Holtz Named New Associate Dean; Rynhold Named Honors Head

By Matthew Silkin

Effective this semester, Professor Shalom Holtz has been named the Yeshiva College Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, taking over the position from Dr. Joanne Jacobson, who retired last academic year. Dr. Holtz previously served as Director of the Jay and Jeannie Schottenstein Honors Program, having been nominated for the position after the previous director, Professor Gabriel Cwilich, stepped down in January 2017. Holtz also serves as an Associate Professor of Bible in Yeshiva College and was tenured by the university in 2012. “I am looking forward to working with Professor Holtz in his new role, having had a very good working relationship with him last year when he directed the Honors Program,” said Dean Karen Bacon. “Professor Holtz likes new ideas, he enjoys thinking through problems, and he enjoys a good debate. These qualities fit wonderfully into the Dean’s Office and will be invaluable in evaluating where we are at YC and where we see ourselves going.”

Holtz was chosen for the position over three unnamed finalists from a national search. The search committee was made up of faculty of Yeshiva College and headed by Provost Selma Botman. According to Botman, Jacobson met individually with all the candidates to discuss components of the position. There was also student involvement in the process, as Botman told The Commentator in an article last year announcing Jacobson’s retirement. According to Yeshiva Student Union (YSU) President Nolan Edmonson (YC ’19), who was one of the students involved, the group met with Professor Holtz on April 26.

“I am looking forward to working with Dr. Holtz to improve the Yeshiva College academic experience,” said Yeshiva College Student Association (YCSA) president Amitai Miller (YC ’19), another student who was part of the hiring committee.

“I am excited for Dr. Holtz to be our new (Associate) Dean, because...” Continued on Page 4

Israel, the Modern Era, and Market-Readiness: President Berman Discusses YU’s Path Forward

By Avi Hirsch and Benjamin Koslowe

In an interview this past Wednesday with The Commentator and The Observer, Yeshiva University President Ari Berman and Provost Selma Botman elaborated on new programs and initiatives for YU students. One year into his presidency, Berman articulated his visions and goals for the University. President Berman announced two main categories of initiatives for this academic year. One category, which formed the bulk of Berman’s words, emphasized YU’s connection to Israel, focusing on new pathway programs with Israeli institutions. The second category highlighted YU’s new initiatives in YU’s graduate schools.

“Israel is no longer a poor cousin,” commented Berman, “but rather is a significant power in its cousin,” commented Berman, “but...” Continued on Page 4

Amid Shake-ups, Julie Schreier Appointed as Interim VP of Institutional Advancement

By Shoshy Ciment

Julie Schreier, former Chief of Staff for President Ari Berman, was named the interim Vice President for Institutional Advancement (IA), Provost Selma Botman confirmed in a recent email. Schreier succeeds Alyssa Herman, who left the position after one year.

Schrier, who was appointed as Chief of Staff to President Berman earlier in the year, will serve in both roles until a new Vice President of IA is appointed. Yeshiva University’s Office of Communications and Public Affairs (CPA) has confirmed that a search is in place for a new Vice President of IA.

“According to sources familiar with the situation, the Office of Institutional Advancement has experienced a large turnover with employees recently.” Continued on Page 3
Looking Backwards as YU Enters President Berman’s “World of Tomorrow”

By Benjamin Koslowe

President Berman’s message to the student body this past week (see front page article) fits an historical pattern of new Yeshiva University presidents. This pattern, which has to do with investiture speeches, interaction with students and practical innovations to the institution, all but leaps out of the oxidized papers that chart this institution’s proud history.

Perhaps a few quotes can begin to illustrate some similarities:

“It is our intention to give to secular education a higher purpose and make the Yeshiva and Yeshiva College a living symbol of intellectual and moral activity.” (—Belkin; May 23, 1944)

“We are committed both to unfettered scholarship, and to the quest for transcendent values, norms, and the wisdom of tradition.” (—Lamm; November 7, 1976)

“The time is now to re-emphasize our commitment to quality and excellence in education, sacred and secular, to challenge the Yeshiva, the undergraduate, and graduate schools to take ownership of Torah Umaddda.” (—Joel; September 21, 2003)

“We know that there are great truths to be discovered in the study of the human mind, the physical world, literature, legal interpretation and more. Our belief in the higher purpose of education is true for all of humanity.” (—Berman; September 10, 2017)

The above words from the investiture messages of Rabbi Dr. Samuel Belkin, Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, Dr. Richard Joel, and Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman are, no doubt, intentionally and consciously-selected lines from much longer speeches. But the entireties of the four speeches, even when read only superficially, beg any reader to associate them together in one set.

The connections are both thematic and rhetorical: Four afternoons in the history of Yeshiva University when a new president addressed an overflowing audience from Lamport Auditorium’s podium for his first time. Four presidents, each expressing awe at the heavy burden bestowed upon his narrow shoulders by preceding giants, as well as confidence with his abilities to carry the institution forward to a more promising future.

Each new president articulated his vision of what Yeshiva University stands for. For each discussed tensions between conflicting modern and Jewish values. Each invoked iconic terms—a call for “synthesis” of secular knowledge with sacred wisdom, a fervent proclamation for the virtues of “Torah Umaddda,” an ethos to “embody and enable,” or an outline of “Five Torah,” five values, that personify Yeshiva University—each vision as career-defining and as perfectly hard-to-precisely-explain as the next.

But the presidential similarities run deeper yet.

In 1944-45, President Belkin’s second year as YU’s second president, he announced a major university expansion of new graduate and undergraduate programs for the university, financed by a $3,000,000 drive. That same year, after a gaffe where the administration banned all Yeshiva College dramatic activities, Belkin responded to student complaints by penning a nearly 1,500-word prospectus in The Commentator, articulating a vision and rationale for the administration’s actions. He discussed Yeshiva College’s growth, pointing to a strong budget, a growing faculty and efforts to “add more fundamental courses.”

President Lamm met with student leaders for formal discussions and interviews on several occasions in his first year as president. In late 1977, at the beginning of his second year, Lamm appointed new deans to several of the institution’s undergraduate and graduate schools (including Dean Karen Bacon, who remains at YU these four decades later). At the time, Lamm explained that his appointments were part of “an intensive effort to keep pace with the rapid changes taking place in higher education.” YU’s third president also addressed problems of declining enrollments and inherited fiscal problems by closing the Belber Graduate School of Science.

In President Joel’s first few months in office he offered an interview to the undergraduate newspapers as well as a town hall meeting where he announced a strategic plan for the undergraduate schools. In 2004, at the start of his second year, Joel hired 15 new professors, raised rosh hei yeshiva salaries, and renovated several Yeshiva University buildings. That same semester YU saw the appointment of a new chair of Yeshiva’s trustees (Mr. Morry Weiss), a new dean of Yeshiva College (Dr. Fred Sugarman), a new Advisor on Israel Affairs (Mr. Howard M. Weisband), and a new dean of the newly-established Center for Jewish Future (Rabbi Kenneth Brander).

In short, YU’s presidents—to some degree in their first years in office, but certainly by their second years in office—established themselves as engaging leaders for students and strong edifices of innovation for the institution.

The year is now 2018. Students find themselves once again on the cusp of a nascent new president and, perhaps, even a new era, of Yeshiva University. Is the man of the hour living up to earlier models?

Consider first the realm of interacting with students. Like his predecessors, President Berman has been a presence on campus. Like President Joel, President Berman lived in Manhattan during the months leading up to his presidency to familiarize himself with student life. President Berman spent several Shabbatot last year at both the Wilf and Beren campuses. He also showed up to student activities, such as Swag Day and a Project START! Science module, and opened at yemei iyun and other Torah events on several occasions.

The new president was at times reserved with his potential authoritative voice. In his first year, Berman discontinued town hall meetings and spoke only once on record to a student newspaper. Readers of YU student newspapers will recall that the president’s shyness was a topic of considerable student criticism by the end of Spring 2018. President Berman’s recent interview, of itself, along with his apparent openness for more discussions over the course of the year is a positive development.

And finally, there is the realm of practical institutional changes. For what it’s worth, President Berman has now announced the formalization of new educational pathway

Continued on Page 3
**First Year Students**

Masa backpacks, Poland sweatshirts and the sweet, sweet smell of post-Israel religious ignorance passed off as piety.

**Yanny/Laurel**

A modern day Shamor and Zachor. Finally, the Mount Sinai reenactment I’ve been waiting for.

**Gush Wedding Dance**

The epitome of Gush; a bit nerdy, well-planned, poorly executed and I’m still a little jealous I’m not in it.

**Dr. Berman Yearbook Photo (1991)**

A major in philosophy, Editor of The Philosophy Journal, VP of the Philosophy Society and a member of the Philosophy Review Club? I’m sensing a trend.

**Key Food Grapes**

The perfect gift for FTOCs to give their Shabbat hosts once they realize they can do better than the Caf.

**16 Handles In the Heights**

*Geshmak! Now I can go on my shidduch date and make the 10:00 pm Maariv!*

**Lebron to the Lakers**

Analysts predicts that he will have to wait at least two years before he gets a chance to lose to the Warriors in the Conference Finals.

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**Westworld Season 2**

I have not seen such convoluted storytelling since The Commentator was blamed for quoting a certain rosh yeshiva who said “you can quote me on that.” #throwback

**No Investfest**

No curtain call for PRDAB’s first anniversary? Like the Yom Haatzmaut BBQ without Zionist fervor and the “Welcome Bash at Wilf” minus its ancient name, the “Yeshiva University Welcome Back BBQ” was as awkward as you’d expect.

**Muss Hall**

But have you seen the showers?

**Movie Pass’ Bad Summer**

Despite all this, The Meg still opened to $45 million. THIS IS WHY WE CAN’T HAVE NICE THINGS!

**Ariana Grande’s “God is a Woman”**

Looks like someone hasn’t fulfilled her BIB requirements yet. So much left to learn.

**Subaba Closing**

Were they ever really open?

**Silence**

It’s been 262 days since a woman last spoke at Klein@9 and my yiddishkeit has never felt stronger! Thanks YU!

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**Vows**

The Commentator Editorial Board extends a Mazal Tov to former Features Editor Eliazi Lipsky (YC ‘18) on his marriage to Tehilla Berger (SCW ’19). Ya’aleh haziyog yafeh ve’eyunu ba’yayin me’eman beYisrael.

**LOOKING BACKWARDS,** continued from Page 2

programs that he called for in his investiture. This is certainly something. And there is the optimistic “market-ready” attitude that the president strongly emphasized, which, although not particularly tangible—it isn’t backed yet by much—is no small matter to scoff at, either.

So, on the eve of a new president’s second year for the fifth time in Yeshiva University’s history, the community should read President Berman’s words once more. They should evaluate them carefully in themselves and assess them in historical context. Then, the question may be repeated: Is President Berman living up to earlier models?

This broad question entails derivative questions, too: Is the new president beginning to instantiate abstract ideas and philosophy into real, practical, necessary change? Do the president’s appearances at events and discussions with student newspapers suffice, not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of quality, as substantive interactions with students? If those topics that the president articulated are real changes, are they of the variety that Yeshiva deserves to see? How exactly will YU in the “world of tomorrow” resemble and stand up to the institution’s impressive past? Are these even fair questions to be asking?

Are students, faculty and alumni witnessing the beginnings of a strong leader who is articulate in action and in vision?

Time, if it has not already begun to do so, will surely soon tell.

**Julie Schreier**, continued from Front Page

with employees recently. In addition to Herman, sources estimate that as many as 13 people in the office have left within the last few months.

Among the recent departees from OIA is Paul S. Glasser, who departed his position as Associate Vice President for Institutional Advancement at Yeshiva University and was recently named Vice President of Institutional Advancement at Touro College and University System.

CPA declined to comment on the recent staffing changes.

The Office of Institutional Advancement is responsible for large-scale fundraising efforts including the annual Day of Giving and the Hanukkah Dinner. This past year, the Hanukkah Dinner raised $4.3 million, which marked an increase of 10% over the previous year’s event and constituted the largest sum in at least five years. The second annual YU Giving Day campaign raised $4.5 Million, a smaller sum than the more than $6 million attained at the first annual Giving Day in 2017.
SHALOM HOLTZ, continued from Front Page

I know from my encounters with him as a professor and as a leader that students are his priority,” added Ben Atwood (YC ’19), who was also on the hiring committee. “He knows the YU system inside and out and will be able to hit the ground running with his moves as Dean.”

Dr. Daniel Rynhold will succeed Holtz as Honors director. Rynhold is a professor of Jewish Philosophy and director of the doctorate program in the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies.

Berman also mentioned the virtues of social sciences and humanities and how they fit into his vision. “A core strength for us,” explained Berman, is to “think deeply about the deep existential questions.” He noted that this thinking is “very important” and can emerge from “new technologies and innovation in the changed world.”

In addition to his primary messages, Berman highlighted new faculty hirings, various awards that current YU faculty have received, and interdisciplinary faculty discussions that he coordinated last year. He further discussed the importance and relevance of the Five Torah to all Yeshiva University students. Regarding YU’s vibrant student life, Berman stated, “Our market research has shown that we’re high in Jewish communal life, and we’re thinking about how we can move the needle further. It’s very important.” He expressed particular interest in the YU Shabbos experience, an area he is “thinking about deeply” so as to create an “environment that would excite our student body.”

President Berman did not elaborate on YU’s finances but promised that he has “a clear understanding of our financial situation and clear pathways of how we’re on a path of growth.”

“It’s a very exciting time for Yeshiva University, our community, our students, and our future.”

President Ari Berman

16 Handles to Open in Washington Heights in the “Very Near Future”

By Leib Wiener

16 Handles, a franchise chain of soft-serve frozen yogurt stores, will be opening a branch in Washington Heights, offering another food option in the vicinity of the Wilf Campus.

“...while there is still no projected opening date, chain officials stated that they hope to be open in ‘the very near future.’”

More than a year ago, a 16 Handles store was set to open in Washington Heights. The proposed location was 400 Audubon Ave., according to Sean Gunner, a spokesman for 16 Handles. As of April 23, 2017, there had been no updates on the new store. This year, the store is set to open at that site, according to a 16 Handles representative. However, while there is still no projected opening date, chain officials stated that they hope to be open in “the very near future.”

There is currently a 16 Handles location near 3rd Avenue and East 30th Street that students at the Beren Campus frequent. “The 16 Handles offers a social outlet as well as excellent frozen yogurt for the students in Midtown,” said Alyssa Wurkst (SCW ’19). “I am sure it will be the same case uptown.”

The 16 Handles store near Wilf Campus will add a new dairy option to the variety of kosher restaurants around the Wilf Campus providing a dessert or snack option for hungry students. The new store “could add a new social setting to the Heights, that people will be definitely be going there because who can say no to frozen yogurt, and that it will add a lot to the overall atmosphere,” said Josh Arnon (YC ’19).
University Completes Renovations, Touch-Ups to Start Semester

By Leib Wiener

This summer, renovations began on the Wilf Campus of Yeshiva University, most notably to Furst Hall.

According to Randy Apfelbaum, Chief Facilities and Administrative Officer at Yeshiva University, the Yeshiva College Honors lounge is being moved from the basement of Furst Hall to Room C-10 of its cellar. The now-evacuated basement area will be used for a new Incubator Lab. This lab will be used to further the goals of the Israel Business Incubator Project, an idea formulated in 2016 by Dean Strauss and the General Counsel’s office. The project will use the lab space to create offices for Israeli startups and allow student interns to run the offices with oversight from Sy Syms faculty. The Incubator Lab and Israel Business Incubator Project were given a major push forward last year with a $350,000 grant from New York State Senator Todd Kaminsky.

Additionally, renovations to other parts of campus are also being completed. The Danziger Lawn, which over the past year lost much of its grass due to heavy rain and snow, is now being re-sodded. There is now a new walkway which cuts through the lawn in order to improve foot traffic to Rubino Hall and the Max Stern Athletic Center. Additionally, all buildings on Wilf Campus now have Edison gas installations to improve heating and the audio-visual equipment in many classrooms has been upgraded. In Furst Hall, urinal wall dividers have been installed in the bathrooms and lights have been replaced in classrooms.

The dormitories on both Wilf and Beren campuses have had an improved Wi-Fi system known as Privatel installed since August 27, 2018. For the past five years, Yeshiva University had a contract with Verizon and each dorm room had its own individual Verizon Fios router. This system led to spotty service and required a student to enter in a new Wi-Fi password for each dorm room they entered. Privatel solved many of issues posed by the old routers by having a singular Wi-Fi network with the same login credentials as a student’s YU Wireless account and providing 24/7 support staff. Jonathan Schwab, Director of University Housing and Residence Life, noted that “this new system is way easier to navigate” and “it makes housing into one big network which adds another communal aspect to housing on campus.”

Additionally, the television screens on the second floor of Glueck are in full working order and will show an image of whoever is giving a sicha or shiur on the first floor of Glueck.

Besides for its basement, the Furst Hall lobby has also had some new additions added to it. A replica of the Arch of Titus Menorah Relief Panel, which in the beginning of the year was located in the Yeshiva University Museum and then moved to the Heights Lounge, is now permanently residing in the lobby of Furst Hall. Dr. Steven Fine, Director of the Center for Israel Studies, stated that the relief panel “reflects YU innovation and scholarship at its most colorful,” and “it pushes forward both Torah and Maddah, and I am glad that our president and his team have decided to preserve it for years to come.” The Relief Panel will be officially inaugurated on Chanukah with a menorah lighting ceremony.

The work done to Yeshiva University this past summer shows the efforts being made to fix up the campus over the past 2 years. The construction of a new plaza between Furst Hall and the Glueck Center and Gottesman Library, the repair of the hot tub in the Max Stern Athletic Center and the refurbishing of the Belfer Hall lobby with a new paint job, tiled floors and TV screens are features of improved campus facilities.

Betty Sugarman Joins as Pre-Law Personal Statement Writing Coach, New Faces in YU Offices

By Yitzchak Carroll and Benjamin Koslowe

Yeshiva University hired several new staff members for the upcoming academic year to fill vacancies and bolster departments.

Samantha Hitt, who previously worked as the Executive Assistant to the Head of School at MTA, will be joining the Dean’s Office as the new Senior Academic Administrator, starting this week. She replaces Yehudis Isenberg, who joined the Drisha Institute as Director of Operations after working in the Dean’s Office since 2012 and in YU since 2005.

Dr. Betty Sugarman is joining the Academic Advising Department as a Personal Statement Writing Coach. According to a recent email from Wilf Pre-Professional Advising Director Lolita Wood-Hill and Beren Academic and Pre-Law Advisor Ilana Milch, “Sugarman has been hired to assist students applying to law school in the 2018-2019 cycle with their personal statements. She will be available to work with applicants on an individual basis starting in September.”

Sugarman joins the staff following the departure of Wilf campus Pre-Law Advisor Dina Chelest and the subsequent promotion of Ms. Wood-Hill, who previously served as the pre-health advisor for many years, to serve in an advising role for both pre-med and pre-law students.

Dr. Sugarman previously served as an independent consultant in various capacities, and currently teaches leadership and strategic communications graduate courses at Columbia University. She will work with pre-law students from both campuses.

Erika Shechter was recently hired as an Academic Advisor in Yeshiva College. Schechter earned a bachelor’s from SUNY Binghamton and a master of social work from Columbia University’s School of Social Work. She has spent the past seven years in Israel working in both government and non-profit social service agencies, in addition to working as an ‘Ein Bayit’ for a post-high school yeshiva. She is “absolutely thrilled to be joining such an inspiring team of people at YU.”

Mechal Haas was recently appointed Senior Director of Communications. She has nearly twenty years of experience in public relations, including a senior leadership position at Edelman and Weber Shandwick. Most recently, she worked with non-for-profits, serving as the chair of the communications committee of the Advisory Board for Mount Sinai’s Adolescent Health Center and leading communications and strategic marketing for Seleni Institute, focusing on maternal mental health.

“As an alum of Stern College for Women,” wrote Haas, “I am very excited to be back at YU and am inspired by the work being done under Rabbi Berman’s leadership.” She added, “I am excited to learn more about your experiences as well. My door is always open and I would love to hear from you.”

“’Eim Bayit’ for a post-high school yeshiva. She is “absolutely thrilled to be joining such an inspiring team of people at YU.”

Mechal Haas, Senior Director of Communications

New Faces in YU (left to right): Erika Shechter, Samantha Hitt, Mechel Haas (Betty Sugarman not pictured)
**RIETS Hires New Undergraduate Rabbeim**

**By Esther Stern**

This year, RIETS hired three new undergraduate Rebbeim to supplement the existing Undergraduate Torah Studies staff as well as to take over some responsibilities held by former Mashpia Rabbi Moshe Weinberger. Rabbis Mordechai BenHaim, Dan Cohen, Ari Zahtz and Yehoshua Rubenstein commenced their new roles in the University at the beginning of the semester.

Each new hire is intended to fill a specific niche within the University. Rabbi BenHaim will be teaching the first Mazer Yeshiva Program (MYP) shiur specifically catered to the Sephardic population at Yeshiva University, that will be taught in English. Rabbi Cohen, who had previously taught classes in Isaac Breuer College (IBC), will also be catering to the growing Sephardic population in Yeshiva and will be teaching a Stone Beit Medrash Program (SBMP) shiur. Rabbi Zahtz will be teaching a MYP shiur that caters to students seeking skills development.

Rabbi Weinberger will be coming to Yeshiva monthly and will be present for a minimum of one Shabbat this year. He will also continue to lead many of the major events, as he has in the past. The biggest change will be the many hours that Rav Weinberger spent every week meeting with students.

Regarding both the new hires of RIETS and the shifting of responsibilities since the leaving of Rabbi Weinberger, Rabbi Penner has said, “It is our responsibility to provide pathways for as many of our Talmidim as possible with Rabbeim, Mashgichim and others who they can relate to.”

In talking about his new position, Rabbi Zahtz explained, “I look forward to creating relationships with my talmidim and working together with them on developing an approach to learning any page of Gemara through the lens of Rashi’s interpretation.” Rabbi Rubenstein will be giving chaburot and meeting with students on Tuesday nights, a role originally filled by Rabbi Weinberger. However, Rabbi Rubenstein will not be assuming the position of Mashpia, and RIETS “will continue to look for those who can assume different parts of [Rabbi Weinberger’s] role.”

Rabbi Menachem Penner
Yeshiva College Institutes New Valedictorian Policies

By Benjamin Koslowe

As of this Fall 2018 semester, new policies for determining the Yeshiva College valedictorian have been officially introduced into the updated Academic Information and Policies of the Yeshiva University Undergraduate Catalog for Men. The changes follow a Commentator investigation last semester into policies and processes that determine YU’s nine yearly undergraduates valedictorian awards.

Last year, as in several previous years, the Yeshiva College valedictorian selection process began in March, when 11 finalists were announced via an email from Dean Fred Sugarman, the Yeshiva College Associate Dean of Operations and Student Affairs. In the weeks that followed, a selection process by Deans and professors narrowed down the pool and eventually culminated in the final decision in mid-April.

As per the new de jure policies, the Deans plus coach, Jon Holtz, and the Executive Committee (which last year included Professors Shalom Holtz and Aaron Koller) vet candidates on the basis of academic criteria. These candidates shall consist of up to 15 students who have the highest GPAs amongst graduating seniors and have at least 94 credits in residence. Any student with a W or Incomplete grade is not considered for valedictorian. This process leads to the selection of 3-5 students for the next step in the determination.

“The policies for designating the YC valedictorian have been in place for some time,” said Dean Karen Bacon, “but were not known by everyone. It therefore was sensible and appropriate to include them in our catalog. I appreciate the input of the students in motivating this change.”

After the 3-5 finalists are determined, the students, as per the new guidelines, are to be interviewed by the Deans and Executive Committee. The students will also be season. Women’s tennis team aims to go all the way for the second year in a row. The biggest obstacle they must overcome is the loss of star player Shani Hava, who graduated last spring after accumulating numerous Skyline Conference Player of the Year Awards in her four years at YU. Tennis opens its season against Pratt on September 2nd.

“Building skills” with returning players. Last year’s Volleyball team left much to be desired after finishing their season with a record of 1-19. The rough season seems to have already been forgotten by Coach Dalli, who described herself as “super excited” for the upcoming season. Women’s Volleyball plays its first game of the season versus Lehman College on August 31.

MEN’S CROSS COUNTRY

WOMEN’S VOLLEYBALL Coach Dalliana Toussiant looks forward to “building skills” with returning players. Last year’s Volleyball team left much to be desired after finishing their season with a record of 1-19. The rough season seems to have already been forgotten by Coach Dalli, who described herself as “super excited” for the upcoming season. Women’s Volleyball plays its first game of the season versus Lehman College on August 31.

MEN’S CROSS COUNTRY did not reply to The Commentator’s requests for comments on the upcoming season.

Men’s Soccer Promotes Davidson to Head Coach

By Chana Weinberg

On August 1, the Athletics Department promoted JJ Davidson from Assistant Coach to Head Coach of the Men’s Soccer team. This move comes after Josh Pransky, former Director of Recruitment and Alumni Affairs from his full-time position at YU.

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“My communication with the players has always been very open and direct and they can expect the same from me as the head coach.”

JJ Davidson

Davidson faces an interesting challenge this year, as 14 of the 20 players on the team’s roster have worked with Davidson in his prior role as Assistant Coach. It is possible such a promotion could spur tension between the athletes and their new Head Coach as they are unused to having him in such a high position. When this concern was brought to his attention, the new coach had full confidence that this would not be an issue.

“My communication with the players has always been very open and direct, and they can expect the same from me as the head coach,” Davidson said. “Obviously, some things will be done differently now as I implement my coaching philosophy but I’ve felt nothing other than support and excitement from the team so far.”

Davidson’s familiarity with the team will end up being an asset, as he is a young coach with little head coaching experience. He served as Head Coach at Kushner Yeshiva High School as well as the Head Coach for the USA Under-16 junior boys team in the 2018 International Maccabi Youth Soccer tournament (YUmacc.com). “JJ, is an excellent young coach with great leadership skills,” Yeshiva University Director of Athletics, Joe Bednarsh said in a statement to YUmacs.com. “His philosophy mirrors that of the department’s, and he’s going to bring a level of discipline and hard-nosed style of play that will be very exciting to watch.”

In other YU sports news:

WOMEN’S CROSS COUNTRY has a new Head Coach and Assistant Coach: YU recently announced that there will be two new coaches for the Women’s Cross-country team. Rolanda Bell, a former track athlete at the University of Tennessee, will be the Head coach, and she will be assisted by Lidia Garcia. In the past, the men’s and women’s Cross Country teams shared coaches.

WOMEN’S TENNIS looks to repeat as champions: Fresh off an appearance in the NCAA Division Three Tournament last year, the women’s tennis team aims to go all the way for the second year in a row. The biggest obstacle they must overcome is the loss of star player Shani Hava, who graduated last spring after accumulating numerous Skyline Conference Player of the Year Awards in her four years at YU. Tennis opens its season against Pratt on September 2nd.

WOMEN’S VOLLEYBALL Coach Dalliana Toussiant looks forward to “building skills” with returning players. Last year’s Volleyball team left much to be desired after finishing their season with a record of 1-19. The rough season seems to have already been forgotten by Coach Dalli, who described herself as “super excited” for the upcoming season. Women’s Volleyball plays its first game of the season versus Lehman College on August 31.

MEN’S CROSS COUNTRY did not reply to The Commentator’s requests for comments on the upcoming season.
Why Sam Harris Can Make Good Tea, but Only Tea

By Dovid Schwartz

I enjoyed a very interesting summer. I would like to share with you my experiences. But first, a joke, or, at least, the very first part of a joke: What did the Buddhist ask for on his hotdog? Certain important questions don’t bother us enough. (This is not the punchline. That will come soon.) I spent my summer thinking about them at Claremont McKenna College where, along with some other students, I read an excellent and difficult book called “Natural Right and History” by Leo Strauss. Later on, in Washington, D.C., I spent seven weeks studying other books—from Aristotle’s “Ethics” to Machiavelli’s “The Prince”—on a program called Hertog.

I pose the following question: How do you make a good cup of tea? The answer depends upon an insignificant dilemma: What constitutes a good cup of tea? This is easily resolved. “Good” here means something that fulfills its function: a good cup of tea is a cup of tea that gets the job done. When I make tea, it is simple. I like it caffeinated because I am tired and I like it unsweetened because I hate myself: a simple tea for a simple function.

I pose, now, a different question which may be entirely the same: What do you make a good society? The answer depends upon a significant dilemma. What constitutes a good society? “Good” here may mean something that fulfills its function, but it may mean something else.

The Buddhist asks for everything on his hotdog. If you didn’t get this one, here’s another: The Buddhist hands the hotdog vendor a fifty-dollar bill and waits for his change, but it never comes. The Buddhist says, “Hey! Where’s my change?” To which the hotdog vendor replies: “Ah, no, sir. Change comes only from within.” Do we see the question of the good tea and the good society as the same or are they entirely different? Are we using “good” in the same way? Or, like the hot dog vendor, have we conflated what ought to remain separate and equated that which ought to have been distinct?

These issues lie at the center of classical political philosophy. What is “good”? In posing this question, we are not looking for a list of good things or criteria by which things qualify to be on this list. We are looking for something more abstract. To illustrate what I mean, consider the distinction between fact and preference. When I say “Murder is bad” and then follow up and say, “Also, borscht is bad,” have I used the word bad here in two different ways or one?

As from Jews, we sympathize with those who draw a distinction. “Murder is bad” is a fact of the Universe, much as the equation “1+1=2” is a fact of the universe. “Borscht is bad,” is not a fact of the universe. At best, we can say “I prefer not to eat borscht,” which is a fact of the universe but one of a different order. Facts of the universe such as “Murder is bad” (if indeed it is a fact) are true without being contingent upon my preference. Which is to say, whether I like murder or not, it is still bad. Facts of the universe, such as “borscht is bad,” are true if and only if I mean to express “I don’t like the taste of borscht,” and I do not in fact like it. Thus, it is contingent upon my preferences.

Is “the good” a preference or is “the good” a fact? This was one of the questions I spent my summer thinking about. Aristotle, in his book titled “Nicomachean Ethics,” believes that the good is a fact. Aristotle believes that there is a way that you should live, and he calls this way of living eudaimonia. This word has been conventionally translated as “happiness,” but I will translate it here as “well-being.” Every reasonable person believes in well-being, which is to say that certain ways of living are better than others. But not everyone agrees on what sort of word “better” is.

Sam Harris, a popular author, takes a reductive view of well-being. By this, I mean he understands well-being as a state-of-consciousness. To borrow one of his analogies, we consider health to be a state of the body. Likewise, in Harris’ view, well-being is a state-of-consciousness. This state will include experiences of happiness, awe, love, etc. It will not include things like misery, pain, depression, etc. However, left out on this model is any fact of the ought sort. It relies on preference. Which is to say, we should prefer certain states of consciousness (those we identify with “well-being”) to others (those we identify with “bad”). But why ought we prefer these things? Harris’ system cannot resolve this question.

Instead, all he can do is say we do in fact prefer these things. He spends time and energy trying to think about what sort of world would be most conducive to this well-being. In this regard, his view enjoys (suffers from?) concord with the views of John Mackie and Bertrand Russell, who believed we should express value judgments in the “optative mood.” By this, I mean it is not correct to say “I ought not murder.” Instead, it is correct to say “I ought not murder in order to have the state-of-consciousness I prefer.”

Sam Harris can make good tea because we take “good” here to mean the tea I prefer or the tea I require to achieve something I prefer. But Sam Harris cannot be good in the higher sense of the word, in the sense where good transcends preference and is a fact of the universe. He can act that way, but he acts that way for something else: his preferred state of consciousness. Remove that goal, and he no longer has a reason to act that way. On Harris’ view, what grounds moral claims is their consequence to our consciousness. Morality, on this view, does not rise above the human theatre, but is instead shackled inside the fleshy matter in our skulls. Is this view correct?

This is what I spent my summer thinking about, and if you’ve made it to the end of this article, you may want to spend your next summer thinking about these things too.

Corporation of Christian Schools, Inc.

My First Fight

By Phillip Nagler

It was a bright and sunny day in Northern Israel. My friends and I had a vacation day from our research labs, so we decided to travel to Gan Hashlosha, a national park. The park was beautiful. We swam in various natural springs and waterfalls and took plenty of cool pictures. People filled the park from corner to corner, both Jews and Arabs.

In the late afternoon, we moved to a new location to go swimming. We put our things down next to a group of Arabs, who were around the same age as we were. One of my friends started a conversation with one of them, and we all introduced ourselves. He was a really friendly guy; he told us that he was from Nazareth and that he was Palestinian. He had a big scar on his back. I found out later from my friend that he got the scar from his father, who held a knife up against his back. When he was a teenager, he didn’t want to be a religious Muslim anymore, and this is what led to the knife incident. He told my friend that his relationship with his father is better now.

We swam for another hour and a half. There was a large and cascading waterfall that was a 15-minute swim away from where we entered the water. After returning to shore, I was completely tuckered out from swimming all day. I decided to head to the showers and change, while the rest of my friends decided to stay in the water for a little longer.

Upon return, I saw that most of my friends were still in the water. One of my friends in the water was still talking to the young Arab man who he had met earlier that day. He had flip flops on, and I wanted to change into my sneakers. I sat down and started putting one of them on. Before I could tie it, I heard two Arab teenagers yelling intensely at each other. They were less than 10 feet away from me. Next thing I knew, one of them punched the other in the face, and they started to fight.

I thought that I would get dragged into the fight, being that I was sitting a few feet away.

Two other Arab teenagers joined in on the fight. It started to get very intense. Many people were a few feet away just watching, including me and my friend who was also out of the water. The Arab guy who my friend was talking to got out of the water and tried to break up the fight. He was not able to overpower the four of them and ran to get help.

I was petrified. I thought that I would get dragged into the fight, being that I was sitting a few feet away. One of my shoes was still untied, and the other one wasn’t even on my foot. I tried moving my hands to tie

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From the SOY President’s Desk: Appreciating YU’s Uniqueness as Home to a Diverse Jewish Community and Our Responsibility as the Nucleus of American Modern Orthodoxy

By Moshe Spirn

This year will be different. I feel confident in saying this before I know anything about how any of your classes will unfold, how much you will enjoy your amazing morning programs, or how many new friends you will make. I know very little of what the upcoming year has in store, yet I can assure you it will be different from anything you have experienced before. If this is your first year here, you may not be surprised by this assertion. Some of the upperclassmen, however, may be a little skeptical. Allow me to explain why I am so confident.

What is the biggest difference in the campus between this year and last? We have some new amazing teachers and rebbeim and many new students, but the most impactful newcomers have been the impossible-to-miss banners which now cover many of the walls of Glueck, Furst and the elevators of Belkin, Rabbi Lamm and many more. I wasn’t as concerned with the details of my specific YU experience because I was so excited that I belonged at YU. Knowing this was all the convincing I needed that I belonged at YU.

As its banners and history can attest, YU is an amazing place. We are all blessed with the privilege of calling this place our home. Every morning programs. At the end of last year, The Commentator published an article describing the recent trends of all the morning programs. As Rabbi Kalinsky was quoted in that article, “every morning program is a l’chatchilah (an ideal) in its own right.” Regardless of what a student is looking for in a morning program, YU has an amazing option for him. We can’t offer the spectrum of programs for granted, as there is no other Jewish school in the world that has the range of students that YU does. And while such a range is not without its challenges, it presents a unique opportunity to grow alongside each other. Complementing the diverse student body is an unparalleled roster of roshei yeshiva and religious staff who are here to call our attention to the amazing diversity of YU’s morning programs. At the end of last year, The Commentator took the spectrum of programs for granted, as there is no other Jewish school in the world that has the range of students that YU does. And while such a range is not without its challenges, it presents a unique opportunity to grow alongside each other. Complementing the diverse student body is an unparalleled roster of roshei yeshiva and religious staff who are here to call our attention to the amazing diversity of YU’s morning programs. At the end of last year, The Commentator took the spectrum of programs for granted, as there is no other Jewish school in the world that has the range of students that YU does. And while such a range is not without its challenges, it presents a unique opportunity to grow alongside each other. Complementing the diverse student body is an unparalleled roster of roshei yeshiva and religious staff who are here to call our attention to the amazing diversity of YU’s morning programs.

The greatest enemy to a prosperous college experience is something with which we are all—unfortunately—probably familiar. It is the cynicism and despondency that creeps into our thoughts, conversations and body language.

The Ronald Reagan poster hanging outside Gottesman Library

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Features

The Ronald Reagan poster hanging outside Gottesman Library

Building Tomorrow, Today.

"The history of Yeshiva University—representing as it does both freedom of secular inquiry and freedom of religion—is the story of America."

Ronald Reagan

Features

Building Tomorrow, Today.

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 Protect Yourself.

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 Friends Don’t Let Friends Get Married Without the Halachic Prenup.

 To learn more about the halachic prenup or to schedule an appointment to sign yours, please call ORA at 212-795-0791 or email us at prenup@getORA.org.
The Enclosure of Modern American Industry: The Death of the Yeoman Worker

By Aryeh Schonbrun

Over the past few decades we have witnessed dramatic events in global and domestic politics, economics and society. We have experienced the dramatic growth of tech, information technologies and the painful reminders that we still share a finite, limited world. The average global temperature has increased as much as our financial anxieties. We have seen runs on the market, downturns that left people poor and unemployed; bubbles form and pop and swindlers rob us (even YU!) of our billions. Politicians have privatized away much of our common resources, and the cost of living has climbed.

Though we live in a time of plenty, the middle class struggles to survive making less, working harder, and in constant battle with the headwinds of a ‘free’ and ‘liberated’ marketplace. The middle class suffers: it has lost much of its say in politics, seen its unions dishonored and underfunded, and, though workers produce much more than their counterparts in the 1980s, their pay, accounting for inflation, has stagnated for decades. That, coupled with increased costs associated with healthcare, education and home-ownership which have outpaced inflation and increasing job insecurity has made it difficult for the average American family to get ahead in this tough-but-‘booming’ economy.

Additionally, upon recognizing the government’s inability to fight inflation, the government began to seize and sell plots of state land, previously ‘common’ or shared, public land, and sell them to private entities. This, it claimed, would encourage more efficient farming/grazing practices and, of course, relieve the government of some of its debts. However, on account of the inability of the middle class to solidify as a powerful political force, and as a result of corrupt political negotiations and unequal leverage, most of the public lands seized did not sell for a proper price and it became still harder for the now-impoverished to keep up.

Over 100 years, much of the once-common land had been repurposed for industrial farming or grazing, or turned over for recreational activities such as deer-hunting, while masses of poor, thoroughly expropriated and ever multiplying, made their way to the major cities in search of food and lodging (sometimes even their houses were destroyed in land takeovers). Through these numerous Acts of Enclosure (or fencing off), the middle class was destroyed, and from its ashes sprung the hopes and dreams of the English working industrial class and the Industrial Revolution.

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During the messy transition, and on account of the appalling conditions of the expropriated masses, many sought a way out. Those who had the courage signed up for indentured labor, while masses of poor, thoroughly expropriated and ever multiplying, made their way to the major cities in search of food and lodging (sometimes even their houses were destroyed in land takeovers). Through these numerous Acts of Enclosure (or fencing off), the middle class was destroyed, and from its ashes sprung the hopes and dreams of the English working industrial class and the Industrial Revolution.

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Debtors’ prisons reopened under the guise of myriad antiquated laws. The War on Drugs took on racial and social prerogatives to rid the streets of previously middle-class crimes and impoverished criminals, and mass-incarceration started to make its way into lower-income American society. Poor states languished from reduced federal spending, schools became re-segregated as a result of unequal economic development, and politicians happily relinquished control over major industries and interests in favor of their friends in the private sector. Taxes were cut, ‘entitlements’ reduced, and the American work ethic, once a hallmark of the financial interests of the market. The government, on the other hand, by virtue of its incessant violation of laissez-faire and free-market principles, has become a commodity, individual responsibility an oft-repeated but misunderstood trope, and the middle-class’s hopes to resurface have been beaten back after multiple economic shocks.

The American worker, having suffered much in the last few decades has become accustomed to his new situation. He is a servant of the financial interests of the market. He is theft, all I can say is, so much the better.

The great English author George Orwell, famous for his anti-communist satires (e.g. 1984, Animal Farm), once wrote (Tribune 8/1944):

If giving the land of England back to the people of England is theft, I am quite happy to call it theft. In his zeal to defend private property, my correspondent does not stop to consider how the so-called owners of the land got hold of it. They simply seized it by force, afterwards hiring lawyers to provide them with title-deeds. In the case of the enclosure of the common lands, which was going on from about 1600 to 1850, the land-grabbers did not even have the excuse of being foreign conquerors; they were quite frankly taking the heritage of their own countrymen, upon no sort of pretext except that they had the power to do so.

It is desirable that people should own their own dwelling houses, and it is probably desirable that a farmer should own as much land as he can actually farm. But the ground-landlord... has no function and no excuse for existence. He is merely a person who has found out a way of milking the public while giving nothing in return. He causes rents to be higher...

That is literally all that he does, except to drain his income. If that [redistribution] is theft, all I can say is, so much the better for theft.

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That is literally all that he does, except to drain his income. If that [redistribution] is theft, all I can say is, so much the better for theft.
There are those among us that feel the role of The Commentator should be limited to reporting only the positive aspects of YU. They claim the paper, being read by thousands including alumni, is no place for students to air their complaints, their criticisms or even their misgivings. Similarly they profess that the paper should not highlight any of YU’s lackings or failures, but rather should report the news in a saccharine fashion. I must protest these assertions. As a responsible Yeshiva journalist, I am cognizant of the seeming tension between those who state that any form of public criticism, even if it be constructive, is forbidden and those who advocate the type of role Western society has reserved for the media.

As far back as Sophocles, philosophers have espoused the position that writers should portray the world as it actually is, so as to allow man to judge for himself. There is a need for an exchange of ideas and a forum for constructive criticism that will reach all the members of our community.

We attend a yeshiva that prides itself on the encouragement of debate and the students to take an active role in determining its direction. We have a student government, Senate and Court, all of which are outgrowths of this desire and all of which are alien to the classic yeshiva. The classic yeshiva had no need for democracy of this desire and all of which are alien to the classic yeshiva.

After this experience, I view Palestinians in my head, the voice of mainstream media. It spoke to me saying that Palestinians are cruel people who use human shields. They were telling me that Palestinians are dangerous and that these teenagers were about to attack me. Then there was another voice in my head, the voice of mainstream media. It spoke to me saying that Palestinians are people too; that they are oppressed and live in a poor economic society. This voice told me that this fight had nothing to do with me and that I had no reason to be scared.

Part of me at the time of the fight wanted to get up and run away with only one shoe, but I held myself back and did not allow myself to stay so close to a potentially dangerous situation. Another part of me felt that I would be safe since this wasn’t my fight. After all, why would they attack me? It turned out that I got out of this situation completely unscathed, but I wondered: was it right of me to not attack me? Then there was another voice in my head, the voice of mainstream media. It spoke to me saying that Palestinians are people too; that they are oppressed and live in a poor economic society. This voice told me that this fight had nothing to do with me and that I had no reason to be scared.

Ultimately, it is foolish to shape an opinion on a group of people from one bad experience. However, it made me realize that I never really thought about the Palestinians who are living in Israel. Some of them may be violent like these couple of teenagers who got into a fight, for whatever reason. But some of them are nice and friendly people, like the guy that my friend was speaking to. After this experience, I view Palestinians as human beings, rather than as a political concept.

After internalizing the amazing opportunity here in YU, I think that there are several other things we must do in order to maximize our time here. I will reiterate my thoughts on the project of YU and its student body. I created after the publication, written by YU students, that will be distributed in YU and in shuls across America. The name of the publication is Yitzchak Yiranen. The classic yeshiva had no need for democracy since its goal was unidirectional—to teach Torah and thereby mold its students into proper Jews. Our goals are centered around Torah and the desire to be proper Jews, but often include secondary valid pursuits. By instilling the framework for a sense of democracy in the yeshiva we must also accept its responsibilities. A democracy cannot function without the participation and the careful scrutiny of its objects by the students.

Our paper is an integral part of a system of checks and balances which serve to safeguard students’ rights. Without the public forum, an individual’s complaints might receive little attention. Thus, by examining an individual’s complaints, the paper is able to make an impact on the school. The public forum is a medium by which our community is able to hold our school accountable. The public forum is a means of examining our actions and a forum for constructive criticism that will reach all the members of our community.

Students have the capability to make an impact on Jews all across America. In my opinion, we often don’t appreciate the fact that YU is the flagship of Modern Orthodoxy in America and, therefore, the impact it has on America. We don’t realize how communities all across America feel connected to YU and look to its roshei yeshiva, faculty and students as role models. This fact is quite intimidating, and forced me to think how we could actually reach out to the world while being true to our ideals. Though written 30 years ago, the questions raised and ideas expressed remain relatable and relevant today.
Counterpoint: Changing Routines, Not Lives

By Shira Levy

Deserts have perpetually blue skies—the sort of blue associated with beach days and summer weather. But the blue stretching above the monochrome desert sand of Arad, Israel does not have that positive, sunny-day effect. Everything in Arad happens beneath a ceaselessly blue sky that, to many, would indicate hope and opportunity, but to Aradians represents the cyclical nature of their trying lives.

I came to Arad with Counterpoint Israel, a Yeshiva University program that sends students to the Israeli cities of Kiryat Malachi, Dimona, and Arad for eight weeks every summer. Campers come to Arad with the hope of leaving a lasting influence on the lives of the students they work with. We work to create variance where there was routine. We interrupt an otherwise-empty summer and remind them that no matter the fun they miss us once we are gone. It is not clear that the attachment and relationships solidify. We leave just when the attachment and relationships or discount its immense value, rather, I aim to identify and specify the impact of Counterpoint in Arad.

For three weeks, we teach kids ranging from 11 to 16 years old English, give them love and attention, and model a positive relationship with authority. Then we leave. We leave just when the attachment and relationships solidify. We leave at the point where they will be sad to see us go, but not miss us once we are gone. It is not clear that three weeks in a full childhood matters at all.

We did not change the cycles our campers live in. We did not change the reality of absent parents, desperate financial situations, or relieve them from whatever circumstances they were born into that qualify them as “at-risk teens.” We did not radically alter their relationships or facilitate a new kind of understanding. What we did do was introduce a welcome contrast and a joyful disruption. We interrupted an otherwise-empty summer and created variance where there was routine. We created a hiccup in these children’s painful and seemingly ceaseless cycle.

While the campers generally and comfortably challenge authority, face the consequences thereof, and again defy authority, we insisted on a different dynamic by establishing warm and playful relationships. We modeled for the campers trusting relationships, ones in which their happiness, balance, and well being were a primary concern. Where vacation time is usually time spent roaming the streets or watching television, camp offered structure and activity. We promoted interests and encouraged ambition by having the teens try new activities and think bigger about their goals. For example, we facilitated a camper-run play of a comedic, bilingual version of “Romeo and Juliet.” In cycles of aggression and searches for dominance, we ended feuds in handshakes and catfights with apologies.

For three weeks, nine Yeshiva University students worked endlessly to create an environment based on unapologetic celebration of values, learning and fun. We watched reticent campers emerge as self-declared color war captains. Restless teens with little interest in English articulated full sentences. In an energetic, charged environment where teamwork and comradeship were essential, campers opened up to one another, embraced their peers and worked to understand each others’ differences.

However, each morning the campers woke up to the same unchanging, blue sky, reminding them that no matter the fun they had at camp, their circumstances can not change. To me, that color was a symbol of what we came to Arad to do. Our accents, attitude, hashkafa and relationships all came together to create a fiery new color for contrast.

If I were to put forward that the children’s routine will feel different after this disruption curately describe what we went there to do, nor does it properly depict the amazing things we accomplished.

Saying that we ‘changed lives’ does not accurately describe what we went there to do, nor does it properly depict the amazing things we accomplished.

No cliché can do justice to the joy this program creates and the potential it unleashes. On the backdrop of life in Arad, the campers’ experience on Counterpoint is one of utter difference. Counterpoint matters because it offers newness in every respect—not because it changes lives. Being around college students who believe unflinchingly in each campers’ ability achieve their ambitions and fulfill their potential is valuable in its own right. Those three weeks matter for the results that follow, but for what they were: unthinking fun and unquestioning support for teens who are brimming with untapped potential. The three weeks matter in their insinuation that there is more out there—that there is room for warm, caring relationships beneath the Aradian blue sky.
Lessons Learned at YU

By Efrat Malachi

Hopping off the plane fresh from shana aleph in Israel and transitioning into the big world of college and adulthood is scary and as you step foot into new, untested territory you are bound to come across some rocky plains. That is why I have made it my duty to share a few of the major lessons and tips I picked up during my first year at campus. My hope is that you are able to internalize these thoughts and messages that I’ve laid out and, in doing so, you minimize your chances to err, giving you the opportunity to have a smoother experience at school.

Welcome to all the incoming and returning students! I will warn you, it will be a rollercoaster ride of a year — as is life — but in the end, it is worthwhile. Ladies and gentlemen, fasten your seatbelts and hold on tight as the ride of your life is about to begin.

In no particular order, here is a list of lessons I learned and want to share with you.

It is important to know that there are resources for getting help right at your fingertips.

Firstly, it is better late than never, which, before this past year, has never rung true. It doesn’t matter whether it’s coming late to a class, handing in an assignment past its due date or even being tardy to an exam/ midterm/ final, you must remember that you can only gain by going or handing in those assignments. Arriving late might feel like its due date or even being tardy to an exam/ test might make you feel like you are not hanging around. In that moment is fleeting. The unpleasant assignments can create clouds that rain stress until the work is done. All in all, the faster you start then the faster you finish and whether you do it the moment it’s assigned or the moment it’s due, it still needs to get done, so you may as well use your time wisely. Be smart; don’t wait until the last minute to do your best work. It is better to be late and know you tried than never to show up at all, which might anyways result in worse consequences. Give yourself a chance. You deserve it.

My next piece of advice is that avoidance is never the solution. This means that avoiding and putting off work until a later time not only decreases your chances of doing satisfactory work but also puts extra strain on your current workload. Unfortunately, there is no prophylactic aid anymore — no one really knows what will demand time and effort and affect daily life. The only thing you can be certain of is the present moment, therefore it is better to do whatever work you can get done today than to wait for tomorrow. Additionally, unfinished long-term projects can create clouds that rain stress until the work is done. All in all, the faster you start then the faster you finish and whether you do it the moment it’s assigned or the moment it’s due, it still needs to get done, so you may as well use your time wisely. Be smart; don’t wait until the last minute to do your best work.

If you do not view assignments as a serious endeavor, you are not going to get the same results as someone who does. This is true especially for the assignments that are due on the same day as the exam/test. The only way to ensure you do well is to plan ahead and start as soon as possible. This is also true for classwork. If you wait until the last minute to do an assignment, you will not have enough time to fully understand the concept and will not get the same grade as someone who started earlier. Additionally, if you wait until the last minute to study for an exam, you will not have enough time to fully prepare and will not perform as well as someone who started earlier.

It’s crucial to frequently check in to see what your smile will emerge simply because you can become complacent and stop seeking out new experiences. Nothing is too big or too small to handle and no matter how scary and bleak the situation may seem, all the help and answers are there. Like with the struggles and fears that settle and build inside you, the strength to overcome and rebuild is inside you as well. Once you start establishing those helpful connections you will secure some peace of mind. So, whether it be a classmate who is failing in a relationship you’re unsure about, social challenges or even family drama, there is always someone on the other line. You just need to pick up the phone and make the call.

Don’t throw away the grand life that’s waiting ahead for you. Remember to take a step back once in a while and see the bigger picture you’re painting.

Finally, do what makes you happy. This is not to say you should go out and do whatever you want. Rather, I’m saying you should incorporate a recreational element into every day. It’s important to realize that you are not just a student but a person with complexities. It’s easy to get so bogged down by work that you end up skipping over this aspect of your day, but it’s crucial to recognize that you’re not a robot. Taking breaks in between long study sessions to do things that make you happy makes you a more well-balanced social FOMO.

Having a fear of commitment can range from the end of a potentially awesome social life you might have had. But it is important at times to realize that nothing is more important than focusing on your future success. If a social event or hang out with friends seem to trump most things in your life and fog your vision, then you need to redefine priorities. It is healthy to go out and have fun with friends, just remember that everything is best in moderation. It’s all about the balance.

Fourthly, I recommend you pray, pray, and pray some more. This is not just a comfort to talk to someone when they are at a loss and can’t seem to find their way but a real-life skill. First, a person must have an honest conversation with himself to identify what his worries and weak points are and then he should address whatever is setting him off. Communication is the greatest tool one has in life, whether it be praying to God, seeing a counselor or talking to a friend or mentor. It’s not embarrassing or shameful at all; rather, it’s the opposite. It’s a sign of strength, maturity and responsibility. Taking time to step back and take a look at your life is very important.

Nowadays we are truly blessed that at our disposal are countless resources to facilitate communication. Nothing is too big or too small to handle and no matter how scary and bleak the situation may seem, all the help and answers are there. Like with the struggles and fears that settle and build inside you, the strength to overcome and rebuild is inside you as well. Once you start

By Chaya Bracha Walkenfeld

Democratic Party at one time staunchly supported religious (and Jewish) freedom, that is no longer the case. The Democratic Party promises to give everyone equal rights (https://democrats.org/), however, that is impossible because some people’s rights impede on the rights of others. By legislating civil rights that are not in the Constitution, the Democrats are actually taking away rights enshrined in the Constitution. In particular, the Public Leadership Institute explains that many states grant protections to specific classes of people—these protections conflict with your constitutional right of religious freedom.

Democratic Party candidates persuade you to vote for them by claiming that their party ensures equal rights for all citizens, including for Jews. This is why Jews voted for them historically, specifically from the time of Franklin D. Roosevelt (Jewish Virtual Library).

I am here to tell you that although the Democratic Party at one time staunchly supported religious (and Jewish) freedom, that is no longer the case. The Democratic Party promises to give everyone equal rights (https://democrats.org/), however, that is impossible because some people’s rights impede on the rights of others. By legislating civil rights that are not in the Constitution, the Democrats are actually taking away rights enshrined in the Constitution. In particular, the Public Leadership Institute explains that many states grant protections to specific classes of people—these protections conflict with your constitutional right of religious freedom.

The Colorado cake shop incident is the perfect example to demonstrate that not everyone can have equal rights at the same time. When Jack Phillips, the owner of Masterpiece Cakeshop, refused to bake a wedding cake for a same-sex marriage, the Colorado Civil Rights Commission (CCRC) ruled that Phillips violated the civil rights of the gay couple who ordered the cake, despite the fact that designing the cake went against his own religious beliefs. State court rulings upheld the CCRC decisions. Phillips appealed both the CCRC and the State court rulings to the Supreme Court where, in June 2018, the justices reversed all prior court decisions and voted 7-2 in favor of the cake shop owner. According to their explanation, Colorado discriminated against the owner of the shop because of his religious beliefs.

Republicans support the Supreme Court’s decision in Masterpiece Cakeshop v. CCRC because it pledges to “…defend the religious beliefs and rights of conscience of all Americans and to safeguard religious institutions against government control.” It continues to say that “Our First Amendment rights are not given to us by the government but are rights we inherently possess. The government cannot use subsequent

Vote For Me, Vote for You, Vote for Who?

By Chaya Bracha Walkenfeld and The Board of the College Republicans

"Vote for me!" "Vote for me!" "No, actually just vote for me!"

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“Westworld” Metacommentary Part I: These Violent Delights

By Samuel Gelman (Houston, Texas)

Analysis.

On the surface, “Westworld” tells the story of killer robots rebelling against their abusive human masters. On a deeper level, “Westworld” examines questions regarding free will and humanity, asking its viewers to question what makes someone human and the value of reality. Beneath that philosophical jargon lies a meta-commentary on the nature of stories and how they relate to their viewers and readers. The unique setting of the show — a theme park full of pre-programmed robot characters with backstories, personalities, and drives — allows the sci-fi/Western to critique and assess the current entertainment landscape in our world, offering insightful and somewhat disturbing observations. Over several issues of The Commentator, this series of articles will examine this commentary and its ramifications on current TV and movies. First up: violence and sex.

Violence and sex dominate television and movies. Movies such as “The Godfather,” “No Country For Old Men” or anything directed by Quentin Tarantino contain an abundance of violent and bloody scenes, while films such as “Fifty Shades of Grey” are dedicated to the topic of sex. Many of these scenes become iconic; everyone remembers the horse head scene from “The Godfather” or the moment the will-they-won’t-they couple of their favorite TV show finally hooked up. Others send more of an artistic message; “No Country For Old Men’s” random violence serves as an antithesis of the Western genre and the philosophy of Tommy Lee Jones’ protagonist. As for Quentin Tarantino, well, those movies are just over-the-top fun.

Not everyone, especially contemporary critics, see it this way. Some of the most popular entertainment programs of the last decade have received criticism for their use of violence, gore and sex. Critics complain that shows like “Game of Thrones,” “True Blood” and “Spartacus” use violence and sex as crude ways to grab their audiences’ attention. In fact, the explicit sexual content on “Game of Thrones” has become so typical that it warranted the creation of a new term — sexposition — which the Financial Times defined as “keeping viewers hooked by combining complex plot exposition with explicit sexual goings-on.” The show’s infamy even spread here to YU, where Rabbi Jeremy Wieder criticized The Commentator for publishing an article about “Game of Thrones,” saying that “the show itself is deeply, deeply problematic.”

At first glance, it would seem that “Westworld” embodies the many criticisms of “Game of Thrones.” The first shot of the pilot opens to a dark room that slowly illuminates to reveal a naked woman sitting on a stool. Other notable moments of the first episode include a rape scene, plenty of shootouts, a scalping and a close up of a man literally getting shot through the face. To say that the show contains explicit and graphic content would be quite the understatement. Looking a little more critically, though, one sees how the violence and sex in “Westworld” takes a much different form than that of “Game of Thrones.” “Game of Thrones” uses these types of scenes to show the brutality and harshness of its world. They become an artistic tool utilized to get its message across. Of course, art can take many forms, leading to much of the criticism of this approach. Other methods may portray the brutality of a world just as well as explicit violence and sex. “Vikings,” which depicts a harsh and unforgiving world with a more subdued approach to violence and sex, serves an excellent example of this.

“Westworld” falls into an entirely different category. It uses these graphic scenes not to further its own narrative, but to comment and examine the nature of these scenes on other shows precisely like “Game of Thrones.”

To make this more clear, I have to back up and explain the unique setting of “Westworld”. The show takes place in a theme park called Westworld. Pre-programmed robots with backstories, personalities, unique and subtle character traits, motivations and drives inhabit the park. Humans — referred to as guests in the show — pay to enter the park and do whatever they want to/with the hosts. And I mean whatever they want. Outside the park, the audience watches as Anthony Hopkins’ Robert Ford and Simon Quarterman’s Lee Sizemore create new narratives and characters, ensuring that the experience stays fresh and exciting for the guests.

If this all seems a bit familiar, that’s because we all experience this any time we turn on TV.
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on a TV. Through its setting, “Westworld” deconstructs and recreates the format of television and host shows as they are labeled on the show — parallel the actors and performers. The people up at HQ correspond to the writers, directors, and producers, the crafters of the story. And the guests? They are us. They are the viewers. The writers and directors (the people at park headquarters) create characters and cast actors, and the viewers, the viewers, (the guests), forcing them to do whatever they need to do to entertain the viewer and get higher ratings (entertain the guests in the park), this includes "killing," graphic sex scenes, and any other ridiculous thing that shows make their actors and actresses do.

None of it is real, though, and the viewer faces no consequences for their actions. At the end of the day, the cast will go home to their real lives, only to return the next day to do it all over again. So too with the hosts. Their sole purpose is to entertain the guest in any way possible, be it being killed or having sex with them. The guests don’t give a second thought towards their actions against the hosts. They are robots, programmed to feal whatever their programming (script) tells them to. They will not remember any of the horrors they went through, and will return to the park the next day as they are all programmed to do.

Therefore, whenever “Westworld” engages in explicit violence or sexual behavior, it does so not merely to attract viewers or make an artistic point, but rather to show the audience their own viewing experience through the actions of the guests. The guests and the viewers are one and the same. Violence becomes necessary because the show must reflect the violence of the TV and movies in our world. “Westworld” asks its audience — by positioning them as the guests — to examine why they love these types of scenes so much.

Granted, the guests live the violence and sex as opposed to the audience who simply watch it. While that may be a significant difference, it does not matter in this case. Both the guests and the audience ask for the same explicit content, just in different formats. Furthermore, with the development of VR technology, the boundaries between “Westworld” and our reality are shrinking. Do we really believe that those gaming experiences will be any different than what TV and movies, or video games, for that matter, give us in terms of content? The short answer is no, but this is all beyond the scope of this article.

In an interview with Vice, Co-Creator Jonathan Nolan admitted to the explicit violence and sex head-on. “This might be somewhat hypocritical, but Lisa [Joy] and I aren’t terribly interested in portrayals of sexual violence or sex,” he said. “Obviously, part of what the show is about is that, but it wasn’t something we were interested in fetishizing. It is a show about violence, though, and we’re asking the question, Why is it that we like violence in almost all of our entertainment?” Violence is in most of the stories we like to watch, but it isn’t part of what we like to do — so why are [the guests on Westworld] paying money to exercise that appetite?”

The same can be asked about our own television and movie programs. If we find it so disgusting and degrading to see these things in our true reality, why do we tolerate them in our stories? Why do we pay extra money to afford premium cable networks like HBO and Starz, two of the primary culprits of this new trend in violent and sexy TV? By making the hosts the victims and crafting the show in a way that makes the audience sympathize with them, “Westworld” is asking the viewers to ask themselves, why do they enjoy watching this? Why do we keep coming back to the same violence, the same sex? What does it say about us as a society?

Westworld asks its audience by positioning them as the guests — to examine why they love these types of scenes so much.

I don’t have an answer to this question, and neither does “Westworld.” Lee Sizemore, the park’s Narrative Director, and Charlotte Hale, Executive Director of the Delos Destinations Board, seem to believe that people love these types of stories for the sake of the violence and sex. “Most of the guests just want a warm body to shoot to or f***,” Hale tells the Man in Black. People are just looking for an escape, a place where they can pay for thrills. And there is a lot of evidence for this argument. Just look at the ratings for “Game of Thrones” or the top box office champions. Even “Westworld” offers some guidance, with the ratings for the much more tame season two falling from the high season one numbers.

Robert Ford, the co-founder of the park, falls on the other side of the argument. He believes that people want more than cheap thrills and tricks. The viewers/guests may come for the violence and sex, but they stay for something deeper. They want meaning and understanding. “They [the guests] are not looking for a story that tells them what they are,” he tells Lee after rejecting the director’s latest narrative project. “They already know what they are. They are here because they want a glimpse of who they could be.”

The only real proof for Ford’s argument comes from the Man in Black. He serves as a symbol for the viewer that looks for something more from their entertainment other than the basic plot. Someone who seeks the symbolism, themes, philosophies and lessons that a show or movie can provide.

He ignores the unnecessary violence and sex that the park offers. Instead, he searches for, in his own words, “something the person who created [the park] wanted to express. Something true.” Yet, even though he does spend most of his time searching for this purpose, he still indulges himself in the spectacle that the park provides every now and then, going so far as to help Dolores for no apparent reason in the pilot.

We may never get an answer to this question, and it definitely won’t come from an amateur critic such as myself. But it is still important to ask these questions and determine what these scenes and stories do for us as individuals and a society. You may fault “Westworld” for engaging in the behavior that they seem to criticize. You may call them, me, hypocrites. But at least they understand what goes on around them. At least they ask the question.

VOTE FOR ME, continued from Page 15

amendments to limit First Amendment rights,” Republicans believe that freedom of religion supersedes rights not protected by the Constitution. Democrats want to re-define the words of the Constitution which would take away from the original right to freedom of religion. This case is an example that shows we need justices who will protect your religious freedoms. Today’s Democrats will nominate justices who would “legislate” rights over religious liberties.

After the ruling, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) released a statement further proving my points, “No business or organization open to the public should hide their discriminatory practices behind the guise of religious liberty...Democrats will never stop fighting for every American’s right to full equality over priority of religious liberties.” The Washington Post explained that about a month before this Supreme Court ruling, Democratic senators introduced a bill to amend (and upend) the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to mean that legislated civil rights take precedence over constitutional guarantees of religious freedom.

“While our country was founded on the principle of religious freedom, it is an abomination that we are seeing attacks like this in the 21st century,” Pelosi said. “As we celebrate Independence Day, we must remember that the Constitution is not just a piece of paper on a wall, but a living document that guarantees the freedom to practice one’s religion in peace.”

Democrats will nominate justices who would be beholden to the left-wing wilderness. Republicans will nominate justices who will uphold the Constitution and defend religious liberty.

Today’s Democrats will nominate justices who will “legislate” rights into and out of the Constitution based on their personal, political beliefs.

For all those who think that it doesn’t matter so much who wins office this election, think again. Remember, the Democratic Party is committed to upholding your religious freedom. Who wins is up to you. It is important to vote Republican so that the pro-First Amendment right to religious freedom is protected.

“Vote for me.”

No, actually just vote for you. Vote Republican.
"2001: A Space Odyssey:"
Cinema’s Greatest Fear Lives on 50 Years Later

By Zack Rynhold

2001 falls into the absorbing category of film that prompts headaches and weariness from over-stimulation. Stanley Kubrick’s 1968 film boasts the most iconic match-cut in cinema history, a memorable soundtrack, innovative special effects for its day, the origin of modern-day technologies such as Siri and Alexa and, perhaps most prominently, a percipient rumination on the philosophical underpinnings of human life. Although some people deem it slow by today’s standards, many would classify it timeless due to its masterful combination of aesthetic beauty and sophistication, along with its thought-provoking nature. Hence, critics still speak of 2001 as one of, if not the, greatest films ever created, whose influence continues to pervade modern cinema. Thus, upon its 50th-anniversary re-release in cinemas worldwide this summer, it seems appropriate to revisit this landmark film and its legacy.

Kubrick’s film consists of four segments: The Dawn of Man, the untitled Moon sequence, The Jupiter Mission, and Beyond the Infinite. Although the plot focuses on a mission to investigate a mysterious extraterrestrial object sending signals across the solar system, the film’s subtle regard for humanity’s progress has dominated much of its critical reception. Charting out technological milestones at various moments in human development, the film identifies the origins, advantages and consequences of our evolution. Such messages have grown increasingly relevant in the constantly changing world of the 21st century.

A substantial portion of the film deals with humanity’s adaptation of technology, the advancement of which currently preoccupies society as an essential component of our existence. 2001 portrays this relationship with our devices through a dialectic lens, examining the codependency that has formed between people and their tools, and the simultaneous benefits and dangers this poses. In the Dawn of Man sequence, we witness the discovery of tools, as an ape realizes the powerful capabilities of bone. The climactic notes of Richard Strauss’ “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” accompany this scene, conveying the significance of this moment in history. This infamous, reusing piece of music marks the triumph of this first step in human progress. However, the apes quickly transition from using their newfound tools for nutrition to using them as murder weapons against a rival tribe. The ape and the bone require each other’s strength to produce this impact, an impact that can produce both resourceful and destructive results.

Kubrick illustrates the fulfillment of such potential in the film’s next transition. He uses a match-cut to jump millions of years into the future, cutting from a victorious chimpanzee launching a bone into the air to a vessel in space. By replacing this simple tool with a similarly shaped, yet more advanced one, Kubrick displays the hurtling speed of human and technological advancement which has facilitated humanity’s conquest of space. Despite the impressive spacecraft dotted above Earth, Kubrick sublty points out that humanity does not possess full control of its tools. In the lunar journey sequence, as Dr. Heywood Floyd (William Silvester) travels to the moon, a flight attendant attempts to relinquish a pen that has flown from his pocket. The pen floats in the foreground of the shot, while the flight attendant gingerly steps towards the pen in the background. Suspended in midair, the pen mirrors the bone and the spaceship but suggests that humanity has started to lose control of its tools. Meanwhile, humanity must now retrace its steps, learning how to function again like children. People are learning how to walk without gravity, they eat softened food through straws and must even learn how to use a toilet as Floyd scans instructions for the zero-gravity facilities. Thus, this sequence not only portrays the glamor of space travel, but indicates that the fruits of progress could knock humanity back down to earth.

The Jupiter Mission segment encapsulates this theme of humanity’s precarious relationship with its tools. Here, the viewer finally meets the film’s main protagonist, Dave Bowman (Keir Dullea), and antagonist, HAL, a sentient computer voiced by Douglas Rain. HAL, mostly shown as a camera lens, oversees all functions of the Discovery One spacecraft, shares conversations with the crew members and even plays chess with Dave. HAL’s soothing voice and heightened ence and emotion. HAL, on the other hand, acts in distinctly human fashion as he goes to lengths to secure his survival. HAL’s singing of the nursery rhyme “Daisy” ironically serves as the most moving scene of the film.

Kubrick promotes HAL’s growing consciousness through his contrast of characters. Upon its initial release, critics of 2001 complained that the only relatable, intriguing character that the film provided was HAL, a computer. But such critics missed a crucial point in casting this observation in a negative light. Perhaps Kubrick intentionally filled HAL with personality and drained any such charisma from the other characters, thereby emphasizing how our tools have outgrown and replaced us as human beings. This frightening concept aludes to Kubrick’s critical view of human evolution in response to technological progress.

Kubrick’s apparent, bleak outlook regarding human technological achievement highlights how our own arrogance can overcome and dehumanize us. Kubrick’s apparent bleak outlook regarding human technological achievement highlights how our own arrogance can overcome and dehumanize us. Kubrick’s apparent bleak outlook regarding human technological achievement highlights how our own arrogance can overcome and dehumanize us. Kubrick’s apparent bleak outlook regarding human technological achievement highlights how our own arrogance can overcome and dehumanize us. Kubrick’s apparent bleak outlook regarding human technological achievement highlights how our own arrogance can overcome and dehumanize us. Kubrick’s apparent bleak outlook regarding human technological achievement highlights how our own arrogance can overcome and dehumanize us.

HAL, a sentient computer and the film’s antagonist.

Kubrick establishes a new hierarchy in this scene. Appearing until his death, implying that HAL is quite literally livelier than most of the crew. We find the remaining crew members, Dave and Frank, enjoying microwave dinners while mentally preparing for the mission. Their arm echoes that of the apes in their earlier interaction. Dave surpasses his fellow-modical ability would serve as inspiration for the likes of Alex and Siri. After HAL appears to mistakenly predict a satellite failure, Dave and Frank Poole (Gary Lockwood) decide they must disconnect HAL to ensure that no additional errors jeopardize their mission. HAL discovers the plan, so he kills all the crew members but Dave, who disconnects him before he can cause any further damage. Although Dave eliminates this threat, the plot underlines the harm that our own technology poses to humanity as a tool that can potentially outsmart and outlive us. Kubrick usually points out that the apes exhibit curiosity, the modern-day humans have taken their gift of inquiry for granted because of their lofty position atop the mountain of progress.

Dave’s confrontation with the monolith, however, reflects a more optimistic view of the state of humanity. Laying on his deathbed, Dave slowly points towards the monolith as it appears before him; his outstretched arm echoes that of the apes in their earlier interaction. Dave surpasses his fellow-mod...
Welcome to the Hedge Fund Profile Series

By Aaron Kareish

As a summer analyst at a hedge fund in New York City, I developed a particular interest and familiarity in the industry—the movers and shakers, the firms that make headlines (for better or for worse). So, I welcome you to a new series dedicated solely to hedge funds. In this column, I will focus on both the industry as a whole, and on certain firms—aiming to provide you with a comprehensive understanding of how hedge funds function, who the major players are, and, most importantly, what they actually do.

In this column, I will focus on both the industry as a whole, and on certain firms—aiming to provide you with a comprehensive understanding of how hedge funds function, who the major players are, and, most importantly, what they actually do.

Seeing as we just got back to school, I won’t inundate you with information...yet; for now, here is a quick rundown.

In its most basic form, a hedge fund is an investment vehicle for wealthy individuals and institutional investors—people and organizations that have the capital to invest, but not the know-how to do so on their own. Though often described by journalists as secretive and unregulated, that is not actually the case, at least not anymore. Gone are the days where hedge funds governed themselves, if they ever did at all. Now, depending on the size of the fund, they are regulated heavily by the SEC, even with today’s business-friendly government in power.

For those who recall, the last article I wrote for The Commentator was about the hit Showtime TV show “Billions,” and how it compares to the real hedge fund world, particularly Steven Cohen’s Point72. As such, the first official “Hedge Fund Profiles” column will be a deep dive into the storied world of S.A.C. Capital—Point72. I promise, it reads more like a novel than a research report, and I’m sure you’ll enjoy it.

Thank you for coming along with me on this journey through the murky waters of the hedge fund industry.

Let’s Talk Business

By Akiva Frishman

The fall semester is finally upon us and with it enters a return of the highly anticipated barrage of ystuds/studs advertising the many extracurricular activities offered here at YU. And though you’ve no doubt meticulously combed through each email, weighing its subject line’s cleverness, the author’s choice of font and exclamation count, and whether or not membership includes pizza, you may still be at a loss as to what you should involve yourself with on campus.

Don’t fret. Allow me to make a sale. Like any “Shark Tank” aficionado knows, I’ll need to begin with the flashy, eye-catching, dude-hand-me-my-wallet, perks of writing for the Business section. As such, I’m required to mention the prestige to which an employer grants a candidate with “Newspaper Writer” emblazoned on his resume. I have to stress how a public forum like that of The Commentator’s serves as a most effective motivator for developing clear, articulate, and expressive writing. I can’t shy away from the fact that high-level executives are often made aware of a writer’s article and decide to reach out to her for further discussion.

And to be quite honest, these factors alone would provide more than sufficient reason to join our section; today’s competitive job market, an impressive resume and noteworthy connections are just as important as a student’s GPA.

But the true value of anything can rarely be evaluated solely on its tangible, observable qualities and rather depends on a more comprehensive metric that considers all of the entity’s many subtleties and abstract qualities. In this case, simply summing-up my pitch with “Writing for The Commentator gives you a good shot a landing a job” would grossly devalue the position’s true worth. Instead, I’d like to go a little in-depth and showcase some of the less-obvious yet perhaps more valuable aspects of writing for the Business section.

The economy is a complex, all-encompassing, multifaceted world and as a writer, you’ll have the opportunity to explore it. You can investigate our politicians’ tax plans, fiscal policies, and stances on minimum wage and then weigh their respective merits. You can sift through the mass of pundits’ commentary and talk-show banter and determine whose opinion most closely aligns with objective facts and statistics. You can speculate as to how turmoil in the Middle East, the rise of Amazon or negotiations with North Korea can affect the price of pretzels at Nagel. You can sit down with entrepreneurs and executives and uncover the strategies and decisions that made them so successful.

Your travels into the business need not be so far from home. Plenty of YU alumni hold respectable positions in companies like J.P. Morgan and EY and are eager to meet with writers and give advice to current students. If you’re frustrated by YU’s CAF Card policies, perhaps you’ll decide to research the New York State tax code and figure out how it affects your choice of dinner. Based on your level of ambition, you might even take a look at our university’s finances and propose a strategy to trim excess spending or secure stronger investments.

Following your expeditions, you’ll consolidate your findings into an article, presenting them to your peers, faculty members and just about anyone with access to the internet. Such a process will naturally require you to become very familiar with your topic and therefore ensure that you’re a more informed, educated individual.

A well-respected publication for over 80 years, The Commentator is a staple of the premier discussion forum for a broad range of issues. Its articles from decades past still occupy a space in the library on Wilf Campus, ensuring a historical record of YU. In other words, your submissions are not merely a short-lived string of a few hundred words, but rather a timeless contribution to a reputable newspaper.

Whether you’re an engineering student captivated by FinTech, a Biology major looking to bring down the cost of medicine, or an Accounting fanatic captivated by companies’ financial statements, this section and its readers are eager to see your perspective.

The Business section offers the opportunity of exploring the multifaceted world of the the economy.
NEVER. STOP. COMMENTATING.

Got something to share?
Email benjamin.koslowe@mail.yu.edu