Edah Holds Conference

YU Refuses to Sanction Function

By David Mencnell

On Sunday and Monday of President’s weekend, February 14-15, Edah’s first international conference met at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Midtown Manhattan. The conference, entitled “Orthodoxy Encounters a Changing World,” drew over 1500 attendees across North America, England, and Israel. Participants came to voice concerns, most worried about their concerns, most worried about the future of Modern Orthodoxy, difficult path is taken in combating these problems, problems that of maximal integration, with society while maintaining a total commitment to halacha. This idea is the courage to be Modern and Orthodox, a difficult path is taken in combating these problems, namely that of maximal integration, with society while maintaining a total commitment to halacha. This idea is the courage to be Modern and Orthodox.

Gambling on Campus? You Bet!

By Chaim Schneider

Heading home for vacation, most students look forward to seeing their parents, visiting friends, and relaxing. For a growing number of students, though, vacation is a chance to head out in a different direction. For many students, gambling both on and off campus, has become a popular diversion. This development is worrisome to concerned friends and administrators who fear that the recent trend may develop into something more serious.

The commentator sets out to examine student attitudes and concerns about both organized gambling and similar games. While administrators spoke freely about their concerns, most students were reluctant to be quoted by name, some worried about offending their friends and others out of fear. For this reason, the names mentioned herein have been changed.

David, tried of simple vacations and uneventful weekends, noted the standard complaint, “I can get bored, so I decided to go home for some fun.” With an open mind and an open wallet, he drove to Atlantic City, the East Coast’s Mecca of casino gambling, for a day of excitement.

“I went to Atlantic City having read a lot about gambling. I went for a day, and for fun I put a little money in it; I ended up cashing out with $250. About two days later I went back, lost a little bit, and then continued on page 17

Rally Staged in Support of MTA

School’s Fate Yet to Be Decided

By Jason Cyrulnik

Anyone who thought MTA would sit idly by as its future slowly disappeared right before its very eyes appears to have been mistaken. Wednesday, February 17 found hundreds of high school students, administrators, teachers, and alumni pouring out on 185th Street in organized protest. Unlike many protests designed to target a particular action, this one protested indiscriminately and the absence of a clear response on the part of Yeshiva University in deciding the fate of its affiliated boy’s high school The Marsha Stern Talmudic Academy.

Following recent reports of Yeshiva University plans to shut down the boy’s high school the subsequent outcry from many different sectors of the Jewish community to save MTA, YU officials scrambled to clarify their position. It didn’t work. YU Public Relations confirmed the existence of merger talks, while official YU figures, at least as articulated the high school stands pointed to the prospect of an incoming freshman class.

Against this backdrop of confusion, the Yeshiva University Board of Trustees’ Executive Committee held a meeting on Wednesday, February 10 to discuss the situation. At the meeting, Elliot Gibeber, Chairman of the High School Board and a key player in the recent developments, presented his plan for financial independence, one of three options being considered by the University at the time — closing the school, merging it with another area high school, or granting MTA financial independence and autonomy. Gibeber’s presentation was designed to sway YU officials to abandon the second option, which would effectively end MTA’s existence.

Yeshiva College Arts Festival Successfully Staged

Hundreds Attend Two Week Event

By Aaron Klein

The Third Annual Yeshiva College Arts Festival, arranged by Students Ben Silverman and Benjamin Schiller, took place this month with a series of events that opened to both students and faculty. According to Joffe, the aim of the Festival was to stress the importance of students applying and exercising intellectual and artistic talents outside the classroom, and to promote art awareness on campus.

Yeshiva College Dean Norman Adler instituted the Festival in 1997 in hopes of widening the aesthetic scopes to the Yeshiva College experience for giving students a chance to express themselves artistically. He calls the Festival a “playground for the mind and spirit.” Adler stressed that although the Dean’s Office was home to the Festival committee, the events were planned “for the students, by the students.”

Dean Joyce Jesionowski feels that the classroom is where intellectual life begins and ends such as the Arts Festival are where intellectual life is further expanded, with students deriving pleasure from each other’s accomplishments. She said, “I cannot even begin to emphasize the extent to which I was impressed by these year’s Festival… I was pleased to see the many sides of the students’ lives.”

The two week Festival kicked off on Sunday February 24th with an opening concert that featured musical performances by the students. It was the first ever YU sanctioned secular music show, and it showcased various types of music including folk, pop, klezmer and alternative. Dev Picholketz and David Kesey were the first performers and had the crowd rocking in no time. Next came various tunes performed by other students.

The conference opened with a keynote address delivered by the director of Edah, Rabbi Saul Berman. Berman elucidated the goals of Edah and the direction of Orthodoxy in the modern world. Our generation’s new paganism, Berman explained, consists of several problematic elements in society, namely materialism, “value relativity, in which the concept of absolute truth is abandoned, and self-centeredness.”

In Modern Orthodoxy, a difficult path is taken in combating these problems, namely that of maximal integration, with society while maintaining a total commitment to halacha. This idea is the courage to be Modern and Orthodox.
Dear Fellow Students,

It has been a month since I have had the opportunity to address the students in the proper Commentator forum. A lot has happened since then so I thought I might fill you in. I would like to thank Moshe Singer for his continuous efforts on behalf of the Yeshiva College Student Activity club to bring the theatre into Yeshiva University. Our excursion to Footloose was a resounding success enjoyed by both campuses. I am also indebted to Dov Brandstatter, Brian Glass, and the Junior and Sophomore classes for their hard working in the planning and execution of our second annual paint ball trip. I would also like to invite all Yeshiva College students to the first annual Yeshiva College Bowling Tournament. There will be fun, food, and free T-shirts for all that choose to participate. The event will take place on March 14th, and busses will be leaving campus at 5:15.

Now for more pertinent business; WYUR will be fixed this month. We have the transmitters in our office and are just waiting for Jeff Soclo to meet with our radio engineers and get the final okay. We here at the student council would like to invite all those interested in participating in WYUR, whether as a DJ, a board member or station manager to come by and speak to either Hadar Weiss or myself and get involved. We would also ask that you stop by the Student Service office and communicate your desire for this to be their number one issue on their agenda. It is my opinion and that of many others that the wheels have been turning to slowly on anything concerning WYUR and we would like to grease those wheels with student pressure.

Finally, I would like to get the students thinking about the upcoming elections. We will be asking for name submissions on the week before Pesach. I would like to encourage all those who are interested in helping out the students and advocating their needs to run for the various positions available. Well I guess I will let you get back to your studying (yeah right) and good luck with all your midterm exams.

Dror Barber
President, YCSC
American Orthodox Judaism's progressive wing, it seems to me, has stagnated for some time. An unhealthy satisfaction with the status quo has effectively stopped the kind of communal philosophical direction affixed many of its adherents. Matters of faith are not the sub­ ject of any discussion, nor do we see a forthcoming of age of another brood of modern Orthodox careerist autodidacts who will lead spiritually unenriched lives characterized by little more than an obscene quest to reach the suburbs.

Perhaps most importantly, Yeshiva University has finally succumbed, musing into existential­ly distinct yeshiva and university units that are, at best, tenuously connected. A glance at the mod­ ern Orthodox Jewish pantheon reveals signifi­ cant concerns. It is true that Orthodox yeshivas have remained numerically steady over the past decade, but only by resorting to a neo-stabulation przezschizophrenic giant with its institutional head in the sand.

As Yeshiva's identity has shifted off the yeshiva-centered model and toward more of a vacuum emerged. Those who believed a model of Yeshiva that integrates tradition with modernity to be attractive no longer had a cen­ tral body that advocated their views in a mean­ ingful way.

Edah, it seems to me, is an attempt to address the aforementioned leadership vacuum by un­ 'ing the progressive Orthodox community under the banner of an entity that will state more affirmatively what Yeshiva today only non­ con­ from the shallow in- in. Under the direction of Rabbi Berman, an uncommonly eloquent exponent of integralist Orthodoxy who has abstained from rabbinic credentials, Edah hopes to answer Yeshiva's silence and Agudath Israel's jihad of fanatical revisionism with a textually coherent approach to revitaliz­ ing modern Orthodoxy. Yeshiva University President Norman Lamm, Julius Berman, and other Yeshiva aligned nota­ bles have withheld their support for Edah since they insist, it is an institution­ally discredited entity. Edah is a Yeshiva entity in­ in. They seem to mean, 

"YESHIVA IS NO LONGER THE VANGUARD OF LIBERAL ORTHODOXY, THE STANDING GROUND FOR BROAD-MINDED TRADITIONALISM, BUT A CURWING SCHIZOPHRENIC GIANT WITH ITS INSTITUTIONAL HEAD IN THE SAND."

Edah and the "Luchos Ho'edus"

ADAM MOSES

Yeshiva's Demise, Edah's Rise, and the Emerging Progressive Orthodox Balance

An editorial in the February 13th 2012 edition of The JewishWeek accuses me of not "fight­ ing fair" in my criticisms of Edah. However, the issue is not one of fairness. Rather, the issue is truth and integrity. What (perhaps better said, who) is Edah? What is its agen­ da? In two recent letters to the editor of this publication, my statements have been severely criticized. I should like to respond to these criticisms and, at the same time, reaffirm their accuracy and truth.

One of the aforementioned critical letters was written by a supporter of Edah that "tricked (his word not my word) with the notions about a return to the Kol Ha'makom in­ sin." How frightening that this educator of our teenage youth, who should be preparing these boys to be Yeshiva bachelors by defining human sexuality in Torah terms, places his imprimatur on the behavior of someone who has defaced the Godly image! Has this self-declared scholar ever studied the Torah's description of "Keshet Reshaim"? He questions my statement, which I hereby reaffirm, that the self-appointed vocal editors of the entire rabbinic faculty of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, an affiliate of Yeshiva University (inaccurate­ ly referred to in the above mentioned publication as "Yeshiva University"), instructed the administration of YU, which it can not associate with Edah. The names of certain prominent colleagues and members may be faculty members of other divisions of Yeshiva University, but they are not on the Yeshiva level. The Yeshiva University was the raison d'etre of Yeshiva University. It was disingen­ uous to suggest that some halachic impri­ matur was conferred on Edah because of the participation of faculty members of Werzweiler, Stern, Cardozo and the like.

Edah's mission is to interact with the lib­ eral clergy and thereby legitimize the ille­ gitimate. A recent exchange with the Executive Director of Edah, I was told that his "mission is Tzchocha" (i.e., reiuke of the non-Orthodox in order that they correct the error of their ways). Upon this query, twice: "Will you grant a patrilineally descended, gay, non-ritually converted man the right to "fasten a signet ring of "Kesher Reshaim"?" He questions my statement, which I hereby reaffirm, that the self-appointed vocal editors of the entire rabbinic faculty of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, an affiliate of Yeshiva University (inaccurate­ ly referred to in the above mentioned publication as "Yeshiva University"), instructed the administration of YU, which it can not associate with Edah. The names of certain prominent colleagues and members may be faculty members of other divisions of Yeshiva University, but they are not on the Yeshiva level. The Yeshiva University was the raison d'etre of Yeshiva University. It was disingen­ uous to suggest that some halachic impri­ matur was conferred on Edah because of the participation of faculty members of Werzweiler, Stern, Cardozo and the like.

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A Return To Jewish Modesty

So, who did you pick up at the SOY Selroem Sale? Ahem... what did you run into when you happened to purchase the chart book? That's right, the chart book. I'm not talking about the Breslov Prayer Calendar or that book with colored diagrams of a luvah. I'm talking about "Modesty - An Adornment For Life," a companion booklet to a much larger and exhausting tome. Check it out. It's the ultimate guide for modesty in this age of obsessive-compulsive halakhic minutiae. And you don't even have to read it. You can simply look at the pictures.

Inside, the reader can view pictures of women dressed both modestly and, of course, immodestly. But don't get too excited. The potentially compromising and immodestly portrayed models are actually sketches of men wearing female clothing. That's right - men. Not to worry, though. Women constitute the remainder of the chart book. Indeed, no image spared - no angle overlooked. Every jot and title of the female body, every alluring inch - so to speak - covered.

The modestly rendered sketches are labeled "Kosher" while the immodest sketches are labeled "Not Kosher." Apparently, even with the dignified and ennobling halakhic format of female modesty, women are just pieces of meat. But they female modesty.

The chart book is yet another example of the mind-boggling explosion of painstaking halakhic inquiry that has seized the Jewish community. Too be sure, that's not necessarily an undesirable trend. Torah as studied in meticulous detail is part of what makes Judaism attractive. In addition, detailed and precise halakhic inquiry is quite essential to the halakhic development and endurance; and the degree to which this occurs ensues is the degree to which more of the Jewish community is exposed to the viscera of Jewish tradition. Making the study of contemporary American culture. Shalit surveys the current scene - ram­ pant stalking, gang rape, eating disorders, loveless "hook-ups," the demise of courtesy, sexual harassment- and concludes that this sexually aberrant condition is the product of a society that has shunned and stigmatized female modesty.

"I propose that the woes besetting the modern young woman - sexual harassment, stalking, rape, are all expressions of a society that has lost its respect for female modesty." Later, Shalit claims that "It's no accident that harassment, stalking, and rape all increased when we decided to let everything hang out." Her position is well-researched and her arguments are couched in the words of women from a wide array of sources, ranging from university research to Cosmo and Marie Claire. She also discusses numerous Jewish sources, including the Ramobum, Rash and Rabbi Norman Lamm. It was actually an article by Williams College in 1997, with a BA in philosophy; and although she is only 23 years old, she's been called "a prodigy at cracking the codes of culture" by the likes of George Will.

Shalit's book, as the title suggests, is a defense of female modesty. But it's also a harsh indictment of contemporary American culture. The book calls into question the guidelines and the particular halakhic ideals which have been trusted for hundreds of years are unsound, is especially disconcerting. It has been noted recently, both by Orthodox and non-Orthodox writers alike, that the success of Orthodox Jewry stems directly from its pedagogical system. The flow of knowledge, passed from generation to generation, forms a corpus of information which guides people in their daily lives. By contrast, modern deviations from classical Jewish interpretations fall simply because they lack a solid basis for maintaining this continuity.

One of the emerging trends in Modern Orthodoxy seems to be the desire to read Classical Jewish interpretations as they apply to the nature of the laws in place. As such, it allows for seemingly incompatible situations to work in congruity.

However, the mechanism of halakhic "compromise" does not weaken the halakhic system. It simply explains the concordia for its application. The article notes further that "halakha and learning are not merely morning classes peripheral to halakhic study." The author notes that halakha is not a cultural code of conduct. The hallmark of a good argument is that it effectively explains the concept brought to light by the opposing viewpoint. Blatant misrepresentations of halakha coupled with effusive arrogance are not enough to convince us otherwise.

What was most upsetting about the treatise was its overt lack of respect. Where does one find the gall to welcome us to a "new age" in which "No one, and that includes the rabbeinu, is beyond reproach!" If one questions anyone's opinion, it must be done with respect. I am confident that I speak for others in saying that slinging invectives in this manner is beneath contempt. Does the author really think that displaying a lack of kavod toward the rebbeim will endear him in the eyes of the halakhically disenfranchised? Fundamentally, we must resist the temptation to reevaluate the guidelines that comprise the halakhic system, even when they appear to be "out of date." Statements calling a woman's voice as "dirty or unethical" are perversions of halakhic. If a woman's voice is an eruvah, yet it is prohibited to do so. "One promise which the article noted, cherished halakha's are not hot enough to convince us otherwise.

A Little Request Please

The need for individuality of thought in the halakhic decision-making process is undeniable. Throughout history, halakhic principles have been debated, beginning in the Gemara itself. Rabbis as Abaye and Tzava openly differed on the most fundamental of halakhic principles. Similarly, Rabinowitz such as the Shach and Igger have found themselves at odds in evaluating the understanding of individual Talmudic positions. This is central to halakha - allowing for openness and debate about halakhic issues and their application to emerging situations.

Here, however, modern opinions diverge. Classical halakhic theory works on the tacit assumption that certain ideals cannot be called into question. Its success stems directly from the fact that debate is voided when they say, following a modern reinterpretation. This position, that the Rebbetzin's opinions which have been trusted for hundreds of years are unsound, is especially disconcerting. It has been noted recently, both by Orthodox and non-Orthodox writers alike, that the success of Orthodox Jewry stems directly from its pedagogical system. The flow of knowledge, passed from generation to generation, forms a corpus of information which guides people in their daily lives. By contrast, modern deviations from classical Jewish interpretations fall simply because they lack a solid basis for maintaining this continuity.

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Meet Tamir Goodman II


Sometimes I just don’t understand the students here in YU. It seems to me they always find something to complain about – the neighborhood, the campus and the lack of girls. Well, tell you what boys, open your eyes. We are in a great place that tries to provide us with everything we need as Jewish students. The small campus gives us the advantage of small classes, we enjoy some great sports facilities including the gym and the swimming pool and we even have a direct van to Stern! However, it doesn’t mean that everything is perfect.

One of the issues that most students complain about, and in this case I think we all agree, is the food. Don’t get me wrong, as a person who served in the Israeli army I learned to appreciate the quality of the food – the potential is there (although not all the time it is fully reached). The real problem is the quantity and the prices. We “get” $650 on our cafeteria card per semester (“get” is the wrong word, in fact it is money we are forced to pay in advance to the meal plan, I wonder who is behind this plan). Last semester we had 78 school days and 14 Shabbat (not counting the 23 days of vacation during which I had to get food on my own.) A simple calculation shows we have $7.50 a day. That is seven dollars and fifty cents a day! And the prices in here can be considered the anachronism of the nineties. I opened the menu and tried to put together $7.50 worth of food. On a normal day one may only have a main dinner dish and 2 oz. of salad or a main lunch dish with french fries and a soda (small). That’s it.

By this calculation, in order to buy three meals a day we have to fast for the next two days. If we do eat normally, I guess we’ll have to announce bankruptcy by the end of the semester. We definitely can’t afford treating friends for lunch, therefore, we cannot afford friends. Sounds ridiculous! Seriously, the best menu I could put together is a bagel with cream cheese and coffee for breakfast, pizza for lunch and one hot dog and a small cake for dinner. Well, you tell me how exactly do you expect us to get our recommended daily nutritional value.

Going to the Cae store does not solve the problem either: everything there is “fat free,” “sugar free” and “half the calories.” We even had “Weight Watchers” candies. I think the people in the food services must be too long with Stern students. We have in this university athletes and students that need hard, but we need food in order to function. Is that too large of a request from a student?

Another thing that bothers me is Shabbat meals. With all the appreciation to the complimentary $5 cost, I do not understand why do I have to beg (literally) for wine or another piece of chalav at Shabbat lunch. (I’m sorry for not being a perfect Jew, but I’m still not fully used to gefilter fish.) In addition, the people that choose the menu need to understand that, you’d better not change the food that we have from shabbat lunch until Sunday breakfast and we can’t live on salads and cake.

We are forced to spend more money (money that we don’t have) on food outside the university, whether it is extra supplies for shabbat or food during the rest of the week. I guess Time Out and Deli Kahal are making good money, so at least someone is happy. Our only hope, perhaps, is Morg Mart, offering us a week with decent amounts of tasty food for affordable prices. (By the way, we are still waiting for the sushi night...)

Before he was elected, Dror Barber, our president, pointed out that the high prices are due to a bill that is only on the paper, as he described it, between the university and the food services.

I call on the administration in Yeshiva University to cancel this “fake bill” between the school and Food Services. I think it’s about time.

I call on the people who get to pay money to this university and ask you: Do you know where your money goes?

If I call on the people who decide where to spend this money to revalue their priorities, it’s really nice to have new elevators, but since we can’t afford the food, I wonder who is going to survive this semester in order to benefit from them in the future?

I call on the people in the food services to cut the high prices. We need and, therefore, demand, enough food at reasonable and affordable prices.

But above all, I call on my fellow students not to surrender to the thought that you can’t make a difference, because you can. So let your voices and protests be heard! You have the power – we have the power to change.

To complain – we do all the time, to point out – I just did, and hope that someone is listening.
Long Live MTA

To the Editor:
As a parent of a student currently at Central, I find it appalling that YU should even be considering the closing of any of its high schools. As a teacher, and one who is somewhat familiar with the current educational industry, I can say that there are very few schools within the New York area that offer the high academic standards of the YUHS system.

Given the realistic world we live in, there really are little choices for a parent to choose from in a quality high school. The so called "black-hat" schools don't little to prepare their students for life after high school. Their emphasis is on learning Torah. While admirable, they do little to provide a solid bases for survival in the real world. The "co-ed" high schools on the other hand, are interested in the "bottom line" rather than the hashkafa of their students. It is to the Editor:

I am not a MTA graduate, but I believe that YU has made a mistake of immense proportions if it has decided to close down MTA. The existence of MTA fulfills the main beis medrash and the Gedolim who davened and gave their shiarim there, and to the current Roshei Yeshiva, cannot be minimized solely because YU deems the school to be a "black-hat" school.

Concerning Tamir

To the Editor:
Baruch HaShem, the times they are a-changin'! Tamir Goodman has a talent that should not be repressed. He has the uncanny ambidextrousness of one of King David's mighty 300. May he prove himself worthy in and out of the Torah to the Nations Kipot may become fashionable, and revered by Jew and Gentile alike!

Offense Taken

To the Editor:
It's disturbing to see that The Commentator, with the publication of its recent Purim issue, has continued to perpetuate the time-honored Jewish tendency of promoting divisiveness and dispute within the YU community. I guess I shouldn't be surprised to see such offensive trash coming from a publ...
More Kol Isha

To the Editor:
Re: Kol Isha by M. Levovitz — that was quite an opus, but let’s keep it simple. According to the article, the Talmudic text cited says that certain sacred religious acts should not take place against the background of a woman singing, because it interferes with the experiential sanctity of the act, just like one shouldn’t say Shemoneh Eitzai in a place that smells. The later citation by the Orchos Hochayim expands on the enumeration of the act, but stays within the confines of the Shema being both prayer and an object of study. Neither of these texts refer to instances outside the realm of religious sacred actions, such as entertainment or pleasure. All these later interpretations are taking on ascertainment where no evidence of original intent to prohibit exists. This evokes me to prove once again the fallacy of creating mountains of halakhas. All these later interpretations of the text was the underlying theory that halakha is subjective, a theory that almost never holds water.

To the Editor:
I would like to note that it was refreshing to read Mordechai Levovitz’s article in The Commentator. I hope many rabbis respond to it and that such issues — illustrating clashes of modern perspectives with traditional stringencies — will continue to be openly confronted another reader to whom I forwarded this article. One paragraph in particular, with its reference to Reform and Conservative Jewish practices was particularly off-putting to that reader, and I agree with his point as well. There is something intellectually dishonest about halakha, that only strict halakhaic requirements in response to the leniencies of non-Orthodox Jewry. Halakhaic interpretation should stand on its own two feet and not just to the right of what I’ve seen or will see the words, if Reform and Conservative practices are truly outside the realm, they should be ignored rather than become the impetus for ever more radical interpretations of halakha as a defensive reaction. Such a reaction only serves to further marginalize the halakhists in the long run, appealing only to those willing to go ever-further toward the Right in adherance to the person who issues such pre-emptive rulings.

Ivan Ciment
YC ’97

To the Editor:
I should also note a particular comment of another YC student wrote an article in Mishnah Torah, Hilkhot/ Sura in YC96. The article’s presentation of the halakha was particularly off-putting to that reader, as it is subjective, a theory that almost never holds water.

To the Editor:
To the right of what stands next to it. In other words, if Reform and Conservative practices were taken on by the community as a whole, which is the case, that is the way the law will be interpreted. These are the minimum requirements only what is mandated by society is necessary. If a behavior is approved, or negated, and meets the minimum halakhaic requirements, then it is acceptable. We base the acceptability below those requirements does not mitigate acting in such a manner. The naked body of a woman singing, which is constantly heard, such as if something is loudly said in a place that smells, is prohibited. The majority of the day with, do not fall under the category of ragil.

Now that your hetar of ragil has been disproved, the only tzyad you have to go by is that of YC, which is a non-live setting, such as the radio. And even that is dubious, however since I have found poiskin who allow it. I will not attempt to follow with which voice speaks. The majority of the day, with, do not fall under the category of ragil.

To the Editor:
To the point you that even miker hadin, kol isha is asssur. The central pillar to your fallacy is your interpretation of the halakha of ragil. You contend that since we live in such a modern and progressive society, where hearing women sing is the norm, then a woman’s voice must be made our needs fit Torah. A hammer can be used to build; it can also be used as a murder weapon. A woman’s voice is also a tool. While it is not physically dangerous, it, like all other forms of evah, can either be used to dehumanize or to make meaningful relationships stronger, to build or to destroy. Don’t make statements like, “In this day and age, the idea that ______ is insulting and dishonorable,” or “Anyone today who thinks that ______ must severely out of touch with western reality.” Rather, question why society has felt to such a level in which the very tools that Hamas granted in order to sensor us to the power of our sexuality, are being portrayed as archaic if not used to destroy that sensitivity.

I consider myself Modern Orthodox. I also consider ideal of Modern Orthodoxy to have failed in practice because we have not learned that Torah is not subjective. The synthesis of modernity and Torah is necessary for us to live in modern society; it is key to a true understanding of Torah. Realizing this goal is for the Jews to be the unifying factor that forms secular society, and not the other way around. When pop culture becomes more important than what the Torah thinks, then that synthesis has failed. JFR implemented the American people to “Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country.” On the religious level, Torah is not about what is convenient, but rather how we’re accepted in modern society; it is key about halakha and subservience to our Creator. We fought not what we can do to make us fit in our needs, but we can do to make our needs fit Torah.

Norah D. Roth
SS55B ’00

Halakha Is Rarely Subjective

To the Editor:
In the most recent edition of The Commentator, a YC student wrote an article challenging the legitimacy of the three thousand year old prohibition against Kol Isha, the voice of a woman. Intervened with logistical leapfrogging to legitimate his idiosyncratic interpretations of the text was the underlying theory that halakha is subjective, a theory which almost never adheres.

Irrational, there is no situation where this theory is applicable, and it is quite similar to the halakha of kol Isha. In hilkot Hazon, Maimonides teaches us that there are two parallel halakhot which lead us to understand that halakha holds for all. Therefore, a woman to wear a skirt above the knee (the minimum length) is assur, and additionally for a woman to wear a skirt above the ankles in a Community such as Meah Shearim, which has adopted a stringency barring such behavior, is also assur. What becomes obvious from this is that kol Isha can be subjective as much as it can add to, but to subtract from, Torah requirements. (Rambam, Mishnah Tora, Hilkot Isha I).

Torah by its very begs the question into the mishenoth of the Seidik Esch that two simultaneous voices are not heard separately. This notion, entertained by the gemora, applies according to the Seidik Esch, only in a situation of nenua. He also discusses the concept of ragil, that something that one is used to be hearing, in some way, better. He cites this concept in connection to the gemora that says that a man may not say shema when he can hear the singing voice of a woman. Even according to the Arukh HaShulchan, who allows a man to say shema in earshot of a woman because of ragil, the woman would not be allowed to sing.

The classical example from your article that has been disussed above. There are minimum parameters of evah, and above beyond those minimum requirements only what is mandated by society is necessary. If a behavior is approved, or negated, and meets the minimum halakhaic requirements, then it is acceptable. We base the acceptability below those requirements does not mitigate acting in such a manner. The naked body of a woman singing, which is constantly heard, such as if something is loudly said in a place that smells, is prohibited. The majority of the day, with, do not fall under the category of ragil.

Here is the basic halakha, not a kohut search, as presented in Levovitz’s article. The gemora says “kol Isha evah.” The Shachton Arukh brings down the same statement as the Rambam, and they both bring down a key clause that has gone unnoticed. The basic halakha is that a woman may speak to a man without committing an issur, but that any use of the male voice to be sexually provocative is issur. What both the Shachton Arukh and the Rambam add, is “kol Isha im zarah,” definitely if she sings. One instance that has the objective quality of being sexually provocative is that of a woman singing which is this assur.

The article asserts that if a woman’s song is to be objectively provocative then it is “thus dirty and unethical.” To introduce such qualitative analysis which is utterly without basis is dangerous. While it is true that the Torah always considers a woman’s song to be seductive, it does not follow that this act is therefore dirty or unethical. A hammer can be used to build; it can also be used as a murder weapon. A woman’s voice is also a tool. While it is not physically dangerous, it, like all other forms of evah, can either be used to dehumanize or to make meaningful relationships stronger, to build or to destroy. Don’t make statements like, “In this day and age, the idea that ______ is insulting and dishonorable,” or “Anyone today who thinks that ______ must severely out of touch with western reality.” Rather, question why society has felt to such a level in which the very tools that Hamas granted in order to sensor us to the power of our sexuality, are being portrayed as archaic if not used to destroy that sensitivity.

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Norah D. Roth
SS55B ’00
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Hussein Leaves Legacy of War and Peace
Weinberger Reflects on Jordan's Past, Present, and Future
BY YEHUDA BURNS

The passing of King Hussein of Jordan leaves a dual legacy. On the surface, his death came while searching for peace with Israel. He was a leader who faced adversity and was confronted with a constant struggle for control. He witnessed the shooting of his grandfather by Palestinian nationalists in 1951 shortly before he took power. In 1988, at the height of the Intifada, Hussein returned to the West Bank in the ensuing battles. This was possibly the low point of Hussein's 46-year reign.

In September of 1970, Jordanian troops were forced to confront armed Palestinian fighters, led by Yasser Arafat, who had established a nationalistic stronghold within Jordanian borders. By 1974, an Arab Summit meeting had declared that Hussein no longer represented the Palestinian people and that the PLO assumed that function. In 1988, at the height of the Intifada, Hussein relinquished his claim to the West Bank to the Palestinians.

Dr. Naomi Weinberger, a political science professor at YU who is an expert on Middle Eastern affairs, described the political savvy of King Hussein. "His style of ruling was to always hedge and straddle the fence, always leaving himself room to maneuver and some deniability," She explained that this was an example of fortune that periodically shook up the empire taught him that shifting between extremes was both militarily and politically dangerous. It was this political ideology that allowed him to openly support Syria in the early '70s, then turn in favor of Iraq as it grew stronger. By 1974, an Arab Summit meeting had declared that Hussein no longer represented the Palestinian people and that the PLO assumed that function. Hussein largely dissipated following the Gulf War conflict. Following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the King sought to keep Jordan in a position of neutrality, angering the US Government and creating the impression among Israelis that he actually supported Saddam's regime. Eventually, Saddam denounced the King, who did not ally himself with Iraq during the war. Jordan could have easily allowed Iraq ground forces to cross through its territory toward Israel. By not allowing this, Hussein demonstrated to Israelis that he was not seeking the downfall of the Jewish state.

What emerged before the King's death was the warmest peace between Israel and Jordan since the 1978 Camp David Accords with Egypt. Largely, notes Dr. Weinberger, the peace was a direct result of the King's personal relationship with Arafat. One of the things they expected was peace and its interdependence. "The Jordanian people don't see the things they expected."

What remains to be seen in terms of the maintenance of a lasting peace between Israel and Jordan is how King Abdullah will respond to his new position. Abdullah is far from a seasoned political force. He is a recognized military officer who suppressed a series of riots inside Jordan in recent years. His powerful stand, despite his inexperience in maintaining the political balance that characterized his father's reign may be enough to retain Jordanian stability. Large, though, noted Weinberger, the Jordanian people will expect the country's political system to liberalize under their new ruler. "The King had tried it, but had to crack down to maintain order. Recently, though, he had made attempts at liberalization. Lacking the clout of his father, Abdullah will likely be forced to proceed on this course to please the people."}

There is no respect to the Palestinians inside Jordan, Weinberger noted, "They have had a flavor of the Israeli democracy and will get frustrated, having followed the progress of the West Bank. Once again, how the freedoms of Palestinians in the West Bank and within Jordan will develop will determine how happy they are. Similarly, this will determine how their approach to Israeli relations will unfold."
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Earth Share
When Falafel Meets the Big Apple

BY ZOHAN AZOULAY

O.K., so you still do the Douglass and a movie routine, at least now do something different for a change. The Israeli Film Festival gives one a great opportunity to glance into the life of contemporary Israel. Surprising as it may sound, Israel does have a thriving film industry and in fact it is blessed with some very talented people. The movies at the festival vary from highly dramatic plots, to documentaries about Yitzhak Rabin, to the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians. It captures Israel and its culture.

A few movies, however, stand out above all the rest. They are at the peak of excellence in the festival. "Dangerous Acts" was chosen to open the festival. This is a psychological thriller starring Gila Almagor, who portrays a woman confronted by the man who killed her entire family in a car accident. Almost certainly one of the best actresses in Israel today, has won in the past many international awards not only for her exceptional acting, but also for being a pioneer in dealing with the issues of post-Holocaust life in the newly born state.

"Alida Express," which was released last year, is back by popular demand. It is a romantic comedy about a mechanic who goes to the big city and decides to pursue his childhood dream of becoming a magician. While performing in his hometown, he tries to get back together with the woman he always loved. My personal favorites, however, are "Basic Training" and "Florentine." "Florentine" describes the lives of twenty-something year old friends and delves into their innermost personal and emotional conflicts; their joys as well as their sadder moments. The series deals with real issues young Israelis face these days such as the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, relationship with their parents, sexuality and daily struggle to survive.

"Basic Training" is an action series that deals with the effects of joining the Israeli army on young soldiers, their family and friends. As a person who went through this process, I can testify to the films brutal realism.

The Moshav Band

BY ELI GUBO

Personally, one of the worst moments in my life was in high school when I realized that the innocence I once had gone. The good old days are over and at the point of my assassination, I was times of responsibility and regret. Little did I know that later on in life I would lack the control over as much time as my worries and troubles. I really regretted that moment in time, the time I was in high school. This particular time I comes from my troubles. Here, I wish I could go back and do it all differently. I hope that my upbringing, my friends, and my fellow students all get together with me and help me to realize that it was the most valuable time period of my life so far.

When I came back from Israel I kept one memory as a reminder of that time. That moment is of my Sunday nights. Every Sunday night from February to the end of the year, I went with some friends from yeshiva to a little place in the Russian Compound called "Kol ba Sara." There we stayed out to two in the morning listening to a band called "The Moshav Band!" We became friends with the band, their friends, and other American students who were also regulars at the club. Looking back, it is nofib that I miss more about Israel then those one a week meeting. I could have gone to any other place than Israel and still have the same people.

Unfortunately, though, once back in America I had of my beloved band was a few bouquets of their songs and one horrible studio tape. Hong Kong music began to dominate the empty space. There were rumors of a tour last year, but to no avail.

In the year this year, my good friend used to go to the band. Noah, who is the lead singer of the band, invited me to his brother's band. The Moshav Band, was coming. I couldn't believe it! I would really see my old friends again! To my surprise, the opening night of the show was Saturday night at Rutgers, but that they were going to open up for his work on Thursday. Once again, I could not believe it. That Thursday night I showed up at the little bar in the East Village to relieve my innocent self. As I entered, I was immediately met with the band; the band was amazing. They played tighter than I remembered, while making their songs sound very different. They opened the show with one of my personal favorites, "Waiting for the Call" and the set received rave reviews. The crowd didn't stop dancing throughout the entire hour and a half long set, which included a cover of the Phil Collins song "Columbus Day." The band played and jammed and talked to the crowd between songs. I felt so happy to see them back on stage, but something was missing. I was thinking of my words, realizing that I had to go home soon because I had work the next day. My reality caught up with my fantasy. I realized that as much as l love The Moshav Band, I feel music appealed me to Israel, but now I am in America. I'm in New York, and in a very different time in my life, their music just isn't as appealing. But that is just my stupid (mashulg). I went to see them again that Saturday night at Rutgers and again, the band played a magnificent show. They were playing again in New York City later this month for their last two shows in America. So go see them Saturday night, March 13th from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. Come to the event and open it for insesite, and then again on Monday March 22nd at Columbia University. They put on a great show and are a lot of fun.
SCDS to Perform
The Bard's Season
by Commentary Staff

In this, the year of Shakespearean triumph in the movie industry, the Stern College Drama Society decided in a last-minute switch that the Bard should triumph in their theater as well. The surprising move came a few weeks ago, when the students involved in the play banded together to cancel the production of 'No Body's a Gig' due to what was perceived as the inappropriate nature of the character of material. In its place will be two comedic one-act shows, the first entitled "When Shakespeare's Women Meet" and the second "The Second Best Bed", both of which have Shakespearean themes.

The switch actually comes as a rallying point for the university's Dramatics Society, which suffered the cancellation of its annual productions of not being able to perform in the theater recently purchased by Yeshiva University for exactly such a purpose, as well as being frustrated with the controversial dialogue in "Gigula".

The first play will be directed by Liz Renna, a Stern student and future Hollywood hopeful, who displayed how much credit she has received for her extremely talented cast by commenting "I'm directing it. What else is there to say? Help!"

The second act of Shakespeare's leading women (Juliet, Cleopatra, Portia, Ophelia, Desdemona, and Katherine) meeting and offering each other advice, while the second one involves what Shakespeare did not have his wife in his will.

The play, showing in Koch Auditorium downtown March 15-18, is eagerly anticipated by students wishing to get their fill of the arts following the closing of the Arts Festival. Tickets were announced to be sold downtown from the President of the SCDS, Devorah Cencher and Fey (nee' Berman) Glickstein, to whom all of whose numbers should be in the Guide or on the soon-to-be- plastered-up posters.

Artistic Festival
Continued from page 1

including Dudi Feur, Ephraim Yablok, and Josh Landa. The audience received a real treat when the hilarious Galena twins, Isaac and Dovid, performed a new kind of music termed "Galena Rock." Interestingly, they were the only students who performed Jewish music. After a brief intermission, Elise Rosenblat and Nathan Mintz astonished the crowd with a vibrant and inspired klezmer performance. Then the lights went out, a disco ball and colorful Christmas tree illuminated the room, the crowds curiosity peaked visibly quelled, and Ilan Rubinstein took the stage. Many felt that his acoustic performance of 'Coffee House Philosopher' was at once intense and satisfying.

The evening ended with a much anticipated showcase presented by David Rappaport. He performed two alternative songs and an original disco-tech presentation that was reminiscent of "Poem Electronique" by Charles Ives.

The music was monumental, the seating was mixed, and the evening ended in a heart-warming way. All Adam Aftergut, a J'S/C'y sophisticate present at the concert, said, "It was awesome. I have to write a review. I had invited my friends from Columbia to see it." On Monday, February 8th, a poetry reading was held in the Writing Center. Students from both Yeshiva and Stern College were invited to read their original works in an intimate environment. Many talented students, including Yishay Fleischer, El Shirshon Reem, Yehudit Robinson, Eli Shoshani, Jake Berkman, and Arts Fair Coordinator Benji Spero, recited their poems to a more than enthusiastic audience. The Writing Center was packed and the crowd listened attentively as the voices of moving pieces.

Of the night, Dr. William Lee, Professor of English, said, "It was the best ensemble of talent in poetry I've seen in sixteen years.

Wednesday February 14th was the date planned for the long awaited and much discussed dramatic presentation. However, one of the main performances came down with laryngitis so the presentation was moved to a later date. Instead, Rabbi Shalom Carmey gave a speech on Art and Religion. He read a letter written by Rav Kook addressing the issue of art and its appropriate role in Judaism. He then discussed the meaning of this letter with the audience. Afterwards, he answered questions from both the students and faculty members who were present.

Sunday February 14th featured a student-run event of the new additions to the YU Museum - a display of original art works created by the students of YU and Stern. Among the works were elaborate sculptures, paintings, and other forms of visual art. A micro- phone was passed around and each artist explained the significance of his/her work. The evening was attended by many students and faculty members, and ended with light refreshments as well as a new found appreciation of yeshiva student art.

The next night was host to a jazz and chamber music concert presented by the YU Jazz Ensemble and Dr. Noyes Bartholomew. The event, which took place in a recital hall on the second floor of Schottenstein Student Center, began with Sonata No. 9 by Corelli, which was performed by Daniel Robbins on the clarinet and Yair Oppenheim on piano. The next piece was Sonata No. 1 by Brahms. Performance majestically by the YU Symphony on the cello and Joseph Zelefsky on piano.

The evening was then enlivened by the Jazz Ensemble, featuring students Didi Weisman, Deborah Roth, Eli Priykin, Daniel Robbins, Rena Goldberg, Alexander Remer, Joseph Zelefsky, Dudi Feur, and Joseph Ringle. Instructor and faculty advisor Dr. Bartholomew, played the trumpet and flute along with his students. The ensemble performed these jazz songs "Black Nile" by Wayne Shorter; "Naima" by John Coltrane; and "A Copula Duets," an original composition by Dr. Bartholomew.

On Wednesday February 17th, there was a student short story reading in the Writing Center. It was no ordinary reading. At this event, the lights were turned on. The podium was replaced by a green sofa, the blackboard was covered with a red, artsy blanket, and the room became an icy blue by a strange-looking electrical contraption constructed by Yishay Fleischer only moments before the event. The reading was part of a reading series by "AppName" which would have Spelling or Dying, iOS as the user experience was hosted by Fleischer and Josh Abraham.

The Arts Festival concluded on February 18th with an evenfolding closing dessert reception hosted by Josh Abraham. The reception was held in the Festival room attended by artists, a reading series, and an awards function for the best students. All students had a wonderful evening to show their talents.

Shalom Berenson, introduced the first performer, Mordechai Levowitz, who began to sing Broadway tunes. His act was soon cut short by Dean Adler, because he deemed its content inappropriate. His short-lived act was followed by Steven Bernstein who impressed the audience with his stunning ballads. The dramatic presentation, rescheduled for that night from its original date, didn't take place because many felt that the audience was already witness to enough drama.

A half-hour video prepared by Yoni Leitner documenting the two weeks of the Arts Festival was then shown and enjoyed by all. Awards were given out to all Festival participants and the evening was pleasantly concluded.

With regards to next year's Festival, Dean Adler expressed hope that "we will have a planning committee as committed and effective as this year's, and that we will hope that all students participate in some aspect of the Festival." When asked if he would head the Arts Festival committee next year, he replied, "One year is enough for me!"
The boat contained a deck full of excited and well-dressed college freshmen anxiously awaiting the start of the voyage. The night air softly danced through my lungs, awakening my senses as the boat pulled away from the dock, its motorsoppressing beneath us like an old washing machine desperately churning through its last cleansing cycle. The vessel housed two levels: a large and semi-stylish ballroom below, and a lounge with an outside deck above, complete with a bar and dance floor.

The last event of Orientation '97 was a series of parties, speeches and meetings planned by tri and phlegmatically uninvited faculty members. I attended the last group of events and found the entire thing somewhat childish, although I did meet a few interesting people.

Three days and two sleepless nights had passed since I had first arrived in New York. My temporary insomnia was a symptom of the most adventurous of desires. Dance music was playing loudly, outside deck. To my right was Jeff Benson, a finance major and it was hard to talk above the sound that pulsated from the photo.

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Commencement 1999

At least my testosterone-charged, egotistically biased mind thought I had noticed her, my eyes, and somehow misunderstood glances in my direction.

"Eat here while you can, because the food in the Caf tastes like raw sewage," I said.

"Tell me about it, and it costs more than imported caviar," the girl responded. "By the way, my name is Lauren." Flirtations confirmed.

"Ian Auclair, it's a pleasure to meet you." "You're pre-med right?" asked Lauren.

"Yeah, how did you know?" I was both impressed and flattered that she knew who I was. I saw you at the meeting yesterday. I'm in that program too."

"Do you know which pre-med courses you're taking yet?" I said, making an effort to continue a conversation with this strikingly beautiful girl.

"Probably general biology and calculus. How about you?"

"Biology and chemistry but I need to register tomorrow."

I look back on that night and stare at a picture that wasn't taken in the photo.

"Maybe we'll be in the same biology class," says the girl in a different lifetime. "You wanna dance?" I impulsively asked Lauren.

"Sure, why not." I was suddenly overwhelmed by a strange and wild feeling, as if I knew this girl in a different lifetime. "You wanna dance?" I impulsively asked Lauren.

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The images in the picture once again come to life - the people who gave rise to them having sunk deep within my soul.

"Maybe we'll be in the same biology class," says the girl in the photo.

I can feel the night as if I were on the boat again. Music is playing. It's turned up a notch louder than before. The students sitting at the nearby tables get up and begin to dance.

"So what's your story?" Lauren asked.

"Trust me, you don't want to know," I responded. "I won't ask for your story because that would be unfair."

"You know what? It doesn't really matter. We're in college now - the past is gone and we're starting a new life.

"You couldn't be more right," I was suddenly overwhelmed by a strange and wild feeling, as if I knew this girl in a different lifetime. "You wanna dance?" I impulsively asked Lauren.

"I couldn't believe that I thoughtlessly uttered those words, wondering if and before I could think of a plausible explanation, Lauren responded, "Sure, why not."

In an almost trance-like state, we got up from the table and I led Lauren to an area on the deck where the other students were dancing. Lauren was about three inches shorter than I, and had shoulder length brown hair. Her blue eyes suddenly pierced me as I took in her nearly perfect figure. Talking with her began to excite me in secret places. Her face now seemed to glow with all the majesty of a calm ocean stretching beneath the moonlit sky.

When we reached the dance floor, the first song ended and a new one began. It was a slower tune, one that would ultimately become our silent anthem. We danced through a galaxy of fanciful mystery, silently absorbing each other presence.

Deep within the eye exists a world, it's where secrets are written in an enchanted hieroglyphic. I gazed into her hypnotic eyes, and heard her murmur of invincibility that serves as the trademark of the young, when the world is yours and the Angels of destiny are oblivious to the world of the young, when the world is yours and the Angels of destiny are oblivious to the world's most adventurous of desires.

"My name is Lauren," she said. "What is your story?"

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Many students participated in this year’s Yeshiva College Arts Festival in one way or another. Some of the students performed or displayed their impressive works of art and still others sat in the audience and watched the performances as if they were at a recital. The festival took place from February 7-9, hosting over 500 students from more than 30 yeshiva high schools across North America. It was the largest model UN of its kind ever held.

The purpose of the event, sponsored by the Office of Admissions, is recruitment. Students come, however, to partake in an educational, social and often times competitive conference. While the effectiveness of YUNMUN as a recruiting event is difficult to gauge, participants agreed that the conference is representative of the University’s Torah U’madda motto in the form of a positive experience. "In conjunction with this year’s ranking, YUNMUN showed me the academic side of YU of which I was unaware," said one Los Angeles student who was waiting to hear from Columbia, Penn, and YU. "I never realized the role that Stem had under the YU umbrella until now. It’s fantastic," said one high school woman.

Under the leadership of Alisa Fox, Secretary General, Kenny Sicklick, Under-Secretary General, Alison Bogin, USG, and Ben Mantell, USG, there were 15 committees. Stem/SSSB students served as chairs and assistant chairs on more than half of the committees, and YLSSSB students served on the others. Participation was completely voluntary, and the help of everybody who attended—chairpersons, assistant chairpeople, rapporteurs, and waiters and waitresses—was an integral part of the event’s success.

One high school sent a delegation representing one or more countries to an array of committees patterned after the structure of the United Nations. The conduct of the committee sessions was also similar to the parlia­mentary procedure used in the United Nations. Committee issues ranged from crises involving the IMF to women’s rights abroad. Indeed, this was the third year that YUNMUN was held at the beautiful Legends Resort in Great Gorge, New Jersey. Once again, the peaceful snow-capped mountain environment proved conducive to both work and play.

The festivities began Sunday with the arrival and registration of each of the schools. Unfortunately, the weather was_refurbished, and only half of the rooms had been renovated so many of the students (and facul­tively chaperones) were disappointed with the Ski, Day, and General Assembly activities, for which YUNMUN is well known, maintained its fine reputa­tion.

After dinner and Maariv, the opening cere­monies included a dvar Torah as well as an address by Alisa Fox, a Stem College senior. Fox expressed her excitement about the event, set­ting the stage for the opening of the conference. Additionally, the first committee sessions are spent address­ing procedural concerns. Said Assistant Chairman Dov Brandstatter, "The caliber of the this year’s delegations became clear as early as the first session, they were the best we’ve seen.”

The YUNMUN'S theme that character­izes the YU experience was seen by looking no further than the rigorous YUNMUN program. Monday’s schedule consisted of nonstop committee sessions throughout the day interrupted only by dinner, shiurim, and meals. The delegate handbook included a section titled, "Speeches, Speeches, Speeches." Indeed, Speech after speech after delegate after delegate provided for a significant portion of the conference yielded many effective and bold resolutions, each committee only to be outdone by the next. That evening’s breakfast on Tuesday morning delegates either had to finish their committee sessions or participated in the General Assembly Plenary. Final resolutions were passed in committee, while others were rallied in General Assembly votes. Upon completing final meetings, tensions rose as dele­gates awaited the Awards Ceremony.

While not the sole purpose of the confer­ence, the Awards Ceremony adds a touch of competitiveness and seriousness where it might not otherwise exist. The goal of each committee session is to solve the topics at hand, not to beat an opponent. The criteria for Best Delegate and runners-up awards include speaking ability, working with others to form coalitions, ability to write and pass resolutions, and general participation. While the individual awards were generally dispensed, The Ramaz School walked away with the Best Delegate, while YULA ended up in second place.

YUNMUN News, a daily paper that updated peers on the status of each issue, came out each day. Watching the delegates get on their buses to make their trips back home, one could see the paper clutched under each arm to take home. The paper pro­vided an informative and fun way to pre­serve YUNMUN memories.

YU MUN DX Draws Record Turnout

The Office of Admission’s YUNMUN IX (Yeshiva University National Model United Nations) was a success again, according to the results which took place from February 7-9, hosting over 500 students from more than 30 yeshiva high schools across North America. It was the largest model UN of its kind ever held.

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MTA Protest
Continued from page 1

Gibber's proposition, as reported in the last issue of The Commentator, closely resembled a model that he had circulated almost four years ago, when he became High School Board Chairman. The plan had never gone into effect, however, and Gibber was left to await the proper time for its implementation.

According to sources familiar with the negotiations, YU's response to the proposal at the board meeting was generally "positive." They acknowledged, albeit unofficially, the abandonment of the merger option for the coming year, effectively guaranteeing that MTA will remain open at the start of the new millennium. Official word of any decision, however, was never released.

MTA was far from satisfied. Rabbi Michael Taubes, the school's principal, deemed the YU Board of Trustees to address the issue.

"The result was an hour-long protest on Wednesday, February 17, by the entire high school (staff and students included) outside of Furst Hall. Chants of "M-T-A" accompanied a heartfelt outpouring of Tehillim. The prayers were led by Rabbi Yitzchak Cohen, MTA's Mashgiach Ruchani, who added a flavor of sincerity to the gathering. New York State Police patrolled the scene to ensure that everything remained under control, and within two hours, 185th was as empty as it had been earlier that morning.

The "protest," as it was dubbed, was not so much a protest as a request. Students and administrators alike simply reiterated their desire, even need, to have a clear cut answer from YU before the March 9th date that YU administrators had announced. Acceptance letters, according to General Studies Coordinator Dr. Seth Taylor, had to be mailed out February 17th; and in order to mitigate the effects of the recent month's developments, letters of acceptance had to be accompanied by a strong show of support from YU regarding a commitment to the high school. Anything less would amount to a pocket veto. "There's a limit to how long people are going to wait before bailing out," explained Taubes.

The success of their words has yet to be determined. The MTA plea was sent to Rabbi Lamm in writing on Tuesday, February 16th.

Lamm effectively ignored the request. He acknowledged, albeit unofficially, the abandonment of the merger option for the coming year, effectively guaranteeing that MTA will remain open at the start of the new millennium. Official word of any decision, however, was never released.

MTA was far from satisfied. Rabbi Michael Taubes, the school's principal, deemed the YU Board of Trustees to address the issue. Despite a lack of indication of a University decision, it remains clear that YU is entertaining numerous possibilities. Subcommittees were set up by both the RIETS Board and the YU Board of Trustees to address the issue. Rabbi Michael Schmidman, the only YU official to contact MTA regarding the situation in the past month, informed Taubes that no decision was imminent within the next "several weeks." Whether or not that was meant to undermine the rumors indicating that March 9th, the next YU Board meeting, would be the date of revelation, remains unclear.

Economically, Taubes expressed extreme doubt as to how such a move would solve any "existing problems" that supposedly trouble YU now, as it would only limit the number of incoming students.

YU Roshei HaYeshiva met with President Lamm in an effort to express their concerns. Through a series of emotional addresses the Roshei HaYeshiva took turns presenting their opinions on MTA's place in the Jewish community. The success of their words has yet to be determined.

WHERE DO I GO TO FIND OUT ABOUT JOB OPPORTUNITIES IF I HAVE A LIBERAL ARTS DEGREE?

Yeshiva University Office of Placement & Career Services
Career Opportunities Newsletter
75% of part time jobs and internships listed want liberal arts students

Yeshiva University Office of Placement & Career Services
Career Fair 1998
85% of participating companies were interested in liberal arts students

Rutgers Career Day 1999 (Rutgers University, NJ)
54% of participating companies were interested in liberal arts students

Careers '99 (New York City)
63% of participating companies were interested in liberal arts students

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YU AND EDAH

by Ben Sandler

Anyone in YU is familiar with the general lack of support for Edah amongst the Roshei Yeshivas. Most of the YU students who attended the recent Edah conference noticed a significant number of people presenting themselves as Jewish or Hebrew to attend Jewish, as they have semi-khosk from REITs. What remains unclear to many students is what the specific objections of the Rosh Yeshivas are and how YU fits into the political arena of Modern Orthodoxy that Edah is attempting to put forward.

The Rosh Yeshiva most associated with opposing Edah is Rabbi Moshe Dovid Tendler. His primary complaint against Edah is that its goal, in his view, is to blur the lines between Orthodoxy and other factions. His complaint is further refined. He stresses that what he calls "irrelevant Orthodoxy Jews" are our problem, rather than the Reform movement, since it is those who have the education and "know better," and are purposely leading their people astray.

He wants the laity to realize that they are "eliminating the line between them and us." What is important to him is that the Reform movement would reject a movement which will allow a "patriotical" descent, non-Jewish, gay rabbi.

Tendler's most noticeable voice in YU is that most of the Roshei Yeshivas are unwilling to talk to the people who leave their investive towards Edah, and current other issues with a halachic approach, which is to be, for the most part, publically unexamined.

However, Rav Hershel Shachtry, among the most widely respected Rosh Yeshivah at YU, did discuss his views on the issue with this reporter. He started off by saying that Edah is "interested in dealing with contemporary issues with a halachic approach... which is commendable." However, he stressed that the people who give themselves the right to a halachic framework must be the greatest halakho, those which involved in Edah are not, nor do they claim to. He sees women's issues as a major problem, which is their depicted issue with, by Edah, and feels that they are not contacting the proper authorities.

In general, Rav Shachtry is not found acceptance among YU students since, he believes that most students see it as deviation from Orthodoxy. He says that the current generation of modern Orthodoxy is the best ever and that the students are in agreement that halakho Judaism is in full consonance with what the gedolei say.

Rav Shachtry is more open to the ideas that Edah presents, but felt that another organization was unnecessary, as YU is capable of addressing the issues. He blamed the YU lead­

for not taking positions on the issues or addressing people's concerns.

Rabbi Shlomo Blau does not feel that the issue of Edah's relations to YU is a crucial matter, nor, according to Blau, do the Rosh Yeshiva feel that the issue of Edah in Modern Orthodoxy takes an official position on it. However, he did note that the large YU attendance at the conference was significant with regard to acceptance in Edah's positions. He also does not feel that it is true, as many in Edah have claimed, that there is an intentional shift in Orthodoxy within Modern Orthodoxy. He noted, in fact, that those who picked up major three aspects of Modern Orthodoxy, namely acceptance of the state of Israel, having jobs, and teaching women.

Blau argues that YU's lack of initiative in addressing the issues addressed by Edah, especially non-controversial ones such as improving t'filah, is due to a shifting of focus from "the movement to the University." He feels that the current generation of Modern Orthodoxy as well as a university, and at different times focus on different things. In the past, YU ran seminars and adult educa­tion to frame and address their focus towards improving the University.

Most people in the YU seem to recognize this, and many mark that there will be but prefer for them to be dealt with within our current structure. Rabbi Norman Lamm expressed this view in a letter to The Jewish Week in which he states a statement was not opposed to Edah's goals but he was opposed to setting up a new organization.

Rabbi Tendler, the Yitz Greenberg board that described himself as "the one who gives the Rosh Yeshiva something to complain about," feels that YU would not want to be involved in Edah since they do not agree with his goals. He argues that most of the Rosh Yeshiva have departed from Modern Orthodoxy and set themselves as a necessary evil or want to get rid of it. They claim that they are on head adnah (malomoh) to the exclusion of edah khakhumot, and that in YU, "people who follow the Torah are kept away.

However, judging from the conference, many people do not share Greenberg's view of how the relations of the movement to the community are involved in Edah value what the school stands for, but are committed to pushing the changes which Edah proposes. Keep in mind that what Edah lists as its main goals enhancing Tanach, religious problems facing Israel and its democracy, the direction and origin of his Modern Orthodoxy. This view is that of Rabbis Hazak and Shlomo Riskin. The conference also contained a special dinner and discussion for college students entitled "Being Modern and Orthodox." A common criticism directed against Modern Orthodoxy today is the leniency some of its adherents take in practicing halakho. It was clear from the talks and speakers at the conference that Edah does not advocate this sort of leniency in practice. Rather, the impossible view of today's situation was stressed throughout the conference.

Rabbi Berman said, "We should not for moment yield to anyone a claim of greater leadership than ours in our commitment to halakho."

Openness and respect for differing opinions was a recurring theme felt throughout the conference. Although some in YU's present­ment's of what Modern Orthodoxy unfold in Orthodoxy, and the Torah's values of tolerance and urgent ethical duties. Berman's vision was a true expression of my most inner feelings of what our society is about. As Rabbi Walter Wurzburg, "It was a moment yield to anyone a claim of greater leadership than ours in our commitment to halakho."

Rabin Shlomo Riskin, a YU alumni and REITs mustukh who is now rabbi of Edah, in his speech on "Previous Minority Opinions in Modern Orthodoxy," called the YU conference, "maybe the most important statement in Orthodoxy in the last two decades." In his presentation, he relate to the story from the gemara from which emerged the idea that the majority of Chazal hold that God wanted an open transmission of the Torah with room for human halakho creativity. He called for YU to develop a new "community framework of halakho" the "glory of Judaism.”

Rabin also used this story, in which Rabbis in the past sought salvation of the new movement of Rabbis, who was the minority opinion against him aside from halakho, as an illustration of what is deserved by people who derogate those whose opinions in halakho and don't from their own. In this context, Riskin made reference to YU Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Moshe Tendler's controversial censure of the liberal approach taken by Rabbi Tendler, declaring him to be "beyond the pale of Judaism." Rabbi Tendler also attempted to forbid people from attending Edah's conference. Riskin believes that not giving a chance is "narrowing the broad world of Torah," which is "the most profound chluf Hashem imaginal."

Another common criticism of opponents of Modern Orthodoxy is its supposed lack of spirituality. It was clear that Edah fought vigorously to dispel this notion. The tells us services at the conference were accompanied by meaningful explanations and heartfelt tunes, and practiced with devout seriousness. Speakers placed emphasis on infusing spirituality into their lives, according to the Torah's moral code.

Although YU chose to abstain from participat­ ing in the Edah conference as an organiza­ tion, it injected its influence much of the conference. Current YU and SCW professors who were presenters included Rabbi Berman himself, and Rabbi Walter Wurzburg, Avi Weiss, Shmuel Goldin, and Dr. Steven Bayme. Approximately forty of the presen­ ters had studied at YU at some point, either while attending high school or during undergraduate work. Although President and Rosh HaShaycha Dr. Norman Lamm chose not to attend, he did submit some of his last speech that was to be included in the Edah packets. There was a large showing of YU students in attendance, with an estimated fifty under­ graduates present during the evening's program.

The students who attended the conference, representing the next generation of Modern Orthodoxy leadership, found the conference to be an important introduction to the world of Modern Orthodoxy, and I hope that all Jews will be touched by this open confrontation with many of the divisive issues which tend to fracture us.

Rabbi Biskin was extremely enthusiastic about what the conference meant for Modern Orthodoxy. "This proves that Modern Orthodoxy is alive and well," he said. "Everyone was premature in writing our obituary notes.

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Campus Bulletin Board

YUDEC: Hashem granted YUDEC victory over the weekend at SITNY! Morrisville. Speaker Awards: 1st: Elan Weireb, 2nd: Zvi Katz, 3rd: Dina Barkey. Debate Awards: 3rd: Elan Weireb. YUDEC members comprised 25% of the tournament pool (4/16) and took back 50% of the awards (4th places were offered as well).

Israel Club: April 16-17th is the Israel Club Shabbaton at Stern. For details contact Hadas Weiss @ 781-3280.

Commencement: If you are a graduating senior, please come by the Office of Student Services located in Furst Hall, Room 419 to pick up your tickets for graduation. It is important to note that the invitations for Commencement '99. It is important to note that the invitations are to announce your forthcoming graduation to family and friends and ARE NOT TICKETS to enter the theater at Madison Square Garden. Tickets for graduation will be distributed on May 5th and May 6th along with your caps and gowns.

The Computer Science Clubs of YC and SCW present: Exploring Avenues in Computer Science and MIS Careers. Find out from professionals in the field about computer careers in: Software development, Scientific Research, and Business. Tuesday, March 9, 1999 at 8:15 PM. Midtown (Time Room 210). Visit inside the Bookstore at 7:45, and will head back from midtown at 9:45.

The Yeshiva College Book Project (1998-1999) presents a lecture by Professor Benjamin Braude, Department of History, Boston College, this Tuesday night March 9, at 8:00 PM in Furst 501. The title of the lecture is Racism and the Sons of Noah: Parshanut and Politic in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The lecture is open to all students and faculty members of Yeshiva College. Refreshments will be served. For more information email jacobson@ymail.yu.edu or contact the Dean's Office.

BOWLING TOURNAMENT!: 1ST Annual YCSC Bowling tournament-Free Bowling! Free T-shirts! Free Prizes! Sunday March 14th 1999. Buses leave from bookstore at 5:15PM. For more information, contact Aryeh Goldberg @ 827-3099.

USHERS NEEDED-YCSC need people to usher during the upcoming production. All ushers receive 2 complimentary tickets to a different night's performance. Please contact Craig Eagle @ 923-4391.

SOY Seforim Sale 99: Gratefully acknowledges all of the tireless and selfless efforts of all of the dedicated workers and volunteers from all schools who helped make this year's sale a resounding success. Nobody could ever fathom the amount of work that goes into the seforim sale and it would never exist without everyone's help. Kudos to Facilities and Security for being there at all times.


Pesach Food Drive: Anyone who wishes to assist in the 5759 Pre-Pesach Food Drive, in any capacity, please contact Yonatan Kaganoff @ 543-2951 or email ykaganoff@ymail.yu.edu.

YU Chess Tournament: To sign up for the YU Chess Tournament email johh@yu.com. Admission is free and open to everyone. Tournament begins Wednesday, March 17. 1st prize: $60, 2nd prize: $30, 3rd prize: $15.

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Gambling: Rolling the Dice On Campus
Continued from page 1

I was going back constantly and I kept on losing."

The Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey [800-GAMBLER] emphasizes the stages a gambler follows. There is a four-stage sequence after which one may be considered a "compulsive" gambler. During the winning phase, the individual gambles occasionally and may frequently find himself on the winning track. Gambling becomes easier, come early at this stage and self-confidence abounds, the good times are only temporary.

"It doesn't make any mathematical sense, but beginner’s luck sometimes does work. When you go into a casino for the first time, you may win right away," David said. "But when you continue going, you start losing and you simply think, 'I'll get that money back again.'" This self-confidence evolves into arrogance, the losing stage prevails, and the gambler begins to lose track of his responsibilities. Restlessness and irritability mark the second phase, as the gambler begins to lose track of his responsibilities.

Here is the trap that lures gamblers. With the odds stacked against them, they fail to notice previous losses, focusing instead on their winnings as a sign that success may not come easily at this stage and self-confidence abounds, the good times are only temporary. With the onset of the third and final stages, which bring the gambler to desperation, there is a marked increase in the time spent gambling accompanied by noticeable alienation from friends and family. After hitting a string of bad losses, the gambler begins to borrow money from friends. Restlessness and irritability mark the second phase, as the gambler begins to lose track of his responsibilities.

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"People believe it is potentially money-making, but of course they don't want to focus on the fact that it's also potentially destructive financially. As you get in deeper and deeper, your pockets get emptier and emptier. And that's just one guy," David said.

"Some of it has to do with one's self-esteem, with one's perception of self, with one's values or moral limitations," Mark explained. "But some perfectly moral people get into gambling innocently and once they get into it, they don't know what they're predisposed to," Mark explained.

College students nationwide have been criticized of late by the media for their gambling tendencies, from innocent card playing and sports pools to casino gambling, bartenders, horse racing, and bingo. Review articles have focused on the widespread availability of gambling venues, both legal and illegal, enticing young adults to break out of the innocence of their youth, luring them to the potential vices of gambling. YU administration feels that gambling is far less prevalent here than it is at most other universities. Still, gambling is recognized as a major problem on campus affecting a significant percentage of the student body.

"Gambling is a problem right now across all college campuses, particularly involving sports. I think that gambling on the Yeshiva University campuses is more of a problem than it is at most schools. I have no doubt about that," Nulman explained. "It exists, but I think it has to be very carefully watched. And since we as an institution are aware of it, we are going to do everything we can to stop it."

No specific school policies deal with student gambling other than the Student Handbook's general prohibition of gambling specifically on the YU campus. Additionally, the general code of conduct mandates the requirement to comport one's self in accordance with the Bible. Recently, however, the administration has established a program aimed at promoting awareness of the potential dangers of gambling. Still, many students feel that the administration has not done an adequate job of lessening gambling among the student body, which some feel has become rampant.

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BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

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- Silver Spring, MD

Hillel
- Miami, FL

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- Kansas, KS

Ida Crown Jewish Academy
- Chicago, IL

MTA
- New York, NY

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- Los Angeles, CA

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Yeshiva High School of Atlanta
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Yeshivat Bnei Akiva
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Los Angeles, CA

Two New York Schools as determined by best win/loss record
Co Macs!

Macs' Basketball Season Comes to End

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

After one of Yeshiva University’s most spectacular basketball seasons, the Macs finished with an astonishing 16-7 record. The Mac’s win total tied the highest in YU history, achieved by only two other Maccabee teams. Regrettably, the Macs were not invited to the East Coast Athletic Conference Tournament, the prestigious Division III tournament in which YU occasionally competes.

The second half of the season began with the return of captain Marc Nadrich and Alex Shakhmuratov, two veterans whose addition helped to lead the Macs to their remarkable record. Marc’s return inspired the Macs’ success, adding both his strong performance at guard as well as his emotional intensity. In response, on Senior night of the season’s last home game, the school recognized Marc for his dedication and devotion to basketball while studying here at YU. Meanwhile, Alex, whose fans call him “Shaq,” returned to fill the void in center caused by last year’s graduating team members. After ending the first semester somewhat short of their expectations with a 7-4 record, the Macs went on an impressive 10-3 run to complete a spectacular 16-7 season.

What is often forgotten regarding this Maccabee team is the lack of confidence the fans evinced in the team at the outset of the season. The team’s detractors believed that the team was too young, and lacked both team unity as well as the necessary experience to succeed. Throughout the season, the performances of Nachum Palefsky, Yossi Gev, and Dov Weiner constantly astounded the fans; these three sophomore members, along with David Neiss and “Shaq,” rounded out the starting five. With Nadrich and Joel Kruger coming off the bench, the Macs proved unstoppable. Of course, it would be remiss to exclude the valuable contributions of Avi Kares, a true leader of the team. His dedication and devotion to basketball were truly unparalleled. Of course, it would be remiss to exclude the valuable contributions of Avi Kares, a true leader of the team. His dedication and devotion to basketball were truly unparalleled.

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Sarachek Tournament to Take MSAC by Storm

BY GREG SAMUELS

Yeshiva University is set to host this year’s Red Sarachek Basketball Tournament, scheduled to run from March 18th to the 23rd. The tournament, named after famous Jewish basketball coach Red Sarachek, is a competition between some of the best Jewish high school teams in the nation. While many in the gentile and Jewish worlds scoff at the concept of “Jewish basketball,” this year’s event should prove that Jewish kids can play ball after all. This is due in a large part to the fact that “The Great Jewish Hope,” Tamir Goodman, will be returning to play for the Baltimore Talmudic Academy (T.A.) Tigers.

That’s right, the same Tamir Goodman seen on “The Nightly News” with Connie Chung, pictured in Sports Illustrated, and who is slated to play for Gary Williams’s nationally ranked Maryland Terapins, will showcase his talent for us. Last year, observers considered Goodman’s flashy play one of the main highlights of the tournament. Yet, according to YU Athletic Director, Dr. Richard Zeneck, this year will not be a Tamir Goodman clone. “There are many talented players and teams in this year’s field,” he said, “and we want to focus on all of them, not just Mr. Goodman.”

Each year, the tournament electrifies crowds of YU students, many of whom are alumni of the competing high schools. Yussi Shar, a graduate of T.A., said, “It is both fun and exciting to be able to see students from my old school play basketball as I like watching their games and seeing Tami play. The best part, however, is that my brother Dov is their team manager, so I get to see him too.” It appears that the tournament not only features quality basketball, it also seems to bring families together. There will be 18 teams in the field, including MTA, if you get a chance, come down and watch the games.
OUT OF TOWN STUDENTS FORM COMMITTEE TO ADVANCE INTERESTS

PLANS AFOOT TO REVERSE "BACKWARD" UNIVERSITY POLICIES

BY MAZ ZADEH

The Yeshiva University experience can often be intimidating. The constant balancing act between a rigorous curriculum and extra-curricular involvement can be overwhelming. When life away from home in dormitories. The building was added to the mix, even maintaining sanity could become a chore. Aryeh Goldberg, a SS58B sophomore from Chicago, Illinois, believes that much of the Yeshiva student's inconvenience in living outside of the tri-state area could be alleviated with greater campus involvement. Goldberg, along with some of his out of town compatriots at Yeshiva University, formed the Out of Town Residence Committee.

The impetus for the creation of the Committee was, as Aryeh put it, a lot of people complaining that the school is dominated by New York students. The Committee, which has already been sanctioned by YCSC president Dror Barber and is sponsored by YCSC, is made up of seven out of town, YU students hoping to give non-New York students, less to complain about. As members, they are chosen from active dormers from across the country and include Joseph Babani (Seattle, WA), Arie Goldstein (Chicago, IL), Oren Harroche (Denver, CO), Ben Mantell (Los Angeles, CA), Adam Kodes (Kings Spring, MD), Marc Tannenbaum (Toronto, Ont.), and Michael Zaidel (Hollywood, FL).

The Committee has several different on-campus improvement programs. A program is being constructed to offer students free airport shuttle service before and after school break. The Committee is also looking into creating a library as well as Beifer computer lab hours to include Saturday nights because

as one Committee member noted, "most major colleges have libraries open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week to accommodate students who live on campus."

Additional out of town upgrades are to include priority dormitory placement, extended cafeteria hours, and keeping the dormitory open for vacation weekends.

While the Committee members hope to independently have bearing on out of town student lifestyle improvements, the primary influence for the Out of Town Residence Committee's work is to be from within the student body. Harvard junior, a member of the committee, he sees the committee as an opportunity "to improve the quality of life for the out of town student in the University. As the Committee's computer authority, Orein is creating a web site for the Committee. The website, which drive in its final stage of development, will promote projects the Committee is currently working on and include a forum for students to voice their own suggestions or displeasure. At the address www.clubs.ycsc.org/outcflown will also create a mailing list of all out of town students to inform them of significant committee undertakings. Committee leadership wanted that its efforts will only be successful if there is widespread student involvement. Committee members closest to the number of out of town residents to become involved in the Committee at Yeshiva University's "backwards" specialty of New York students. It is out of the Out of Town Residence Committee's hand to affect any changes in the student body itself. But keep in mind the whole set of arrangements, Erdaf said that members of the tower administration dealt with were extremely helpful, but the upper administration made any petition request an ordeal. The upper administration members never revealed themselves directly, but required written questions for every minute detail. And then did not give the organizers the opportunity to negotiate. However, Security and Facilities Management, particularly Jeff Socol and all the captain, were extremely helpful. Erdaf noted.

Other administrative hindrances included securing elevator usage. Because the third elevator in bigger hall was not functioning. Sale organizers were unable to schedule any retail hours during the day. Wednesday and Thursday. The reason given was that. In particular at the Warwick School of Social Work, would be disrupted by the increased bustle and demand for elevator riders. As a result of only night until 10:30. Sale workers faced more exhausting hours as they had to restock each time the sale closed. Frustrated by the lack of babysitting. Lake said, "The administration does not like the Sofer Sale," with their only explanation being that they feel it against students interests.

Despite these obstacles, the Sale still ran more smoothly than ever. People involved at previous years' sales were able to implement changes that provided needed improvements. Last year's biggest problems were that the computers were connected to several different databases rather than a single one and that the check-out centers did not always work simultaneously.

The Yeshiva College campus news

March 11, 1991/ Page 20

THE COMMENTATOR
500 West 186th Street
New York, NY 10033

continued on page 20