Muzin Elected to Head Next Volume of The Commentator

BY RYAN S. KARREN

Ensuring a climactic end to a reporting tenure marked by extensive investigative journalism, the Governing Board of The Commentator has elected Nicholas D. Muzin Editor-in-chief of the paper's Volume LXI. Arnon Storfer will serve as Executive Editor and Joshua Feldman will assume the new position of Managing Editor.

Muzin, of Toronto, has extensive experience in every area of the paper's content, having served as both Associate News Editor and Features Editor. His lengthy and thorough articles have been a Commentator staple since Muzin joined the staff in September 1994.

"Nick brings to this position formidable enthusiasm and impressive dedication. His work in both the news and features departments has afforded him a unique opportunity to be involved in every aspect of our reporting," said outgoing editor-in-chief Owen L. Cyluruk. "We have every confidence he will carry on The Commentator's commitment to accuracy and excellence."

As a cub reporter in the Fall '94 semester, Muzin's investigation of university employees' charges of asbestos contamination in university buildings landed him a coveted place on the upper fold of the paper's front page. He also covered the activities of the Racial Harmony Council and proposed amendments to the YCSC constitution.

"I think that what is remarkable about Nick is that he doesn't fill in the face of controversy. He is not afraid to tackle difficult and uncomfortable topics," noted Ari D. Hilt, the paper's current editor. "He exhibits a truly unusual resilience."

Muzin has raised eyebrows this year with articles exposing cheating among Organic Chemistry students and investigating alleged mishandling of the SOY Seferim Sales. He concedes that some of his articles have drawn some criticism.

"There are those who make a habit of raising issues—sometimes legitimately—with things that appear in print. What is worth reporting is a difficult call, but everyone needs to remember that our central mission is to provide the students of Yeshiva with information" continued on page 15

Poll Indicates Students' Call for a Unified Beit Midrash

BY YOSSI LEWIS

The first act of the recently formed Beit Midrash Committee was to conduct a survey of student opinion regarding a solution to the current problem of overcrowding in the Batei Midrash. The results, according to Committee Chairman Jonathan Neiss, indicate that students want change.

"The consensus seems to be that there is a definite need for improvement," says Neiss. "The status quo is not sufficient."

According to the survey, which was distributed to every student in the dorms, 57% of students feel that Yeshiva University needs one unified Beit Midrash, while 43% are against this idea. However, almost 50% of those who are against unification favor change in the form of expansion in either the Main or Forst Beit Midrash, or in the establishment of a Beit Midrash in the Schottenstein Shul.

Although less than 50% of Y.U. students responded to the questionaire, Neiss felt that the survey represents an adequate cross section of the wants and needs of the student body.

"I was pleased with the response because the students at Y.U. are usually apathetic to this kind of survey. The people who responded were for the most part those who care and are most likely to be affected by the situation."

Approximately 75% of the responses received were from MYP students who, according to Neiss, are "the ones who were targeted in the survey because of their connection to the issue."

According to the survey, 62% of MYP students support unification while 38% do not. Half of the MYP students who favor expansion over unification feel that Schottenstein is the solution. Neiss admitted that Schottenstein is not the best idea, due to its relative distance from the heart of campus, and agreed that many MYP students may favor this solution under the assumption that they would have first stake in the Main Beit Midrash.

The results from BMP were 50% for unification—50% for expansion. Continued on page 15

Candidates Gear up for Presidential Campaign

BY BOAZ KURZIS

What was once a muddled collection of hopefuls, many of whom were ultimately unable to commit themselves to the demands of YCSC president, has winnowed down to a field of just three individuals competing for Student Council's key post.

The Canvassing Committee, the student-run body that monitors campaign elections, has officially reported the following names as presidential candidates for the upcoming May 2 ballot: Jason Buskin, Shraga Goldenersh, and Shmuel Bodenheimer.

Among the three, the final tally could very well be decided not only by the type of leadership voters want, but also from where the candidates are coming. On a campus where student polarization has become an increasingly applicable issue, the candidates, on the surface, seem to embody the division lines that have long separated factions within the student body.

The candidates hail from the two most highly represented student groups on campus: those who relate mostly with right-of-center Judaism, usually referred to as the Yeshiva or Beit Midrash crowd, and the moderates, who are stereotypically associated with theIBC "mainstream".

Buskin, an IBC student, seems to have emerged as the centrist candidate, and the MYP/Beis Medrash contingent is widely viewed as Goldenersh's political stronghold. Bodenheimer is relying on a maneuver whereby he hopes to show that his background transcends the stereotypes. He is continued on page 15

Spring has finally arrived on campus, bringing students outside to enjoy the warmer weather.
Fire from Above

Every issue, every month, and every year The Commentator generates its wide range of critics; about three thousand in total, the paper's circulation. And each critical reader reacts in their own self-satisfying way. Some curse the articles and its editors, others respect them. Some publicly deride the paper while others choose words of praise - some use the cafeteria as their forum for critique, some the Beit Midrash, others the bathroom, and the more serious critic writes back a letter to the editor. But this year students have popularized a medieval methodology in dealing with their objections to an issue, an article, or even a sentence - trash the paper, the whole paper, maybe stacks of thirty to eighty at a time.

Eyewitnesses recall accounts of yeshiva men taking stacks of papers and tossing them in the can with the same joy as offering a korban. "It is a Chilul Hashem, (a desecration of God)" is just one remark often used by these trashmen as a license to their action.

And last issue members of the Yeshiva College Dramatics Society, including its president, went on a "Let's throw out The Commentator crusade" as soon as they read one critical paragraph of an actor's performance within an overall laudatory play review.

Scary, isn't it.

Such an extreme philosophy should not fit within the context of a Yeshiva, College, nor any other student curriculum. Anyone who uses 'higher' causes or 'sacred' motivations to warrant malicious behavior mirrors the tyrannical psychology of a Yigal Amir or a Baruch Goldstein. What's most frightening is that many of these students openly admit that they did not even read the contested article.

And what about geneva (stealing)? Stealing from paid advertisers; stealing from the other twenty-five writers and editors, and stealing from the paper itself - officially only the advertisers; stealing from the other twenty-five writers and editors. As soon a student disagrees with an article in The Commentator, he heads out and throws out piles of newspapers. This action is not excusable in a college where we pride ourselves in our dedication to Torah values as well as secular values.

In the last issue of The Commentator there was an article that contained information about the Dramatics Society that the students of Yeshiva University, has the right to print anything that they feel is newsworthy and appropriate. The Editors are the judges of this and not the student body. There is a right way and a wrong way of dealing with one's problems. If you have a problem write a letter to the editor, but do not destroy property that does not belong to you.

I apologize for my actions and hope that the students of Yeshiva University choose to always stand for what they believe in, but also to choose the correct forum and method in which to express their views.

Martin Tollinsky
President, YCDS
SSSB '96

Mazel Tov To:

Danny Nagler and Anniel Seghi
Shami Minkove and Elana Milstein

On Their Recent Engagements
On Departing, and Coming Back

MEIR S. ZEITCHIK

"My God it's been so long... Never dreamed you'd return. But now here you are..."

And here I am...

"Hearts and thoughts they fade... away."

- Eddie Vedder

The scene is, by turns, fuzzy and vivid, numbing and compelling. A man returns to the same pristine town he left years ago. We're not sure why he left. Perhaps he entertained notions of a fast-paced urban life, but the events that brought the disparity of his small-town upbringing. Maybe he saw hazy visions of grandeur, a dream of skipping loose the confounding shackles of his hometown. Or he might have left for no reason at all, driven by a natural curiosity to find "something more."

Whatever the reason, we know how he feels upon ending the chapter of exile - the contradictions. His roots are in his birthplace, yet he feels alienated from it, detached. He longs for some glorious past that probably never existed, but he can't imagine living for that over the new opportunities in his life. And yes, he feels slightly superior to his neighbors, for he's undergone experiences that his former neighbors can't even conceive of.

Yet something draws him back. He's not certain of what it is, or if it's anything at all. But the reasons of his mind, the sights and sounds of years past, the victories and the heartbreaks, become cloaked in a surreal glow. He returns, fully aware of his inability to penetrate that shield and recapture those days. Yet that makes it all the sweeter - the memory remains intact, immune to the banalities of the present.

In some bizarre way, our experience at YU mirrors that of the exile taking to the road. We leave prior experiences behind, and, through our academic pursuits, explore far-flung intellectual terrain. Our perception of times and places gone by becomes clouded in the satisfaction of their kashrut. As we turn our backs on the college community, we remember to ourselves and dozens of my classmates, has tenured brightened mornings for my fellow graduates, I wonder where the years have gone. What has happened to those faces in the yearbook that I've never seen since June of 1995. Where are they now? Perhaps writing a column similar to this one.

Most of us have turned out alright. A good number of us are heading to Ivy League law schools; others are embarking on successful careers in medicine or working in Jewish communal service. Some have disappeared in the cold world of work and are learning more Greek than Jewish.

Others haven't been so fortunate. Alisa Flotow z"l, whose smiling countenance brighten mornings for myself and dozens of my classmates, has been taken from us by those killers who treat innocent human beings with less respect than we show their murderers. Sara Duker, with whom I worked on the high school newspaper, has been taken from us by those killers who treat innocent human beings with less respect than we show their murderers.

Rafe, Duker, with whom I worked on the high school newspaper, has been taken from us by those killers who treat innocent human beings with less respect than we show their murderers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are also the peaks: rejoicing with friends from high school will be at my wedding. If I close my eyes and think hard enough, I can even transport myself back to a classroom at 243 East Frisch Court in Paramus, New Jersey. It seems like just yesterday.

I've usually handled transitions pretty well, allowing myself a brief glance back, but remaining focused on the challenge ahead. But like so many of my fellow graduates, I wonder where the years have gone. What has happened to those faces in the yearbook that I've never seen since June of 1995. Where are they now? Perhaps writing a column similar to this one.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
Alumni, President’s Circle Donate $15,000 to YCSC

BY J.D. SHULMAN

After weeks of dedicated effort, YCSC President Josh Fine and his council have secured $15,000 in donations from Yeshiva University’s alumni associations. The money comes at a particularly critical time in the year, as Fine seeks to live up to his promises of funding various clubs and publications strapped for cash. They include the First Aid Society, the Bikkur Cholim Society, the philosophy journal Shem V’Yefet and the English literary magazine Kol.

President’s Circle co-Chairman Robert Kantrowitz (far right) and Louis Tuchman (present a check to YCSC President Joshua Fine.

President’s Circle pledged $3,800, to be used to finance various clubs. The Alumni Association promised $11,000, which will help subsidize the journals, senior dinner, a ceremony for the 60th anniversary of The Commentator, and perhaps Lag BaOmer festivities.

“Students’ activities needed the money, and I said I’ll try to get it,” recalled Fine. “The First Aid Society and the Bikkur Cholim Society, likewise, do a lot for the community, but they incur high costs. I hoped to subsidize the allotment from the YCSC Student Council with alumni donations.”

YCSC Sets Upcoming Agenda

BY DAVID SWIDLER

In a meeting the week preceding Passover break, Yeshiva College Student Council discussed a number of events planned for the coming weeks, as well as more general issues of policy and politics.

A similar vein, the Council on Racial Harmony, headed by Chaim Motzen and Jeremy Lautman, set forth its plans for a trip to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. The Senate Task Force, consisting of dov Simons, Michael Belgrade, and Natan Lebowitz presented a measure to make Student Senators more representative, by ratifying Y.U.S. approval for senatorial nominees.

To help resolve another sticky issue, legislation was introduced that would clarify the status and source of funding of the Dramatics Society, which for some time has been caught in the middle of YCSC and the administration, each of which wants the other to provide the bulk of YCDS operating expenses.

The Council voted to continue displaying the Israeli flag on campus, putting support for Israel over the concern of some that such open identification with the government of another country might be undesirable.

“Also approved was a measure to distribute more door-to-door suggestion forms, specifically with regard to any proposals students might have for additions to the YCSC Constitution,” explained Fine.

College Republicans Visit Rush Limbaugh Show

BY NACHUM LAMM

On Wednesday, April 17, the College Republicans of Yeshiva University spent an afternoon as audience members at the television show of the conservative movement’s most popular commentator, Rush Limbaugh.

About ten members of the club traveled to the midtown studio where the late-night talk show is taped. The trip was made possible by the show’s twice-a-year “college week,” which provides tickets to the show—which usually involves a wait of over a year—to various College Republican clubs around the country free of charge. Some club members have traveled hundreds of miles to see the show; fortunately, YU students only had to take a cab.

The students were seated in the studio with clubs from Columbia, Cornell, Brooklyn College, UPenn, and other colleges, and were first greeted by “Bo Snerdley,” a.k.a. James Golden, the call screener of the eight-year-old, fifteen million—listener Rush Limbaugh radio show, and a celebrity and popular talk show host in his own right. After explaining a few rules, answering some questions, and otherwise generally preparing and pumping up the audience, Snerdley introduced the host.

Before the taping began, Limbaugh talked to the audience for a while, answering questions and discussing the challenging faceted conservative students on college campuses. The show lasted a half-hour; in it, Limbaugh discussed the “spiritual revival” among liberals as exemplified by a Michael Lerner-run conference, pointing to it as proof that conservatism is winning the day. He also played and commented on humorous political video clips and played a phony commercial for a “new cologne,” “Essence of Extremism,” “Available at NEWTstroms and other fine stores.”

After the taping, Rush signed copies of his books that had been brought by the audience members.

The YU students all enjoyed the annual trip, and many others have already inquired about next year’s show (contact the College Republicans next fall). Although many were having the show taped, a number of audience members and other fans of the show gathered in Morg Lounge at three A.M. the next morning to watch the show—and themselves—one more time.

Mir Yeshiva’s Escape Chronicled at Yom Hashoah Program

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

The Mir Yeshiva’s wartime travels from Poland to Vilna to Vladivostok, and its remarkable deliverance from the hands of Hitler and Stalin during the dark days of the Holocaust, are topics which justify years of intense study. But Rabbi Marvin Tokayer, a witness to and participant in the students’ acclimation to its strange, new world, are topics which justify years of intense study. But Rabbi Marvin Tokayer, a witness to and participant in the students’ acclimation to its strange, new world, are topics which justify years of intense study. But Rabbi Marvin Tokayer, a witness to and participant in the students’ acclimation to its strange, new world, are topics which justify years of intense study. But Rabbi Marvin Tokayer, a witness to and participant in the students’ acclimation to its strange, new world, are topics which justify years of intense study. But Rabbi Marvin Tokayer, a witness to and participant in the students’ acclimation to its strange, new world, are topics which justify years of intense study. But Rabbi Marvin Tokayer, a witness to and participant in the students’ acclimation to its strange, new world, are topics which justify years of intense study. But Rabbi Marvin Tokayer, a witness to and participant in the students’time, the
Cries of Fire Hazard Plague Rav Bronspiegel’s Shiur

BY NOAH STREET

On Sunday, March 31, Rav Abba Bronspiegel rose and pointed on the sermon in the Main Beit Medrash announcing that shiur had been cancelled for that morning because the shiur room had been locked. Due to a drama being played out among security officials, the MYP office, and Rav Bronspiegel and his 95 students, Furst 440’s doors remained locked amid claims of fire hazard conditions.

After much ado, the third-floor Furst Hall Beit Midrash became the new home for Rav Bronspiegel’s shiur, replacing the previous 75-person facility.

“The problem,” Rav Bronspiegel told The Commentator, “began about a month before my announcement, when I was informed that my room had been locked and I would not be able to give shiur in F-440 any longer.” He was quite perturbed about the incident, because “instead of locking the room and then telling me, they should have told me first.” Both MYP Dean R. Zevulun Charlop and Assistant Dean R. Chaim Bronstein interceded with the Security Department. Rav Bronspiegel’s behalf and for the time being, the room was left open.

For the next two weeks, Rav Bronspiegel’s shiur received an almost daily visit from the former building maintenance, who would stand in F-440’s doorway and make a head count of the students inside.

During this period of time, Rabbi Bronspiegel was offered two alternative rooms, but neither were viable options in his eyes. “They suggested I use room 404 in the Mussa building, but it is a lecture hall and it is impossible to give shiur in that room. It’s like a professor lecturing to a class. I don’t lecture, I give shiur, so I bring the students to the room.”

Finally, on Sunday, March 31, R. Bronstein informed Rav Bronspiegel that he could no longer use F-440 and that these orders had come from Rabbi Lamm himself. This would be the first time in the past ten years that Rav Bronspiegel had not given shiur. After R. Bronspiegel made his proclamation in the Beit Medrash, his students banded together. They put up notices around the school asking the students to protest the “lack of Derech Eretz and Kavod Hatorah” being accorded R. Bronspiegel.

Students petition

Next, R. Bronspiegel’s students authored and signed a petition protesting the closing of their shiur room, scouring the Beit Midrash for additional signators from other shiurim. In the petition, they point out that, “The claim that our shiur’s presence creates a potential fire hazard is spurious at best. After all, when Rabbi Lamm and other distinguished rabbis speak in the main Beit Midrash, the room is filled beyond its official capacity. Yet, no one has ever locked the room because of the potential fire hazard.”

R. Bronspiegel made a similar point: “So even if technically my room is called a fire hazard, because I have 80 students in the room instead of 75, even the fire department would not make a fuss.”

These rules of going by the book have been observed, but not being observed right now. I checked into it. There are more students in the Beit Midrash than are legally permitted.” R. Bronspiegel believes that the difficulties were “just a ploy, a ruse and a pretense to harass me... The real crux of the matter is that not only am I being harassed, but it is a harassment of the entire yeshiva. Certain administrators are looking for technicalities, such as the one used against me, to control the yeshiva.”

R. Charlop feels that “the petition isn’t really a strong argument, because the fact of the matter is whenever you have a big meeting you are going to have overflow audiences, but that happens once a year. You don’t run a class four or five times a week like that.” In addition, Rabbi Charlop notes, while he would “to wait until the end of the term, they made it very difficult. Building maintenance felt very strongly that the number of students far exceeds the maximum capacity of the room. Everybody always says it [a fire] won’t happen, but what about when it does happen?”

While R. Charlop feels that the current temporary solution is “an excellent solution to the problem,” R. Bronspiegel claims he “was very happy with my class and there was absolutely no good reason to take the class away from me.”

Lavish Plans for SSSB Dinner
Raise Eyebrows

/

BY ARI GRUNEN

Wontons and plum sauce. Mini-kishkes. Stuffed mushrooms. A sushi bar. The menu of an ultra-expensive kosher restaurant in the city? Not exactly. It is a list of just a few of the hors’oeuvres and main dishes served at the Sy Syms School of Business student dinner.

Amid criticism of the $25/$30 student cost—depending on how early students RSVP’ed, and due, at least in part, to the menu—the Sy Syms School of Business’s student dinner will take place at the Toy Building in downtown Manhattan. The April 29th event is entirely run and organized by students and will serve the dual purpose of honoring SSYSB students, as well as providing an opportunity for networking with SSYSB alumni and recruiters.

Approximately two thousand dinner invitations were sent out, as all Sy Syms students, faculty, administration, and alumni, as well as recruiters from scores of firms including Arthur Andersen, Coopers and Lybrand, J.P. Morgan, Merrill Lynch, and N.W. Ayer, were invited to attend the affair. The four dinner chairpersons—Sarat Aranov, Sharon Daffen, Jonathan Lifschutz, and Etan Pomrenze—who, along with a help in being at the Office of Placement and Career Services, are responsible for running and organizing this year’s dinner, are expecting 400 people to attend the dinner.

The dinner program calls for a cocktail hour which will offer ample time for mingling, followed by a buffet style dinner during which senior awards will be announced.

Dinner organizers defended the $25/$30 subsidized cost, saying that a five dollar increase over last year’s fee was necessary to insure the success of the dinner.

Adrienne Wolff, Assistant Director of the Office of Placement and Career Services, described the fair as a “multi-purpose function for students to find about potential positions in their chosen majors and fields, and to start to become comfortable with the recruiter.” She believes $25 is not outrageous for an event such as this and added “if there are students who have a problem with this [the student fee], they should come speak to me.”

Jonathan Lifschutz pointed out that the student fee was increased in part to offset the cost of the hall in the Toy Building. “We wanted recruiters to come,” he commented. “Recruiters will not go to a place in an inconvenient location. The Toy Building is very convenient and is well known.” Lifschutz said the Toy Building, which is located downtown and across the street from the Sy Syms School of Business student dinner.

In addition, the buffet dinner will have set seating according to industry so that students will be able to maximize their networking time with recruiters from their chosen fields of study.

While admitting that “no other school does something as lavish as this,” Assistant Dean R. Chaim Bronstein feels that the petition, “was very fair deal” on the price, and as an extra incentive for SSYSB students to attend the dinner, Adrienne promises free chip and quack lessons.

![Toy Building]
Faculty Votes to Allow Two Credits for YCDS

BY ARNON STORFER

The Yeshiva College Dramatics Society has won a small battle with the Yeshiva College administration, at least for now.

The word came on March 20, after the faculty voted to pass a recommendation from the curriculum committee to grant students of the official drama course, up to two credits for their participation in YCDS productions. The mandate, however, is currently a trial, and its performance will be reviewed by the curriculum committee at the end of the first year.

According to the mandate, Dr. Anthony Beukas, the YCDS faculty advisor and instructor of Theater Workshop, the official drama course, up to two credits for their participation in YCDS productions. The mandate, however, is currently a trial, and its performance will be reviewed by the curriculum committee at the end of the first year.

The reason for the year-long trial, which was tacked on to the initial recommendation by the Academic Standards Committee, according to curricular committee member Jeremy Lustman, is “to ensure that the academic standards of the course are upheld and grades are allocated accordingly.”

Lustman explained that the status of the Theater Workshop is questionable, and there are members of the curriculum committee who feel that activities that are “unacademic in nature,” such as sports, are not worthy of more than one credit. The committee, on the whole, felt that Theater Workshop was more academic than other activities that are granted one credit, yet not worthy of a full two credits. As the faculty was deciding upon the academic standing of YCDS, the Yeshiva College Student Council passed legislation on March 24 mandating that YCDS receive a maximum of only $9,500 for the entire semester, the instructor will end of the semester, the instructor will assess student performances and grade them accordingly. When asked if YC administration has agreed to undertake a permanent role in financing all facets of YCDS productions, YC Dean Norman Adler replied, “Yeshiva College is firmly committed to the continuation and thriving of the YCDS—no matter what the specific format of support may be.”

Finances aside, however, YCDS is no stranger to controversy over the maximum number of credits it can allot to students involved in just four productions, as a result of a compromise made with the University allowing it to review script submissions and suggest revisions. The establishment of the executive Committee on Academic Standards for that purpose was a result of the controversial production Lips Together Teeth Apart, which contained overtones of homophobia and homosexuality, as well as causing negative publicity to the University.

During the following semester, the curriculum committee met and concluded that allowing students to receive three credits undermined the legitimacy of the speech and drama minor, since a student involved in just four productions would fulfill the requirements of the minor. As a result, the committee adjusted the maximum number of credits to two. And students who returned at the beginning of this academic school year to roll in the course found it to be reduced back to its original one credit. According to Dr. Michael Hecht, Associate Dean of Yeshiva College, the current two-credit compromise is expected to last well beyond its one year trial period.