the Caf daily can relate to). English also features perfect and past-perfect participles, such as “I have eaten,” “I had eaten,” “I will have eaten,” “I will have been eating,” and many, many others. But, do all languages work similarly?

While some languages claim even more verb tenses, moods, and aspects than English (such as most of the Romance languages), some of them don’t even feature any tenses or conjugations at all. As described above, English contorts and modifies the verb “eat” in over twenty ways to reflect changes in a verb phrase.

Compare this with the Mandarin Chinese verb *chi*, meaning “eat.” While one does generally need to clarify the timing of a verb in Mandarin Chinese through the use of time-based words and adverbs (such as “yesterday,” “tomorrow,” “already,” etc.), the word *chi* will always be *chi* no matter if one had been, will be, should have been, or will have been eating. Compare Mandarin’s simplicity to the nightmare of the Georgian verb, which one can modify based on four classes, over ten tenses, four moods, and countless irregularities and exceptions. Georgian verbs are so complex that linguists can’t even classify them based on the above terms and instead use a separate organizational device called a “screve” (which includes six forms of each verb modified for pronouns and other factors) just to convey the basic details of Georgian verbs.

Whether or not you’ve made it to the final paragraph of this article without having nodded off somewhere in the middle, I hope to prove that our ability to effortlessly express ourselves using the considerably complex grammars of our languages is nothing short of miraculous. The next time you enjoy a conversation with a friend, take a moment to think about the thousands of precise calculations and considerations your brain makes in order to express even the most basic thoughts.

Why YU Should Teach Personal Financing

BUISNESS

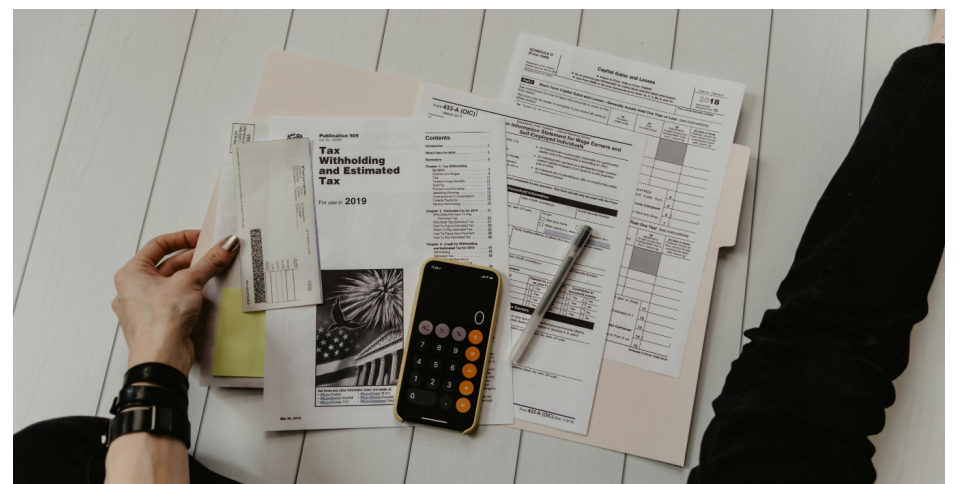
BY TALIA HALSTUCH,
STAFF WRITER

After taking *Principles of Finance* at Yeshiva University, many of my peers and I began to think more about our personal finances. How should we invest our money? Should we put it into bonds, the stock market, etc.? After hearing students’ curiosity on this topic, I realized that YU should be teaching us how to manage our personal assets.

As a university, YU is preparing us to enter the real world – whether it be the workforce, graduate school, or continuing our Limudei Kodesh in the next stage of our lives. One aspect of learning

to be self-sufficient is understanding how to manage and handle your assets so you not only maintain the money you make, but also actually have that money grow.

Principles of Finance is not a required class for non-Syms students, so students in Stern College or Yeshiva College do not have to learn the basics of finance in school. But even a simple understanding of the concept of time value of money is invaluable for students to understand. If you leave your money in a checking account, it depreciates over time. Taking the introduction to finance course taught me this, as well as the difference between investing in bonds and stocks, and calculating for future cash flows of investments. These simple concepts gave me a whole new understanding of how



to handle my personal assets.

I would advise every student to take at least one finance class in their time at YU. However, it is understandable that not every student in YC or Stern College has the time or availability to take a finance class. So, I suggest that a personal finance event should

take place where students have the opportunity to hear from finance professors or working professionals about the different options of investing their money. By having an event that all students can come to, we can all learn this valuable lesson of how to invest our assets, so we can be prepared for the future.



A Tale of Two Markets: Navigating the Dynamics of

BY CHANA WAKSLAK,
SENIOR BUSINESS EDITOR

Entering the corporate world amid the current employment landscape requires a thoughtful approach. You might wish you could don a Neverland costume, stick your head in the sand, and avoid the corporate chaos a little longer. But reality beckons, and you're about to dive headfirst into the enigma that is the current job market.

The good news? Most of your competition seems to be competing in a race to the bottom. Employers have been complaining about workers being lazy, apathetic, and incapable of basic communication, providing an opportunity for those who exhibit consistent dedication and basic professional skills.

Further, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, at the closing of 2023, the job market has been holding strong, with 2.7 million new jobs created and an unemployment rate holding steady at 3.7%. With a market like this, it seems like it should be pretty easy to get a job that will help you further your professional aspirations.

The not-so-good news? The hiring market for choice jobs is tightening, as highlighted by a LinkedIn study reporting an average of one job opening for every two applicants, a shift from 2022's one-to-one ratio. Entry-level job seekers, in particular, report experiencing prolonged searches, often going months without securing an offer.

An elevated number of job open-

ings doesn't always translate to real opportunities. Misalignment between job seekers, available jobs, and acceptable work contributes to this issue, with a majority of jobs considered low-quality, intensifying the competition for select positions.

It's not just you who might feel intense competitive pressures when searching for summer internships or entry jobs. Across industries, job postings attract more applicants, guarantee an elongated hiring process, and involve more decision-makers. The introduction of one-way video interviews adds a

"The job market is ours for the taking. With the correct focus on technical skills and acing the hiring process, there are plenty of opportunities for success even in a competitive market."

new format, presenting a learning curve for applicants and enabling companies to interview a greater number of candidates. A vicious cycle emerges as job seekers, frustrated with the hiring process and realistic about their odds of success, apply to more jobs, increasing overall competitiveness. LinkedIn reports that in 2023 job seekers sent out 40% more applications compared to the previous year.

So what can we do to set ourselves apart from the pack? To

navigate this challenging landscape, three experts, Liza Kirkpatrick, Assistant Dean of Career Services at Kellogg School of Management, Joel Schwartzberg, a professional presentation coach and author, and Nahia Orduña, a technical leader at Amazon, all delve into strategies for achieving hiring success.

Being Proactive

Kirkpatrick underscores the crucial step of researching industry-specific hiring trends to proactively identify potential hurdles, such as hiring slowdowns or layoffs. She also

suggests exploring roles in adjacent industries where your skills may be highly valued.

The Resume

Schwartzberg emphasizes the importance of tailoring resumes to specific job descriptions. His advice encourages job seekers to organize their resumes strategically, either by skill or job experience, ensuring bullet points demonstrate maximum relevance to the desired job description. These tailored approach-

es, rooted in industry awareness and a keen understanding of the job requirements, maximize relevance and increase your odds of being selected for an interview.

Addressing the rise of AI and other new technologies, Orduña asserts that staying ahead of the hiring curve involves a comprehensive understanding of these technologies and the acquisition of relevant hard skills, including cloud computing, user experience (UX) design, cybersecurity, and marketing. Orduña emphasizes that possessing these skills positions employees as indispensable across various industries, enabling them to fill roles that have emerged with the integration of advanced technologies. More broadly, learning transferrable and in-demand technical skills can help make you more relevant and marketable across industries.

The Interview

Kirkpatrick emphasizes the importance of learning to use effective storytelling during interviews as a means to showcase one's abilities and experiences compellingly. To succeed during interviews, it is essential to thoroughly research the company and its culture, tailor responses to specific job requirements, and ask questions to demonstrate interest.

The job market is ours for the taking. With the correct focus on technical skills and acing the hiring process, there are plenty of opportunities for success even in a competitive market.



Gambling Frenzy for 2024's Super Bowl Predicted to be a New Record High

BY YOSEF SCHER, SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY
SENIOR EDITOR

In recent decades, sports betting has surged in popularity, with 38 states legalizing traditional sports betting and 30 allowing online platforms. While many events entice people to wager their money, none captivates the nation's betting frenzy quite like the Super Bowl. This year will be no different, with projections suggesting that sixty-eight million Americans plan to wager approximately twenty-three billion dollars—a staggering 35% increase from last year's Super Bowl. This unexpected increase begs the question of what factors are driving this year's heightened betting.

The first reason analysts believe there is an uptick in sports betting is because of the unique rematch of these two teams. Three years ago, the Kansas City Chiefs defeated the San Francisco 49ers in Super Bowl LIV. While the Chiefs won the game by a score of 31-20, the teams were neck-and-neck for most of the game until the Chiefs took a last-minute 11-point lead over the 49ers. This year, football fanatics believe that the game will be even more exciting than it was in 2019, with recent polls predicting a rallying victory for the 49ers. In short, a rematch of this kind has not been seen in quite some time and will be instrumental in drawing in more viewers and bettors alike.

Secondly, analysts believe the

choice of location at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas, Nevada, is also impacting the record-breaking Super Bowl betting surge. As one of the most popular gambling destinations for people to visit, the nation's betting capital profits around \$8.3 billion each year from the casinos alone. With the addition of the Super Bowl being played in Las Vegas, analysts “expect the festivities in Las Ve-

the heightened gambling at this year's Super Bowl. Since Swift and Kelce started dating in September 2023, Swift has attended many of Kelce's games in support of him and the Chiefs. While the NFL and television broadcasts would not typically care about the relationship of a player, “[Swift's] presence at Chiefs games has increased viewership, particularly among young wom-

that focus on Swift. BetOnline, an online gambling platform, told NPR that it has made a concerted effort to “come up with the biggest menu of Taylor Swift prop bets in the world,” including the color shirt Swift will be wearing to the game, the lipstick shade she will be putting on, and how many times Swift will be shown in the stands.

The unique circumstances of this year's Super Bowl are predicted to set a record for the most money gambled on a Super Bowl in history. The noteworthy rematch of the two teams, the location of where the Super Bowl is being held, and the Swift-Kelce romance are predicted to cause one in four Americans to gamble some amount of money on the Super Bowl. While the outcomes of the bets are unpredictable, one thing is for sure: sports betting is here to stay and will only increase in the coming years.

"The unique circumstances of this year's Super Bowl are predicted to set a record for the most money gambled on a Super Bowl in history...While the outcomes of the bets are unpredictable, one thing is for sure: sports betting is here to stay and will only increase in the coming years."

gas to have a ripple effect across the country and entice more fans to place bets than in years past with the microscope of media and advertising on Vegas culture.”

Finally, the high-profile romance between Taylor Swift, the world-renowned music artist, and Travis Kelce, the Chiefs' tight end, has added an extra component to

en and Gen Z. Swift fans aren't just watching, they're buying NFL merch and posting about the Chiefs.” The NFL hasn't been the only one that has benefitted from the Swift-Kelce romance. Sports betting platforms have capitalized on this celebrity relationship by offering proposition bets, which are bets about the game unrelated to its outcome,

Neurodegenerative Diseases in Football

SCI & TECH

BY SYDNEY HOFFMAN,
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
EDITOR

As avid football fans, it's natural to revel in the excitement of draft picks and the thrill of the games that follow. However, amidst the cheers and celebrations, a stark reality often goes unnoticed—the perilous risks each player faces every time they step onto the field. The National Football League (NFL) is synonymous with adrenaline-pumping action, but it's also associated with a heightened risk of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), a condition characterized by impaired cognitive and physical functioning due to external force.

TBIs not only jeopardize immediate health but also raise the specter of neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and Amyotrophic Lat-

eral Sclerosis (ALS), commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease. Motor neurons, which are a type of neuron found in the central nervous system, play a crucial role in controlling movement. Unfortunately, they are more susceptible to cell death as a result of traumatic brain injuries. When motor neurons deteriorate, they lose their ability to transmit signals to the muscles, ultimately causing paralysis and difficulties with speech and swallowing. In cases where the diaphragm, the muscle responsible for breathing, ceases to function, individuals require mechanical ventilation to sustain their lives. The death of motor neurons leads to the development of ALS.

Tragically, the NFL has witnessed the unfortunate loss of prominent individuals like former San Francisco 49ers receiver Dwight Clark

as well as Tim Shaw, a former Titan, to ALS. Studies indicate a fourfold increase in ALS risk for NFL athletes, underscoring the urgency of addressing this growing health crisis. Fifty-five other reported cases of ALS in professional football players have been recorded. Although there have been significant medical advancements in treating ALS, finding a cure for this devastating disease has yet to be done, highlighting the pressing need for continued research efforts.

Furthermore, Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE), another prevalent neurodegenerative disease among football players, presents a unique challenge. In contrast to ALS, CTE mainly presents as cognitive impairments and dementia, and it can only be diagnosed after death through the examination of brain tissue. Shockingly, studies reveal an alarming 91.7%

prevalence rate of CTE among former NFL players, emphasizing the pervasive nature of this condition. The accumulation of repetitive hits, rather than isolated major head injuries, emerges as the primary risk factor for CTE, highlighting the insidious nature of this disease.

Responding to the high occurrence of Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBIs) and neurodegenerative conditions such as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) and Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) requires collaborative actions from individuals involved in sports and the medical field. Only by working together as a group and continuously doing research can we reduce these hazards and protect the health and welfare of athletes for future generations.

The Interplay Between Personality and the Development of PTSD Symptoms in Israelis and Palestinians

BY RUCHAMA BENHAMOU,
MANAGING EDITOR

In "How Personality Affects Vulnerability among Israelis and Palestinians following the 2009 Gaza Conflict," Canetti et al. explore the intricate interplay of factors that increase the development of PTSD in Israeli and Palestinian students. Although vivid exposure to trauma is regarded as the most significant cause of PTSD, research suggests that personality traits (based on the "Big Five Personality Traits") as well as individual cognitive mechanisms or strategies due to subjective environmental surroundings can be significant determinants of PTSD and depressive symptoms. This quantitative study examines the effects of the longstanding Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the results of its flare-ups among Israeli and Palestinian students alike, particularly the increased rate of PTSD and/or depressive symptoms due to the degree of exposure to the conflict.

Canetti et al. explain three hypotheses to effectively research this: "H1: Palestinian students will report higher levels of trauma experience, PTSD and depression than Israeli students. H2: Higher levels of extraversion and emotional stability are hypothesized to predict higher levels of PTSD and depression. These predictions will

be stronger among Palestinians than Israelis. H3: The five thought control strategies will significantly predict levels of PTSD and depression: higher use of worry and punishment will predict higher levels of PTSD and depression. These predictions will be stronger among Palestinians than Israelis." To determine the validity and reliability of their hypotheses, Canetti et al. utilized sampling and data accumulation methods through

"I was interested to learn how personality plays an intricate role in the determination of such symptoms, yet also disheartened to see how many young lives are affected by the rise and fall of this conflict."

surveys. These various surveys consisted of questions to target symptoms of PTSD and/or depression, trauma exposures, subjective cognitive processes, demographics, environmental factors, as well as individual personality traits, at different universities in Israel.

Specifically, the independent variables featured in this study consisted of various surveys and questionnaires regarding trauma responses and personality traits, such as the "Brief Trauma Ques-

tionnaire," "Ten Item Personality Inventory," and "Thought Control Questionnaire." On the other hand, dependent variables are seen through questions aimed specifically at factors such as depressive symptoms, PTSD, and demographic conditions among participants. Researchers in this study utilized meticulous data collection through precise sampling of students in different universities across Israel, as well as students

of intersecting social identities. The results of this study indicated that symptoms of PTSD and depression were overall higher among Palestinian university students than Israeli students. Through the use of a MANOVA analysis, the statistical distribution suggested a strong correlation between individual personality traits and subjective cognitive mechanisms in the development of these symptoms. Although Pal-

estinian students expressed higher rates of negative symptoms, there were positive correlations indicating that Israeli students also experienced symptoms of depression and PTSD regarding the rise and fall of Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. Specifically, the group's original hypothesis regarding the extent to which personality traits affect the development of negative symptoms seems to be supported by the descriptive statistics. Through the different questionnaires targeting trauma exposure, individual responses have highlighted how personality traits regarding emotional stability, temperament, effective coping mechanisms, and notions of reward and punishment have greatly affected the onset of depressive and/or PTSD symptoms.

This study examines how the reality of living within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in connection with subjective personality traits is greatly correlated with the development of PTSD and/or depression among university students. The research sample of Israeli and Palestinian university students from lower socioeconomic statuses, their inability to access resources, and the politically-charged environment can be great determinants

The Physical and Emotional Ramifications of Sleep Deprivation

BY ROCHEL LEAH
ITZKOWITZ, SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY EDITOR

Although sleep loss is not a formal disorder, it may lead to destructive consequences in overall physical health and performance. Sleep loss pertains to sleeping a shorter duration than the recommended 7 or 8 nightly hours in adults. Studies have proven that sleep deprivation worsens as individuals age, where 18 percent of adults believe they are receiving inadequate sleep.

Few nationally representative surveys portray the sleep patterns of the general population. However, one survey carried out by the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) asked, "[o]n average, how many hours of sleep do you get a night?" in 1977, 1985, and 1990 surveys. After asking the same question in a 2004 survey, the number of individuals who reported sleeping less than six hours per night increased exponentially over these past decades. About 35 years ago, it was estimated that adults slept 7.7 hours per night on average.

Adolescents, in addition to adults, struggle with insufficient sleep. Based on hormones and sleep-wake cycles, the ideal sleep duration for adolescents is around 9 hours per night. A significant factor in adolescent sleep loss is the inclusion of excessive amounts of television in a child's routine. A substantial study in Rhode Island of over 3,000 children discovered that only 15 percent recorded sleeping 8.5 hours or more on school nights. Meanwhile, 26 percent of these adolescents reported receiving 6.5 hours or less of sleep on school nights.

A symptom of sleep deprivation is excessive tiredness during the day, a depressed attitude, and a lacking memory. Many studies find that the greater the degree of sleep loss yields more significant adverse health effects. Sleep

loss may also result in various health consequences, such as obesity, diabetes, heart attacks, worsening mood and behavior, and even an increased mortality rate.

Various surveys have discovered an inversely related connection between sleep and obesity. If an adult sleeps less than seven hours per night, there is a greater risk of obesity. A 13-year cohort study studied about 500 adults and reported that by age 27, these sleep deprived adults were 7.5 times more susceptible to obtaining a higher body mass index (BMI). These results were found after controlling for possible confounds such as demographics, level of daily exercise, and family history. A different survey investigated two eating-related hormones further to grasp the relationship between sleep deprivation and obesity. They found that sleep deprivation indeed boosts appetite levels. Leptin, a hormone that holds back appetite and is generated from adipose tissue, decreases in the body with sleep insufficiency. Ghrelin, an appetite-stimulating peptide, increases with improper duration of sleep.

Diabetes, or impaired glucose tolerance, also has a clear relationship with insufficient sleep. The Sleep Heart Health cohort study (2005) analyzed adults who slept five hours or less per night versus those who slept 7 to 8 hours. They reported that unlike those who received sufficient sleep, those who sleep 5 hours or less are 2.5 more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes. The same conclusions were discovered by an experimental study where 11 male adults slept for 4 hours during 6 consecutive nights. These researchers noticed that despite a relatively short duration of sleep loss, the volunteers developed impaired glucose tolerance. Their glucose clearance with sleep deprivation was 40% less productive than normal sleep. These consequences disappeared

after receiving a standard sleep duration during the following nights.

Irregular sleep may lead to cardiovascular complications such as heart attacks and stroke. Many extensive studies, including the Nurses Health Study, found a modest connection where those with less sleep were only slightly more likely to experience a heart attack. Nevertheless, sleep deprivation can undoubtedly increase blood pressure, impaired glucose tolerance, and sympathetic hyperactivity. With these factors, it is clear that an association exists between insufficient sleep and cardiovascular disorders.

Another possible consequence of sleep deprivation is negative mood and behavioral patterns. A 2005 observational study reported that adults with sleep issues typically experience mental anguish. Many published articles have collected solid evidence regarding the body's emotional responses to lack of sleep, including increased anxiety levels, and depressive tendencies.

PLOS Biology researchers report that since insufficient sleep is associated with affected social behavior, it can likely lead individuals to behave less generously. Their analyses illustrated that the sleep individuals lose over daylight savings time each year decreases people's inclination to help those around them. They reported that one U.S. charity organization received 10% fewer donations than a month before and after the time change. In areas of the U.S. that do not experience daylight savings time, the donations to this organization stayed the same.

Neuroscientist Eti Ben Simon of Berkeley University determines, "lack of sleep shapes the social experiences we have and the kinds of societies we live in." She and her research team wished further to understand the link between insufficient sleep and generosity

tendencies. They studied 23 individuals who slept one night and stayed awake for the next night. In both the consequent mornings, the volunteers completed an altruism survey, which analyzed their tendency to assist others in specific situations. To demonstrate, the individuals inserted on a scale from 1 to 5 how probable it was that they would provide a ride to a colleague. The results proved that 80 percent of the volunteers were less likely to help those around them. These scientists also used MRI testing to record the difference in the participants' brain activity when they were well-rested versus fatigued. They discovered that sleep loss decreased brain activity in locations associated with human empathy.

Ben Simon promotes awareness about the developing issue and its solutions to educate those who struggle with sleep deprivation. She explains the potential reward of treating this issue: "[i]f you think about promoting sleep and letting people get the sleep they need, what an impact that could have on the societies we live in."

Despite the prevalence in society, many believe that treatment for sleep deprivation is not adequately addressed in the healthcare field. However, it is understood that taking naps under 2 hours and implementing better sleep habits can manage the issue. If an individual cannot avoid long shifts, it is important to follow recommended health tips to remain alert, such as taking wakefulness medications like caffeine. Researchers have found that "catching up on sleep on the weekends, a popular remedy for sleep loss, does not return individuals to baseline functioning." Evidently, sleep deprivation poses significant physical and emotional health risks for individuals of all ages; with the proper guidance, sleep loss can be treated and managed.

PTSD
FROM PAGE 27

of overall mental health. Although both Israeli and Palestinian students experience trauma due to the conflict, rates of depressive and PTSD symptoms are higher in Palestinian students, likely due to their lower socioeconomic position within society. Particularly, a lower social class, coupled with

subjective personality factors and individual comprehension of reward, punishment, and overall conflict, has been suggested to be linked to the development of these comorbid symptoms. Both groups of students exhibit correlational indications that trauma exposure due to the conflict with subjective personality traits greatly affects mental health, while negative correlations of depressive and PTSD symptoms, such as distractions

from charged events and social controls, are suggested. Although Palestinian students are more susceptible to developing these negative symptoms, more research on the link between personality and symptoms of trauma exposure should be conducted, as they can and will affect more populations.

Personally, I found this study to

be quite intriguing. Due to the current Israeli-Hamas War, as well as volunteering in Israel over winter break, I wanted to research different theories on why PTSD can develop among those in Israeli society. I was interested to learn how personality plays an intricate role in the determination of such symptoms, yet also disheartened to see how many young lives are affected by the rise and fall of this conflict.

Student Research Spotlight: Ezra Cooper

BY YOSEF SCHER, SENIOR
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
EDITOR

Yosef Scher (YS): Hi, Ezra (EC). Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. Let's start by getting to know you.

EC: Hi! My name is Ezra Cooper. I am from Memphis, TN. I spent two years at Yeshivat Hakotel and am now entering my third year at YU. In terms of studies, I attend the Talmudic lectures of R' Daniel Feldman, and I am a psychology major on the pre-dental track. Perhaps most importantly, I am an avid runner and love chicken soup.

YS: How did you get involved in this research?

EC: I participated in the YU-Bar Ilan University joint summer research program in Israel. So, like the 27 other attendees, I applied to the program and was honored to be accepted and included in a fun, research-filled summer in Israel!

YS: Whose lab do you work in, and what do you study?

EC: Three other lab interns (two others from the YU-BIU pro-

gram—shoutout to fellow YU student Ma'ayan Tzur) and I worked in Professor Eva Gilboa-Schechtman's lab. In addition to serving as a psychology professor, Professor Gilboa-Schechtman is the head of a research lab focusing on social anxiety and depression. Our work in the lab included a few different projects, but all of the work revolved around social anxiety or depression. Our first project involved working to aid psychologists in diagnosing depression. The thought is that with technological improvements, computer programs, and the like, can be developed to assist therapists in assessing patients suffering from depression. This involves assessing patients and their emotional congruence across different channels, like the pitch and tone in their voices, the content of their speech, and their facial expressions. While an exciting overall goal, the actual project requires a lot of detailed, technical work - which is where we came in. Our second project focused on categorizing people's statements about themselves as either agency or communion-based statements. The goal was then to determine what other variables (social anxiety, depression, etc.) might be correlated with one of these categories. Our work fo-

cused on the categorization of the self-generated statements.

YS: What did you gain from this research experience?

EC: First and foremost, being in Israel for the summer was great fun. We had a top-notch, high-quality group of good, passionate, *frum*, American college students. In the actual lab, it was super cool to work with so many friendly people, to learn what it's like to be in an Israeli work environment, and simply to be exposed to real-life research in the field of psychology. I feel like I gained so much by being in that environment.

YS: What role do you play in this lab?

EC: Our role involved a lot of technical work in the projects I mentioned earlier. But beyond the actual work, the whole lab internship served as a meaningful learning experience, where we had the opportunity to discuss some important concepts and issues in clinical therapy. Additionally, we discussed how AI technology developments may impact the psychology and therapy world.

YS: Is there anything you encountered that was especially difficult during the research?

EC: We were exposed to a lot of depressing content, as a key part of the research required working with content from patients in therapy suffering from depression. At times, that felt very heavy and sad. However, with a good supporting group of interns and great programming from the YU side of the program, we all had a great, fun, and enjoyable summer.

YS: What did you find most interesting about your research?

EC: Most interesting, I believe, was seeing how the world of psychology and therapy is and will continue to be impacted by improving computer technologies and AI.

YS: Lastly, do you have any advice for students interested in lab positions?

EC: Research can be slow and tedious. It's important to keep in mind the big picture and what the ultimate goal of the project is. That will do wonders for your motivation and commitment to the research you're involved in.

Persian Jewish Genetics

BY EMILY KOHANBASH

The history of the Jews in Iran dates back to late biblical times and Jewish life in Persia, particularly in the book of Ezra, which credited the Persian kings with allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their Temple. However, not all kings were kind to the Jews. For example, Nebuchadnezzar exiled the Jews to Babylon on three separate occasions which are mentioned in Jeremiah 52:28-30. The oppression did not end there, as between the years of 634-1255 CE, which was the time of the Islamic conquest of Persia, the Jews were under a lot of pressure by the Sassanid rulers, and therefore some Jews welcomed the Arab armies with open arms. As time progressed, and the Mongols came to power, things got even better for the Jews, as they believed all religions should be equal, allowing Jews to hold administrative office. Unfortunately this period of excellence did not last when Ghazan Khan converted to Islam, and then tried to force many Jews to convert to Islam. From then on the animosity towards Jews started to decrease until the Iranian revo-

lution in 1979, which saw many Iranian Jews being tried and executed in court for various reasons. This eventually led to the Jews having to migrate to places like North America and Israel.

With that being said, there are certain diseases that occur more often in a certain cultural or ethnic group than within the general population they live within. Specifically, with regards to Jewish people, due to their previous isolation from other populations, there are some diseases which are found more frequently within Persian/Iranian Jews such as inclusion body myopathy.

As previously stated, the Persian Jews have remained isolated and highly inbred for over 2400 years, that is until 1979 when the Islamic Revolution occurred and caused mass migration to North America and Israel. Therefore it is not surprising that certain recessive transmitted disorders were identified more frequently within this subgroup than any other subgroup within the Jewish population. To estimate the percentages at which these specific diseases are found

in Persian Jews, a study with 1,000 individuals was conducted to test for four specific conditions: BCHE deficiency, CMOII deficiency, Multiple Hormone Deficiency, and Hereditary Muscle Disorder. The reason these four diseases were selected was because they were reported as the highest frequency within the Persian Jewish community migrating to Israel. The findings were shocking. Overall, 288 of the individuals were found to be heterozygous for at least one of four of the diseases, 10 were found to be homozygotes, and another 10 were potentially at risk to develop a disease. Since Jews have migrated from all around the globe, investigators have attempted to categorize the origin and relatedness of Jews throughout the diaspora and in Israel. However, because very few polymorphic markers were available at first, the early studies focused on specific distances. Thankfully, in recent years, population genetics has been enhanced by the identification of millions of polymorphic markers that reside in close proximity to one another. We can use these polymorphic markers to expand our knowledge of Jewish history. For example,

there were two earlier studies that discovered how genetically, Jewish populations were more similar to each other than to non-Jewish populations. However, these studies had different conclusions about the extent of mixing with local populations. Therefore, to gain a better understanding of the relatedness of contemporary Jewish groups, subsequent studies analyzed the Y chromosomal and mitochondrial DNA haplotypes, which provided evidence for shared genetic ancestries among major Jewish diaspora groups, along with variations in mixing with local populations.

Although Jews have come from everywhere around the world, and therefore possess many differences, we should not look at each other as unconnected. In the end, we are all Jews tied through the same creed. As it says in Pirkei Avot, "feel your friend's pain," which teaches us to care about another Jew and that we should be more inclusive instead of exclusive. If all of us come together to do that, we may merit the holy *Mashiach* (redemption) to come.

Novel Carbon Dioxide Removal Method Sheds Hope on Combating Global Warming

BY YOSEF SCHER, SENIOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EDITOR

Earlier this month, scientists at Brookhaven National Laboratory made a significant breakthrough in combating our global warming crisis. Jingguang Chen, a professor of chemical engineering at Columbia University with a joint appointment at Brookhaven Lab, led a team of scientists who developed a method to convert carbon dioxide into carbon nanofibers. The idea of capturing carbon dioxide and converting it into another material is a phenomenon that has been around for a while. People have devised various ways to rid our atmosphere of carbon dioxide, such as capturing it straight from the air and storing it underground or converting it into another form of fuel. However, both of these methods tend to be ineffective because gaseous carbon dioxide usually leaks from its storage containers, and the fuels that gaseous carbon dioxide is converted into frequently release the carbon dioxide right back into the atmosphere. The novelty of Chen's work is that he and his team have developed a way that converts carbon dioxide into solid carbon materials, like

carbon nanotubes and nanofibers.

Before delving into how Chen and his team devised this new process, it is essential to understand why scientists are actively looking for ways to reduce carbon dioxide from our atmosphere. While some carbon dioxide is normal in Earth's atmosphere, too much of it can warm the planet, causing climate change. Since the start of the Industrial Revolution in the mid-1700s, "[h]uman activities have raised the atmosphere's carbon dioxide content by 50%" in less than a couple of centuries. Furthermore, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, carbon dioxide emissions have increased by about 90% since 1970, with emissions from fossil fuel combustion and industrial processes contributing to about 78% of the total increase in greenhouse gas emissions from 1970 to 2011. Without reversing the effects of climate change, which include more deaths and illnesses from increasingly frequent extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, storms, and floods, people will continue to suffer.

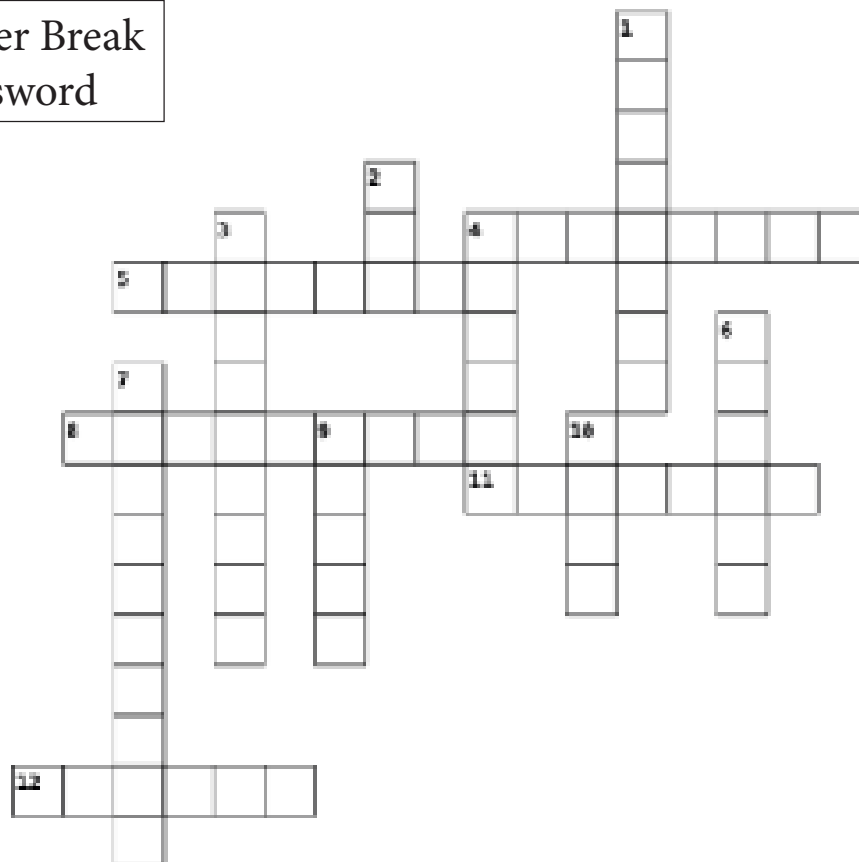
How exactly did Chen and his team find a way to convert carbon

dioxide into solid carbon materials, like carbon nanotubes and nanofibers? To do this, the researchers used a two-step electrochemical and thermochemical reaction conducted at relatively low temperatures and ambient pressure. Using their knowledge of organic chemistry, the scientists realized that carbon monoxide would be a much better-starting material than carbon dioxide to make a carbon nanofiber. As such, they searched for ways to synthesize carbon monoxide from carbon dioxide, which would ultimately be used to make the carbon nanofiber. After much research and trial and error, Chen and his team found that they could use an electrocatalyst made of palladium supported on carbon to split carbon dioxide and water into carbon monoxide and dihydrogen gas, for the first step of the reaction. For the second step of the reaction process, Chen and his team discovered that they could use a heat-activated thermocatalyst made of an iron-cobalt alloy to convert carbon monoxide into a carbon nanofiber. By coupling electrocatalysis and thermocatalysis, the scientists achieved the desired outcome that none of the two processes could have done alone.

In addition to their discovery of the coupling catalysts' two-step process reaction, Chen and his colleagues found that the coupled catalysts can be easily recycled, demonstrating that this process could occur commercially because of the catalysts' efficiency and ease of reusability. The scientists used transmission electron microscopy to see that it is easy to recycle the catalytic metal because the catalyst gets pushed up and away from the surface as the carbon nanofiber grows. According to the researchers, "[the] ease of catalyst recycling, commercial availability of the catalysts, and relatively mild reaction conditions for the second reaction all contribute to a favorable assessment of the energy and other costs associated with the process."

All in all, Chen and his team are optimistic that their findings will "[open] a door for decarbonizing [carbon dioxide] into valuable solid carbon products while producing renewable [dihydrogen]" renewable fuel that could potentially lead to harmful carbon emissions within the coming years.

Winter Break Crossword



Across

- 4. One way to get down a mountain
- 5. I went there over winter break
- 8. The result of being in the cold too long
- 11. The result of stacking three snowballs
- 12. This country has the most winter olympics medals

Down

- 1. Emily's exciting winter break activity
- 2. Water in the winter
- 3. Use these to walk on top of the snow
- 4. "hit the []" (a common winter-sport phrase)
- 6. YU sent a mission here
- 7. The location of a skating rink in New York City
- 9. A warm winter destination
- 10. A common protective structure build from snow

	7	1	2	4	0	5	0	0	7	1	2	2	1	2	1
1															
3		●													
1															
5								●							
3	●														
1															
3												●			
1					●										
3														●	
2					●										
3														●	
2															
5										●					
2															
0															

5	■	■	■	■	■	□
4	■	■	■	■	■	□
3	■	■	■	■	■	□
2	■	■	■	■	■	□
1	■	■	■	■	■	□

Battleship Rules:

The goal of this puzzle is to fill in the entire board with water squares and ship squares. The numbers on the edges signify how many ship squares are contained in that row or column. Under the board is a key of what ships remain to be filled in and their respective lengths. Each ship is a straight line of uninterrupted black squares, either horizontally or vertically. Ships may not touch horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. It is generally best to start by filling in the squares that we already know based on the starting board, and then moving onto the long ships.

14	10		10		10		20	12
		7	11					
14			15		10		4	9
13	9	12	13		10			
				5	11	14		7
	11		13			12	10	
5	5			22	10			14
	13					9	14	
16		11						

Rules: The board must be filled only with numbers ranging from 1-9, with no repetitions of numbers within any row or column. There are also no repetitions of numbers within the 9 marked 3x3 sections. The component that differentiates this from a normal sudoku are the little cages throughout the board. Each cage contains a number, which denotes the sum of the numbers within those cages. Numbers may not be repeated within a cage. Additionally, there can be no repeated numbers in the big diagonals from the top-left to bottom-right and top-right to bottom-left. These 2 diagonals are shaded. Good luck!



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 **March 1st**
(May Degree) (September Degree)

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 8 **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 Shavel Glaubeck 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/FD2024

QUESTIONS?

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

YU.EDU/COMMENCEMENT