

# THE BASH

Bnei Akiva Schools Headlines

## From the Desks of the Editors

Layla Frischman  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

If you're reading this, it must mean that the first ever issue of the Bnei Akiva Schools newspaper was completed and published.

At the end of last year, I remember having broad discussions about a potential newspaper. Seeing the process of those discussions transform from being theoretical to concrete has been quite gratifying.

The BASH team is truly making history by creating the platform for future students to have an outlet where they can express their opinions and ideas, develop their critical thinking abilities, and expand their writing skills. This year's newspaper team is particularly fortunate to have the opportunity to configure the newspaper however they wish. Truly, the best way to describe our creation process is, simply put, collaborative.

At our very first meeting, students from both Or Chaim and Ulpana, in grades nine through twelve shared their ideas in an open environment which can be attributed to the broad-minded attitudes of both Mr. Saltsman and Mr. Rapp. I am greatly appreciative to be a part of this team, and of my opportunity to contribute to this student newspaper. Formulating ideas articulately, understanding controversial topics, and creating work that one is proud to attach their name to, are fundamentally important skills I believe every student should possess before leaving high school.

I hope the BASH will contribute to the development of the skills of its participants, engage its readers, and maybe even stir the pot a bit. Thank you to everyone involved!

Eitan Markus

## New Tuition Structure at Bnei Akiva Schools

Avery Hoffer EDITOR

Over the past six months there has been a lot of controversy about tuition at both Or Chaim and Ulpana, because of the events that have transpired at CHAR. For those who are unaware of what happened, CHAR closed down, which consequently allowed CHAT to lower their tuition from \$28,500 to \$18,500. Following this, many people thought that the administration at Bnei Akiva Schools would do something to combat CHAT's tuition cut in an attempt to draw in any indecisive students or parents.

I sat down for an interview with Rabbi Grauer to gain some insight on this issue. I was surprised with how open he was about all of the numbers when it

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Hello all, and welcome to our inaugural issue of the Bnei Akiva Schools Headlines, or The BASH for short. As an introduction to The BASH, I would like to give everyone an insight into how this paper came to be.

In early September, I heard that Mr. Eric Saltsman and Mr. Hillel Rapp had an idea to create a student-run newspaper. After expressing my interest, I was honoured yet flabbergasted when, a few days later, I was approached by Mr. Saltsman to be an Editor in Chief.

Within the month, we had compiled an editorial staff, a list of staff writers and we held our first meeting. Ever since the meeting, we hit the ground running. I, along with my Co-Editor in Chief Layla Frischman, assigned all the articles we needed

to our wonderful staff writers and from there we were set.

A couple of months later, our all-star group of writers and editorial staff have whipped up a fantastic set of thought-provoking and informative articles we are very proud of. We cover topics ranging from school matters like the Knights and the UO Skirt Conundrum to outside news like the ever-controversial Donald Trump and the French Organ Donor Debacle. No subject is too outlandish or taboo for our fearless staff to cover.

For all involved, The BASH is a labour of love that we are excited to share. I truly hope that everyone enjoys the work we have put in and I am so excited to work on future editions. Here's hoping they exceed expectations, just as this one does.

Without further ado, please enjoy!

came to tuition. While CHAT chose to lower their tuition substantially, the administration at Bnei Akiva Schools took a different approach. Bnei Akiva Schools continued with the policy of prior years and add a relatively small increase from last years \$24,200 to \$24,700. This may seem surprising considering the actions taken by CHAT, but Rabbi Grauer explained that even though there was no full tuition price drop, there were other actions being taken to ensure that there were different types of tuitions to suit everyone's needs. For instance, there is a new category of financial assistance being offered this year called an Unconditional Subsidy, which is the ability for a family to pay less than the full tuition.

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What this means is that any household can choose how much they would like to pay between \$20,000 and the full cost \$24,700. This new type of subsidy is due to the fact that there are families who have the capability to afford the full tuition; however the extra income may make an important difference in their quality of life. The Unconditional Subsidy ensures that parents who need are able to pay a little less and keep some extra money for themselves. Rabbi Grauer explained that in addition to new subsidy, regular tuition subsidies remain in place and continue to be based on each family's financial needs. This amount can range anywhere from \$5,000 up to \$20,000. In order to receive this type of subsidy, one must send in a tax return along with a many other documents allowing Bnei Akiva Schools, in conjunction with other Jewish schools that a family attends, to make a decision on how much a family will be asked to pay each year.

The numbers of tuition break down as follows: 18% of families in the school opted for the Unconditional Subsidy that the school introduced this year, while 27% of people payed the full \$24,700. The remaining 55% are on already existing subsidies provided by the school which total around \$2,200,000 this year.

According to the Canadian Revenue Agency, in 2016, the school had a budget of approximately \$6.5 million. This sum is partially from the tuition, and the rest is received from private donations, in which last year alone the schools raised over \$2,000,000 which was needed in order to offset the \$2,200,000 in subsidy that they gave.

With such a hefty price tag on tuition one might wonder how that money being spent. About 80-85% of the money combined from tuition and donations goes towards the salaries of employees in the school. Another 10% of the funds goes toward most things that we use in the buildings, for example, the electricity, water, heat and building maintenance. This would apply to situations where someone breaks a ceiling, or maybe a table during a tisch. And finally, the last 5-10% of the funds goes towards everything else that one would see or use in the school on a day-to-day basis. For instance, all the non-donated judaic books such as the Gemaras and Chumashim that we have in all of the libraries. Aside from that, other items that would fall into the 5-10%

category are: Computers, Wi-Fi, all educational supplies and special programs such as all the food at tisches, special breakfasts and matmidim/matmidot. In summary, of the total \$6.5 millions, about \$5.5 million covers salaries with the remaining \$1 million going to all other costs.

Although the price of tuition did rise over the past summer, many signs point to this plan working, as both Or Chaim and Ulpana have the largest freshman class in recent history, as well as a record number of students throughout all grades. Rabbi Grauer indicated that the school would likely be raising the tuition by the same 2% again next year while making an effort to keep the Unconditional Subsidy in place. With costs expected to rise in line with the increase it remains to be seen if the school will need to raise more money to cover the increasing needs of member families.

### **No More Skirting Around Uniform Skirts Have Unexpected Benefits for Ulpana Students**

Rivka Werner and  
Marya Nurgitz  
EDITORS

On May 12, 2017, the students of Ulpanat Orot seemed startled with the announcement that uniform skirts would be implemented the following school year. Although the announcement was initially met with widespread agitation and even the start of a petition against the new uniform, there are many students and faculty who now believe that this initiative has benefits which have been largely overlooked.

It was well-known in Ulpana that the 'skirting' policy was not proving to be an effective means of maintaining the Halachic and dress-code standards inherent in the school's values. Students dreaded being called to the office for fear that they were about to be 'skirted,' the phenomenon whereby students wearing skirts deemed not within the dress code were ordered to change into school-approved skirts kept in the school office. Once a rare occurrence, 'skirting' became more and more rampant as the 2016-2017 school year went on. Uniforms, therefore, should have come as no surprise, for they were the obvious solution to both problems associated with skirting: the embarrassment of

the 'skirtee' being called publicly to the office and then having to go through the school day wearing the easily identifiable 'skirting skirts', as well as the overall ineffectiveness of the skirting policy on student compliance to the dress code.

To get a real sense of matters on the ground (or in the halls,) The BASH sent a reporter to gauge the reactions of students and faculty alike to this new mode of garb. Here are what our interviewees had to say (these students chose to remain anonymous-- perhaps out of fear of a negative backlash):

*"I don't have to think about which skirt to put on in the morning so it's one less thing to think about."*

*"It's a valid attempt at trying to correct the problem at hand... I understand why it was instituted."*

*"Now, when I cross the hall from the locker room past Mrs. Weinberg's office, I don't get that overwhelming rush of anxiety anymore. I feel so liberated!"*

Dr. Levy also weighed in, maintaining, *"As a student of Ulpanat Orot, you are expected to uphold the principles, values and overall hashkafot of the school. There are lines that should not be crossed, no matter what others happen to put out into the world. Stay true to your own principles."*

When we reached Mrs. Munk, Ulpana's Assistant Principal, for her reaction to the skirt controversy, she gave us an inside perspective on what she has been dealing with for the past several months. She stated the school's reasoning behind implementing the uniform skirts as follows:

*"'Skirts' may be the most uttered word over the last several months. While it is no secret that the new UO skirts initiative has been met with mixed reactions, I believe that overall it has been worthwhile and successful. The concept of modesty is one that is important to Ulpana as an institution and to me as an individual. To me it means more than just inches and technical guidelines. Modesty is a lifestyle, a value system meant to promote the ideals of self-respect and self-pride. The goal of the Ulpana skirts has nothing to do with conformity; it has everything to do with modesty. The world we live in makes it incredibly difficult to live a modest lifestyle. It is for this reason that we were driven to create a multitude of options for students to*

*choose from, remaining sensitive to cost, body type, and personal taste. I am thankful to all the students who brought forth ideas, and challenged us each step of the way. While some of the logistics and technicalities in the buying process have been more complicated than we had wished, I am proud to say that we offer skirts that girls are not embarrassed to wear in public. I am proud to say that as a school, we are doing something in terms of dress code that has never been done before. I am proud to say that we are trying to teach our students about the importance of modesty, one small step at a time."*

Uniform skirts are also an easy way to reduce morning hassle and to increase time to sleep by making the process of choosing one's clothes in the morning easy and efficient. On a religious level, uniform skirts have brought a new level of *achdut* (the unity that Judaism believes is vital to bring the ultimate salvation of mankind) into the school by banding students together in a fight for justice and freedom of expression, uniting the school both in the uniformity of students' clothing and in their rigid opposition to it. Do uniform skirts really remove freedom of expression? Nay! On the contrary, they force their wearers to express individuality in more creative ways than just their clothes.

It is vital to point out, though, that the uniform skirts didn't come without a price tag. Perhaps they are worth it if they might actually help students become less clothes-minded.

### **Opening the Door to Future Successes Open House at YOC**

Eitan Markus EDITOR

On November 5th, 2017, Or Chaim hosted an Open House for prospective students. In the eyes of Mrs. Kagan, it was a very successful morning. I am inclined to agree with her wholeheartedly.

As I was asked to be a student representative at the event, I got a firsthand look at YOC operating at peak capacity as a PR machine. Every teacher was in attendance (and wearing spiffy suits at that) and the student representatives were on point the whole morning.

We greeted the parents and prospective students at the door with smiles and directed them to the

Beit Midrash for the first part of the morning. Cookie platters and coffee were available while parents signed in and schmoozed. As student reps from the younger grades helped set up the next parts of the morning, grade twelve student Jacob Fine eloquently addressed parents.

After the introduction, there were model lessons given from our talented staff to parents and Grade 8 students alike. The lessons showed the parents and children how wonderful our teachers are and the



amazing classes that happen at YOC. The parents then went to a Q and A panel with the administrative staff and grade twelve student Jory Dayan, while the grade eight students had their own Q and A sessions with various teachers, student representatives and a lot of snacks.

Finally, after an enlightening school tour, it was time for a BBQ lunch and the end of the open house. When I asked Mrs. Kagan on her thoughts on the morning, she was very enthusiastic. From her perspective, the morning ran very smoothly. We had a very large turnout and (in my opinion) most importantly, student reps were fantastic. She said parents were very impressed with what they saw and it gave them an opportunity to see what their boys could become.

Nice weather, great student reps, phenomenal teachers, tons of food and happy parents. When talking about an open house, what more could a school ask for?

## Ulpana Open House

**Potential Future Students Experience UO**

Hannah Lipson

The Ulpana Open House this year was a great success. Over fifty

prospective grade 8 students attended, as well as their parents.

Everyone's hard work showed throughout the day. We heard from Rabbi Grauer, an alumnus, and Hadas Moyal- student representative. The promotional video, made by Mrs. Kestenbaum, showcased the different aspects of the school including extracurriculars, engaging classes and building relationships. It was a big hit and undoubtedly wowed the group of potential future Freshies.

Our guests then got to tour the halls - which were filled wall to wall with posters galore. This, of course, reflected the wide variety of opportunities our school has to offer. The students got to sit in on mock classes, getting a taste of what being a student here is 'really like' (if we upgraded the uniforms to include 'I♥ UO' shirts) and our teachers never stopped smiling.

Being asked to attend the open house this year was a great experience because I was able to talk to the interested girls about my high school accomplishments and why I think Ulpana is truly the best place to attend high school.

A very big thank you is owed to Mrs. Fixler for putting it all together. It was a classy showing from a place that certainly is "So Much More than just a School".

## New "Kids" in the Hall Shalichim at Or Chaim

Eliav Saban

### Uri Wolfson: Young Shaliach

Meet Uri Wolfson, a 25-year-old shaliach from a village called Merkaz Shapirah. Born and raised in

Uruguay, Uri made aliyah when he was seven years old. After serving in Tzahal for two years, Uri decided to attend university, where he heard of the shlichut opportunity. In university, Uri heard about a program in which he would travel to Canada for six months and become a student teacher there. After he decided to come to Toronto, there were many formalities and meetings that needed to take place in order to finalize the plans. After a multitude of interviews with Rav Aviad Pituchey-Chotam, telephone calls between Yeshivat Or Chaim and Uri's school in Israel were exchanged, and half a year later, he was finally accepted as a shaliach. Uri is very happy to be here in Toronto, where he can further his studies while also traveling the world and learning about new Jewish communities.

### Aviad Don: Young Shaliach

Meet Aviad Don, a 23-year-old shaliach from גוש עציון in אילון שבות. Aviad was born in Israel. Aviad served in the army for five years through a program in his yeshiva, Yeshivat Hesder. He has now completed his years in yeshiva and has striven for his goal of getting a teaching degree. Aviad has decided to come as a shaliach not only to gain experience for a teaching degree, but because his parents were also shlichim in Toronto. When Aviad was three years old, his family was sent to Toronto as shlichim and he attended Netivot Hatorah Day School for four years.

Aviad has come to Toronto not only to learn to teach but also to learn how to interact with students. He does this by teaching classes, side groups, and chavrutot, as well as by playing basketball with the students at Or Chaim. About a year and a half ago, Aviad saw an advertisement for the shlichut program. He wasn't ready for it at the time, but he

always kept it in the back of his mind. After talking to a variety of people, even a former shaliach to Or Chaim, Akiva, Aviad decided to sign up for the program. Aviad sent an email to Rav Pituchey-Chotam at Or Chaim and was accepted by the next week. Aviad is here to hang out with the Or Chaim students and to not only teach them, but to learn from each of them as well.



### Avichai & Emanuelle Geldzahler: Shlichim Couple

Avichai and Emanuelle Geldzahler came from Jerusalem, Israel, to serve as shlichim at Bnei Akiva Schools. Avichai was born and raised in Raanana, while his wife, Emanuelle, was born and raised in Katamon in Jerusalem. Since their marriage they have wanted to become shlichim to a foreign country, leading them to network with people in other cities doing shlichut. After a short process, the couple ended up fulfilling their wish and coming to Toronto as shlichim. When choosing which city to travel to on shlichut, they decided that they wanted a large Orthodox community. When they arrived in Toronto their jaws dropped. The city's vibrant Religious Zionist community made the Geldzahlers immediately feel at home.



## **A Book Club For All Ages Grade 9s and 11s (and parents) gather for in-school Literacy Night**

Eitan Markus EDITOR

One of the things I love about BAS is the great number of activities and programs available, both during and after school hours. From fun clubs to Matmidim/Matmidot, Bnei Akiva Schools has a way of offering something interesting to every kind of student. One such activity occurred on September 25th, 2017, known as "Literary Night".

Two years ago, at YOC, in my grade 9 year, I was involved in a book talk; also known as Literary Night. A book talk is when all the students from a grade are divided up according to which book they read for their summer reading assignments, and are put into groups in which they discuss said books. As an additional, important note, parents are not only welcome but encouraged to come to Literary Night, regardless of whether or not they have read the books. The evening offers a chance for learning, discussion and a place where no idea can be too farfetched.

Literary Night is an ancient tradition in Or Chaim that continues every year, usually only run for the Grade Nine class. This year, however, the administration decided to give Grade Eleven students the opportunity to have a book talk, as well.

Taking part in said book talk, I thoroughly enjoyed my experience. The scintillating conversation was led masterfully by our resident teacher who guided our discussion with thought-provoking questions and insightful comments. I was able to share my thoughts in a judgement-free environment and look at the novel from other points of view.

It was also a lovely experience for parents. My mother accompanied me for the night, as she had read the same book as I and it was a great experience for us to bond in an unusual setting. Literary Night also, for one day at least, disqualifies the ever-present question of, "What did you do at school today?" My mom already knows what I did at school, because she was there experiencing it with me.

The only thing that did not live up to expectations was the food, as I felt that one small cookie platter for every room was not nearly enough. The YOC boys are so ravenous that I

think pizza would have been a much better choice. Mrs. Kagan, if you are reading this, perhaps something to consider for next year...

Insufficient confectionaries aside, the 2017 Literary Night was a fitting end to our summer reading block in English class and an overall delightful experience.

## **The Importance of "I" in "WE" BAS Students Attend WE Day Festivities**

Eliav Saban

On September 28, 2017, thousands of changemakers packed the Air Canada Centre for an unparalleled event. World renowned speakers, a list of performers, and tens of thousands of youth celebrated a year of action that transformed communities and changed lives. Students from both schools, Ulpana and Or Chaim, attended the event. These lucky students who went were able to see what the WE is really all about.

WE is a movement that believes when we come together we can create an even better world. WE believes in giving of ourselves to help raise a compassionate future generation that looks for any opportunity to make a difference. WE makes it easy for you to get involved whether at home, school or work by offering resources to help you create positive social change in your community and around the world. Why? Simply put: to make the world a better place.

The following students attended We Day. From Or Chaim: Eliav Saban, Yisrael Price, Yehuda Zahavi, Yoni Bean, Yakir Magence, and Eitan Markus. From Ulpana: Yakira Gasner, Batel Suissa, Leora Benmergui, Mikayla Daniel, Erin Keslassy, Hadar Wercberger, Marya Nurgitz, Zhava Fortinsky, and Shira Mammon. These



students learned the importance of WE, the needs of WE, and the love for WE.

We hope that we will be able to continue make a difference in WE both in the short and long term. It is our hope that the students in the BAS community will be working with WE for many years to come to make WE what it is supposed to be.

## **Faith, Trust, Pixie Dust... and a lot of Hard Work Former Disney Animator Speaks to Bnei Akiva Schools Students**

Temima Tova Gerstl EDITOR

On Friday, October 27, students from Or Chaim and Ulpanat Orot gathered in the Ulpana beit midrash to hear from Orthodox film and TV director, and former Disney animator Saul Blinkoff. Blinkoff had flown in from his home in Los Angeles to share his inspiring story with Toronto's Jewish community. Blinkoff's credits as an animator include working as an animator on *Pocahontas* (1995), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), *Mulan* (1998), and *Tarzan* (1999). Blinkoff has directorial credits for *Winnie the Pooh: Springtime with Roo* (2004), *Kronk's New Groove* (2005), and the hit Disney TV show *Doc McStuffins* (2012 - Present), among other things. The director shared his life story with an energy and straightforwardness that kept his audience enthralled throughout, focusing on both his professional journey to the top of his field, as well as his spiritual reawakening to Judaism.

In the first segment of his speech, Blinkoff focused on his beginnings, detailing his passion for both movie-making and drawing as a child, and describing the twists and turns that eventually brought him to be studying animation at the prestigious Columbus College of Art and Design. While attending the program,

Blinkoff received a highly-competitive Disney internship, which laid the groundwork for a career in animation and eventually, film and TV direction. Blinkoff underscored to the students in the room the importance of never giving up on one's dreams, demonstrating through his own life story that with hard work, anything is within one's reach to accomplish.

Blinkoff then went on to share his inspiring return to Judaism, and how he now balances his family and religious life with a career in TV and movie direction. He spoke about the importance of prioritizing his family--his wife Marion and four young children--over his work life, and making sure his children are not influenced by the Hollywood culture around them. Blinkoff highlighted the importance of making Torah the center of one's life, relating to his audience that he now only takes on projects that are in alignment with his religious principles.

Blinkoff's speech was met with warm applause. His audience of high school students felt inspired by the knowledge that it is within the capability of each person to balance one's dream career with a Torah-observant lifestyle, and that dreams really do come true--with hard work and perseverance.

## **A Fresh Point of View The Ulpana Experience as a Freshman**

Leeba Woodrow

Walking into Ulpana, I was greeted with many new faces. To be honest, at first, I was a bit overwhelmed. Soon, however, the sea of faces transformed into individual droplets that I was able to befriend and appreciate as unique individuals. I think that my journey from middle school to high school is not a one-dimensional change. Rather, it is a coming of age; an evolution from one stage of life to the next.

I will illustrate my point with the metaphor of how I learned to ride a bike.

When I was three years old, I started riding a tricycle. Riding on my own, without a seatbelt or a car seat, was quite an intense experience; which of course was fun and edgy for my three-year-old self. With the encouragement of my parents and the adults around me, I rode around all day.

At five years old, I got my first bike with training wheels. I felt so big! I thought I looked just like the big kids who rode around on their bikes, doing wheelies and riding down the street. With my training wheels there to support me, I was safe from falls as I swayed side to side. Eventually, I was confident enough to finally take the training wheels off and get a “real” bike.

Soon enough, I became a pro at riding my traditional bike. I was confident, ready for the next step: a three-speed bike! This bike was tall and yellow and had three speeds and hand brakes. At first, coordinating all the different functions, such as switching gears and braking, was a bit tricky. Once, I accidentally pressed the front brake and flipped over, scraping my knee. But I didn't care, I was on top of the world with my cool three speed bike.

This evolution is representative of my journey from nursery to middle school and, finally, to Ulpana. I am in high school, otherwise known as the ten-speed bike in my Jewish education. I'm ready to learn how to be the best rider I can possibly be, even though there might be bumps and scraped knees along the way. With support from my teachers, role-models, and interactions with the entire student body, I know I'm going to learn how to be the best rider I can be. I recognize that the choices I make may give me a couple bumps and bruises, however I am confident that my Ulpana support system will always help me get back onto my bike.

I am proud to be a freshman at Ulpana. These first few months have been great! I love the consistently positive atmosphere, I love the fun activities and people, and quite surprisingly, I even love the food!

There is a lot of work, more than I was used to coming from middle school, but it has been quite manageable (I think that might be because the school doesn't want to intimidate us). I also started learning completely new things; it was so eye-opening to learn Talmud for the first time! I know that challenge is coming and I am ready for it.

I look forward to spending more time with my new UO friends from all over the city. I am grateful for my Eitz Chaim experience, which was a large contributor to my strong Jewish foundation.

Looking ahead, I hope to grow here at Ulpana. It is a place where I look forward to developing and recognizing my true self. It is a place

where I know I have the resources and opportunities to point my life in the unique direction that I want it to go. By the time I leave Ulpana I may be covered in bandages and bruises, but I have no doubt that I will be ready for the Tour de France.

## **My First Impressions of Or Chaim**

### ***A Freshman Perspective of YOC***

Rafi Snowbell

After the first few months of the school year attending Yeshivat Or Chaim, I can say with certainty that I have been thoroughly pleased with my experience so far. At Or Chaim, all the teachers are good with the exception of a few who are *great*. All of my classes so far have been extremely engaging and thought provoking, without sacrificing the education and curriculum. Though I already knew a lot about YOC beforehand, in my time here so far I have been surprised over and over again by the kindness of the staff and the wonderful atmosphere. YOC has such a welcoming environment that I feel like I have already made strong connections with students from all grades and with many teachers.

One of the most exciting things I've experienced at YOC is the abundance of freedom I now have. I am still getting used to this novelty, but I feel that the relaxed environment outside of class will really benefit me through the next few years. If school were to carry on like this for the next four years I would be delighted but, alas, I know that over time the workload will only grow and I will encounter some rough patches in my high school journey. I am, however, ready and willing to deal with these problems if they shall arise, and I am excited about my four years to come at YOC.

## **Social Segregation**

### ***A Look into Trends at YOC***

Yosef Zeldman

Everybody in YOC has a smartphone. This is a known fact.

The students use their smartphones to call, text, use the internet, check social media and play games. Smartphones do have many benefits, such as the ability to stay in contact with people all around the world with the tap of a screen, or the ability

to preserve memories through the hundreds of constant photos.

That all being said, smartphones can be incredibly addictive; to the point where people become reliant on their smartphones and can barely function without them. Over the course of my three years attending YOC, I've witnessed phones being used in the hallways, during lunch, during davening, during classes (yes, it's true!), during guest speeches, and any other opportunity that arises wherein a student is within reach of his device. Being on your phone is becoming such a social normality that I believe the use of smartphones in YOC is not only excessive, but self-destructive.

The second the bell rings to signal the end of class, the most common activity I see is students reaching into their pockets and retrieving their smartphones, refreshing Instagram or replying to “Snaps” on Snapchat. Rather than engage in any sort of discussion with their peers outside of the classroom environment, many students would rather send a meaningless 10-second-selfie, as opposed to genuine human interaction. This is a problem that needs to be addressed. Social interaction is a human necessity that is slowly becoming less and less physical, as many people will turn to their smartphones rather than try to hold a conversation looking at one another eye to eye.

Studies have shown that people who spend more time on Facebook are far more depressed than people who spend less time on Facebook. When we begin to obsess over meaningless things like “likes” and “views”, we lose sight of what is truly important. Rather than stare at a screen that already occupies most of your time, why not build genuine relationships and trust through conversation and interaction? The people surrounding you are the people you're going to spend (at least) four years with. Further, High School is one of the most important places to form meaningful and long-lasting relationships. High School will be over before you know it, those four years will fly by and it is imperative that we try to take advantage of that time that we have here at Or Chaim rather than wasting it on various screens.

This issue of the overuse of smartphones is something I see not only all around me, but also within myself. I'm making steps and attempts to make my smartphone use the most limited it can possibly

be, but before I started actively trying to stop using my phone, I was quite the avid user.

Personally, I used to use snapchat almost every hour of the day. Whether it was watching snapchat stories, replying to snapchats, or refreshing the app constantly out of boredom, Snapchat was the most used application on my phone for a long while. Towards the end of 2016, I started to realize how pointless Snapchat was, understanding that the app was only a waste of time and takes away a lot of opportunities for genuine human interaction. It's just 10 second pictures with no purpose whatsoever, and I started to realize that I shouldn't be spending so much time in this digital space.

I soon realized that the problem wasn't just snapchat, it was my phone itself. I was using it far too much and it was getting in the way of real sociability. So, slowly but surely, I started to eliminate my phone use. It started with me leaving my phone at home during family events, then with me putting my phone away for the entirety of any dinners I attended, and then, finally, taking out my phone only when necessary when with friends.

I still feel that there's room for improvement, but I do believe that I've made significant steps towards a true limitation on my smartphone use, and I believe anybody who wants to limit their phone use absolutely has the ability to.

I want you to try an experiment to challenge yourself in a positive way. Generally, when you're in a car with nothing to do, turning on your smartphone is the most common activity. Rather than do this, try this alternative: look out the window. Notice the cars going by, the weather, the people on the sidewalk. Witness the real world. Instead of refreshing instagram for the umpteenth time, turn to the person next to you or behind you and engage them in a conversation. Conversations build trust, and trust builds connections that can and will become the most important relationships in your life. This is the



method I've used to limit my smartphone use, and I've gained so much more of an appreciation for the world around me once my smartphone was out of the picture. Try using this method, and I truly believe that, together, we can limit the use of smartphones in YOC and UO, and bring down the walls of segregation that smartphones have erected.

## Current Trends at Ulpana Three Popular Fads at UO

Orly Davidov

When the new school year begins, one thing that immediately pops up are the new trends. Whether it is the latest music, clothing, or daily student shenanigans, here are the top three things taking place in Ulpana at the moment:

The first most prevalent trend at Ulpana is tichels (headscarves). The staff and students in Ulpana couldn't be happier to welcome all the new (and previous) staff members who came from Israel. Their presence changes the school spiritually and physically with each of them having unique qualities. Although, it appears to be they all have one thing in common, and that is wearing a Tichel!

The next big fad at Ulpana is white sneakers. One thing you might notice about the students at Ulpana is not only the new uniform skirts, but the white sneakers that the majority of the girls are wearing. This trend is taking place in every grade, from Stan Smith's Adidas tennis shoe and Nike Air Max, you would most likely see at least 50% of the student body wearing them!

Lastly, but certainly not least, the accessory sported by almost all students: Starbucks drinks. Ulpana's location is nearby to some of the best stores like Metro, Sunrise, and more importantly, Starbucks. During

freshman claimed to have spent \$30 every week on Starbucks drinks!

With the school year less than halfway complete and the winter months still to come, who can say which trends will last and which new ones will spawn. For now, make sure to grab your tichel, suit up in white sneakers and make your way over to Starbucks in attempts to keep up with the ladies around you!

## Grade 11's Trip to SPiN Ping Pong Expedition

Malka Daniels

On October 31, Mrs. Kestenbaum announced that our grade 11 class would be going on a surprise trip on November 2nd in recognition of our efforts thus far in the school year. The school had seen how stressed my grade can get and, in hopes to give us a reason to be, happy they took us to SPiN; a place downtown with ping pong tables galore as well as a bar!

When we first arrived, some people got into the game, but that didn't last long. As we wandered around trying to get a good photo on the school's camera, or trying to convince Mrs. Kesty to let us play beer pong, with water of course, our boredom persisted. Not only did the bar not have any solo cups we could take, but no one in my class really likes ping pong anyways.

So, we had to improvise. We gathered in a circle and played concentration, then stood up and played the game with the frog on a log. Eventually no one was playing ping pong, we were getting odd looks from the bar tenders, but, we were all enjoying ourselves.

Ultimately, it was time to go. While waiting for our bus, we put our arms around one another and began to sing, ignoring the looks we were receiving from the people passing us on the sidewalk.

On our way back to school we stopped at 7/11 for slurpies and partied on the bus back to Ulpana. We burst into the school announcing the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration while parading down the hallways singing.

What started off as a field trip everyone was complaining about, ended up being an amazing bonding experience with my class

and an enjoyable day (whilst missing a few classes in the process).

## Sock It To Me! The Club That's Taken YOC By Storm

Yehoshua Bendayan

A gathering of men, of around thirty in number (and ever growing), congregate in the Small Beit Midrash every Friday at lunch time. A gathering of men lead by Mendy Kanofsky and Yochanan Goldstein, the Co-Founders of this gathering. A gathering of men who seem to have initiated one of the most successful and consistent gatherings. Gatherings of which there are many, yet few as successful and consistent as this particular gathering. What is it that these men do exactly, which results in the success and consistency of this gathering? They stare at each other's feet for 15 minutes. Yes, this gathering is known as Sock Club.

It seems Mendy Kanofsky and Yochanan Goldstein have struck gold on this club idea, which has even attracted teachers such as Dr. Levy to compete. The premise of Sock club is to have the members attend every Friday at lunch wearing socks that would be considered "above average" or "unique" in one way, shape or form. The group then spends some time admiring the swell socks that are on display.

Usually, each pair of socks is accompanied by a description, and an explanation as to the meaning that the pair of socks has to the wearer. The group will then commence their voting and crown the week's "Sock Club King". The founders have gone even so far as to purchase trophies for the winning party. Refreshments are almost always served at sock club, often even sponsored by members of the club themselves.

The club has its own Instagram page, where pictures of the winning socks are posted and can be admired by people who were not fortunate enough to be able to attend. The club also has its own bi-monthly newsletter sent out, which lists upcoming events taking place at the club, the past week's winners, and cool articles and facts about socks.

Truly one of the greatest gatherings to ever be called a club, sock club encourages you to attend and to see for yourself, just one of the many ways we have managed to find beauty in life.

## Senior Class' Interview Prep Grade 12 Participates in Interview Workshop

Adina Weitzner EDITOR

On October 25, the senior class at Ulpana had the opportunity to learn valuable interviewing skills through a presentation given by Ms. Shirley Bouskila, Employment Counsellor with JVS.

Bouskila went over how to properly prepare and dress for an interview, as well as how we should be answering questions. She also covered ideas such as sending follow up emails and making sure to always have references in on time. Following the interview presentation, there was a question and answer session, followed by a sign up for mock interviews with teachers.

It was greatly beneficial that each student got the opportunity to have a mock interview with a teacher because those teachers were able to critique us, as well as give positive feedback.

Going into University and Seminary interview season, the seniors can confidently say they feel prepared and ready.

Thank you to Ms. Bouskila for her presentation, Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. Munk for spearheading this initiative, and all the teachers who agreed to give us mock interviews.

## A Momentous Moment: Sephardic Hachnasat Sefer Torah Sephardic Torah Inauguration

Jacob Fine

The sense of camaraderie and exuberance positively catalyzed the unforgettable *Kiddush Hashem*.

We danced all morning; our energy quickly captivated the respectable members of the wider Jewish community.

Personally, the Sephardic Hachnasat Sefer Torah made me feel proud to be an Or Chaim student.

While several generous families funded some main components of the new shul, many students of Or Chaim briskly donated small sums of money to fulfill the mitzvah of *katavas Sefer Torah*.

We paraded the streets with the traditional chuppah while waving Israeli flags. What began as a humble affair, turned into an over the top



any break of ten minutes or more, students rush to Starbucks as soon as the bell rings. A few of the new

sanctification of *Torat Hashem*. Many parents, inspired by our *simcha l'avodas hashem*, hastily joined the festivity.

Clearly, the incredible energy generated by the *Simchas Hachnasat Sefer Torah* cements the foundation for an enthusiastic year. With great certainty, our school has the potential to amount to momentous moments, due to the underlying sense of *achdus* and *ruach*.

## Uniformly Frustrating *Ulpana's Uniform Skirts Just Not Working*

Rena Strauss

Students at Ulpana are at school for roughly 180 days per year. That is 180 days that we have to get dressed in the morning according to school dress code. I understand that as a Modern Orthodox Jewish school, there are restrictions on what we can wear to school and there is subsequent discipline to incur if students break the dress code. Before the administration had the idea of uniforms, the system put in place was simple; if a student came to school with a skirt too short, an administrator would give her a maxi skirt and the student was required to change.

When the idea did not work, the administration convened some students in small groups to get ideas of how to keep Ulpana's students in dress code. Many students recalled being told that the school was not interested in implementing uniforms.

A few months later, much to the dismay of many girls throughout the school, the announcement came that there will be a uniform policy for Ulpana students.

Aside from a "broken promise" that uniforms would not be implemented, the uniforms have caused many other subsidiary problems.

One major issue is the of price of the new uniform skirts. Without the uniforms, students could go to any store and buy a \$5 skirt, whereas now students are obligated to order skirts that only *start at* \$45. This is a concern, because, in addition to tuition fees and all other school expenses (shabbatons, lunches, trips, etc.), parents now must spend even more money on skirts. This seems like an unnecessary use of family funds.

In addition to the price, ordering the skirts has been a hassle for

students, parents, and administrators. There have been



issues with the businesses supplying



the skirts, and many people received the wrong skirts, skirts in the wrong sizes, or skirts with the school logo printed upside down. To add to the students' frustration with the supplier, one of the stores is located in New Jersey, making it very difficult to import the skirts and communicate with the supplier.

Yet another disadvantage of having a uniform is that it does not solve the problem it was created to eliminate. Students who do not wish to cooperate with the dress code can still find a way to disobey, simply ordering shorter skirts or wear the skirts pulled up high so that they appear to be short--the same thing they would do if they were wearing a regular, non-uniform skirt.

All in all, having a uniform is a good idea in theory, however, there are a few problems in the policy's execution. Overall, the uniform skirts just do not work due to cost, disorganization, and the way students can still violate the school dress code while wearing the skirts.

## Knights of the Round Table *Big Expectations for This Year's Knights*

Salomon. A. Friedlander

This 2017/18 season is filled with excitement for the YOC Knights Basketball teams.

We begin first by examining the Junior team, which is fortunate to be bringing back returning star guard and last year's leading scorer Yoni Bensousan, as well as fellow much-improved backcourt mates Yosef Ouanounou and Benji Froom. Bensousan, Ounounou and Froom will be joined in the backcourt with the likes of Meir Cohen, Ethan Leibowitz and Yoni Wapner - a strong group of savvy, quick guards.

On the wing, we have Sophomore forward Avi Ironi, as well as reigning Jewish League MVP, and brother of senior Knight's star Daniel Cohen, freshman Eitan Cohen. Both of whom

look poised for a season of success ahead.

Now, on to the "Big-Man" rotation. We have a combination of size and strength with returning Sophomores stretch-four David Haber and tenacious defender Yisrael Price. They are joined by Freshman Yoni Herman, whose brother Jacob played in last year's thrilling title game for the senior Knights squad, as well as returning starter Josh Perlmutar.

The team will once again be led by Coach and former Knight Avishai Gasner and will also be under the advisory of Mr. Skarrott.

When asked about his expectations for this year's team Yoni Bensousan responded: "I think this team is very good and we hope to surprise the fans". The fans are looking forward to an exciting season filled with success indeed.

The intensity of the practices is through the roof. When asked, Mr. Skarrott responded "Our practices are very spirited and a great learning environment". These Knights hope they can bring that energy from practice to the games.

Suffice it to say, this team is filled with talent and is looking to surprise not just YOC basketball fans but every incoming team looking to underestimate this young, energized group.

Now, as far as the Senior Knights squad goes, this year's team is coming off a spectacular season last year in which they came within a point of taking home the district championship, while also qualifying for the Sarachek tournament in New York. This year's team hopes to improve on last year's great season with several new faces joining the veterans.

This year's Knights bring back key senior contributors from last season such as Daniel Cohen, fresh off his summer representing Canada in the Maccabi games. This team also brings back fellow seniors William Ayayi, Avi Karakowsky, Aaron Ekstien, Jacob Fine, and Akiva Newman.

The team will also feature seniors Michael Dyer and Dver Zvi, who look to provide this team with the talent and leadership and help put them over the hump.

Now, as for the Juniors on the squad, we have top scorers from last year's JV team Sammy Balsam and Yakir Magence who look to bring their intensity and experience to the from previous years to this Senior team. Balsam and Magence are



joined by fellow Juniors Chaim Mamann and Mendy Kanofsky; a couple of scrappy big men hoping to learn from the experience of the seniors to carry on the future of the Knights.



This Knights team did suffer some losses of key senior contributors from last year's team, but this does not phase our current Knights. When asked about the makeup of the team, Daniel Cohen responded: "The loss of key seniors last year hasn't affected us at all. We are a different team and this year's Knights team is willing to leave it all out on the floor and give 110%". Can you really ask for anything more from a team fighting for a championship?

According to William Ayayi, "All of our players from last year have matured both mentally and physically. We hope to bring that to the court and bring a title to YOC."

Bringing home a title. The team may change but the goal remains. The team is ready. As of November, we will see if the hard work and determination will pay off once and for all.

## Say Good Knight Knights Complete Another Season

Dorothy Paling EDITOR

The Knights Girls Basketball team started the season fresh with a team comprised of 50% rookies.

This year's roster included Aliza Balsam, Adina Judelman, Maayan Volfson, Hannah Aaron, Hanna-Eden Ibgghi, Elyanna Remer, Alexa Edelstein, Gila Gordon, Sarah Judelman, Hadassah Nauenberg, Mia Rosenblum, and Hannah Lipson.

The team played an impressive season. Their excursion went as follows:

Out of their first four games, the Knights won two. This then earned them a ticket to the playoffs. In the playoffs they won one out of two games. This win then gave the Knights a spot in the semifinals. In the semifinals, they lost a hard-fought game, thus ending their season.

Regardless of the outcome, the team put in a tremendous effort. No doubt, the girls will learn from the

experience of grinding through the tough playoff competition. With only one senior player who will be graduating this year, most of this roster will remain intact for next year (and years to come). These girls will have the ability to further develop their skills and chemistry in the seasons to come.

Following the hard-fought season, team captain Hannah Lipson, had this to say: "I am confident that with a lot of hard work and practice, next year the Knights will make it to the playoffs as well, and hopefully the championship. Our season was a very close one, and I am confident the Knights will be on the winning side of the scoreboard next year. Go, Knights!"

Although the Knights did not quite get the result they were hoping for, Lipson believes they have a promising future ahead. We wish them the best of luck in their future games and hope next season will provide a new banner for our gym wall!

## Kneel for What You Believe In Athletes Kneeling for the American Anthem

Shmuel Laitman EDITOR

It was Sunday August 14, 2016 and the San Francisco 49ers were scheduled to play their first game of the preseason. Their quarterback, Colin Kaepernick, who had gone with them to the Super Bowl just three years prior, made headlines around the world without even stepping onto the field. While everyone in the stadium was standing with their hats in their hands for the American national anthem, Kaepernick could be found on one knee.

Initially, this act did not gain much attention, along with the second time he knelt on August 20<sup>th</sup>. It was not until the 26<sup>th</sup> of August, before the 3<sup>rd</sup> game of the preseason, that the world took notice of Kaepernick's protest. After the game, when the media asked Kaepernick

why he knelt during the anthem, he told them that he knelt in protest of oppression of people of colour and police brutality.

Two days after the game, Kaepernick met with the media to discuss his kneeling in depth. His response, in short, was "I knelt to give a voice to people who don't have one". He went on to explain that he was not trying to disrespect the United States, its flag, or its anthem and that he has many family and friends who served in the military.

On September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 Colin was no longer protesting alone. During the singing of the national anthem, he was joined by 49ers safety Eric Reid. Additionally, approximately 730 kilometers away in Oakland, California, Seattle Seahawks cornerback Jeremy Lane took a knee just minutes after Kaepernick and Reid. After his game, Kaepernick donated one million dollars to charities that focus on racial issues, with the intention of proving that he was neither anti-America nor anti-military, and that he was kneeling for no other reason than what he had told the media. This day was crucial to the spread of kneeling because, for the first time, people realized that Kaepernick was sincere in his actions and began to support him.

Protests supporting the cause were quickly growing inside and outside of the NFL. By the first regular season game, eight players were kneeling during the national anthem, while the entire Kansas Chiefs roster locked arms. Later that week, Marshawn Lynch, current Running Back for the Oakland Raiders, went on the late-night talk show *Conan* and told the audience that he supported Kaepernick's protests. Iman Shumpert, a basketball player for the Cleveland Cavaliers, started a campaign that aims to improve the relationship between police and American citizens. During the anthem prior to the first game of the NBA season, the Knicks and Rockets linked arms while the Celtic players put their heads down and crossed arms. On October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016 before a Sacramento Kings game, anthem singer Leah Tysse knelt while singing the lyrics "Land of the free, and the home of the Brave". Throughout the 2016-17 season, many players and teams across all sports took a knee in silent protest, exercising their own freedom of speech in doing so.

Though groups of people saw the protests as peaceful and positive, the NFL's Conservative fans - who make up a majority of their viewers - did not. The NFL owners allegedly agreed not to sign Kaepernick on for another season with the goal being to sweep the controversy under the rug.

President Donald Trump however, had a different idea. At a rally in Alabama that was supposed to be about their former attorney general Luther Strange, the focus quickly shifted into a Trump-rant about NFL football. He started off by saying "You know what's hurting the game? Those people taking the knee when they are playing our great national anthem." He continued, "Wouldn't you love to see one of these NFL owners, when somebody disrespects our flag, to say, 'get that son of a [expletive deleted] off the field right now. Out. He's fired. He's fired!"

The morning following the incident in Alabama, Trump sent out a tweet reading "Going to the White House is a great honor for a championship team. Stephen Curry is hesitating, therefore invitation is withdrawn". This tweet was in response to Stephen Curry's hesitation when asked about visiting the White House as part of the championship winning

Golden State Warriors. The tweet found NBA fans and players alike supporting



Steph, most notably LeBron James, who tweeted at Trump "U bum... Going to the White House was a great honor until you showed up!" The Warriors collectively agreed to skip this year's visit to the White House and will instead "celebrate equality, diversity and inclusion - the values that we embrace as an organization."

Throughout the week following the incident with Curry, Trump continued to tweet about kneeling during the American anthem and how it disrespects and dishonours the flag. Trump tweeted: "Sports fans should never condone players that do not stand proud for their National Anthem or their Country. NFL should change policy!" For once, the President isn't alone. According to a survey done last fall, 61% of NFL fans disagree with Kaepernick's protests, while a more recent poll shows that many fans are now watching less football due to the athletes taking a knee.

Will the NFL change its policy? Will Kaepernick get signed? Will Trump apologize to Curry? All that we know for sure is that the President is spending too much time watching sports.

## **Trump vs. NFL NFL Players Kneel for National Anthem**

Gila Gordon

Do you stand when you hear the National Anthem? Do you understand why we sing it, or is it just a catchy song to you? Normally, a person rises during the Anthem because it shows respect for soldiers who fight for their country's freedom.

Recently, many NFL players decided to make a statement by kneeling during the National Anthem before their games. Donald Trump, the president of the United States, was very upset by this and constantly tweeted about this matter. He wrote, 'Courageous Patriots have fought and died for our great American Flag --- we MUST honor and respect it! MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!'. To Trump, people kneeling or sitting while we say the Anthem is like a slap in the face.

You might ask, why are people doing this if it is so blatantly disrespectful? The reason is due to the mistreatment of African Americans all throughout the United States. Colin Kaepernick, a former San Francisco 49ers quarterback, explained to the press, "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color. To me, this is bigger than football and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder." Metaphorically, it feels as if the United States is slapping him, and his people, in the face. The fact that it is a prevailing issue that African Americans are being prejudiced against and harmed is a huge flaw in our society.

As an American myself, I strongly believe that these NFL players are out of line. The time when we honour all those who went to war for us, who put their lives on the line for us, is not the appropriate situation for NFL players to express their dismay. Perhaps it would have been more proper were they to make organizations or present speeches.

Sitting during the National Anthem, however, is making a statement that you do not care to respect the people who are the reason the United States is the country it is today. Without those veterans, we would not have the land of the free.

## **Maple Leafs Generate Hype A Look Into What Makes the Toronto Maple Leafs Unique**

Sarah Birnbaum EDITOR

What is so special about the Toronto Maple Leafs?

Although I don't consider myself an avid hockey fan, I have always wanted to understand what drives the unconditional passion of Maple Leaf fans. After all, the Leafs aren't the only Canadian hockey team; they are joined in the league currently by the Montreal Canadiens, Ottawa Senators, Winnipeg Jets, Calgary Flames, Edmonton Oilers and Vancouver Canucks. This is not to mention the fact that they haven't won the Stanley Cup since 1967 (a fact their fan base is all-too-familiar with). Also, they spell the plural of leaf as "leafs" instead of "leaves!" What could possibly be creating their immense fame?

One option could be the team's history. The Leafs were founded in 1917 and were one of the original six teams in the National Hockey League. The Leaf's longevity creates a sense of tradition and heritage for Torontonians (as well as for folks from neighbouring towns).

Additionally, the Maple Leafs have had some very memorable moments on the ice. Ya'akov Novak, a student at Or Chaim, recounts his most memorable Leafs moment as, "The 2016 game between the Leafs and the Senators, Auston Matthews, in his first NHL game scored four goals, setting a rookie record." 100 years later, the team never ceases to create unforgettable moments for its fans young and old.

Another aspect to the Leafs renown is their fan's devotion to them. Even when the team is on a losing streak or playing poorly, their fans remain steadfast in providing support; whether by purchasing tickets or watching the game at home, Leafs fans never fail to support their team. According to *Forbes Magazine*, tickets to games can be incredibly expensive, the average price being \$368.60. Furthermore, multitudes of fans in the GTA and beyond purchase season tickets making it increasingly

difficult to obtain a ticket at all. The difficulty to obtain a ticket to a Leafs game is exemplary of how much Leafs fans value and celebrate their team. Currently there is a 30 year wait to get season seats for the Buds.

The devotion of Leafs fans is largely due to the fact that the Leafs represent Toronto; known by most as one of, if not the most, iconic Canadian cities. This bustling metropolis is full of things to do and known all around the world, due to its vibrant people and fierce loyalty to its sports teams. The maple leaf adorned on the Leafs' uniforms represents our country, our city, and the spirit of the team itself. According to the official Leafs website, the current version of the leaf has 31 points to represent the year that Maple Leaf Gardens was opened, and 17 veins to represent the year of the team's founding.

Lastly, the uniqueness of the Leafs lies in the unparalleled experience of watching a Leaf game. The music is blaring, the air is frigid, and the charged crowd goes wild as their team scores. In the event that they win the game, everyone leaves the arena feeling charged with positive energy. If they lose, it can feel like the end of the world. As Mr. Saltsman recalls from watching the Leafs being eliminated from the playoffs by the Boston Bruins in 2013, "I will never forget that night. I will never forget the silence in the room as they showed the highlights again and again like a dagger plunged into my heart".

Yet, people always come back to watch another game. Perhaps it's because, at the end of the day, it doesn't matter whether they win or lose. It's the feeling generated while watching a Toronto Maple Leafs game, it lights a fire of hope and adrenaline in you that cannot be extinguished by any number of losses.

Their history, the loyalty of their fans, and the unique experience of a Maple Leafs' game all play a role in the Leafs' glory. We can't say with certainty which of these keeps us coming back for more, but we can say that the Leafs give Torontonians a sense of pride and honour that is unmatched by any other sports team.

**ISRAEL**

## **Shalom from Israel! Inside Perspective of A Recent Oleh**

Mrs. Gelernter  
Former Assistant Principal, Ulpanat Orot

I made Aliyah.

Suffice it to say, I'm not far enough along on this journey to give the topic of making aliyah proper perspective, but I can certainly share what it feels like to be newly Israeli.

I love it. I've lived in several different places in my life, each one more wonderful than the next, but none had the immediate feeling of being 'home' like moving to Israel did. I currently live in Ramat Bet Shemesh. The community is wonderful, although my Hebrew will likely not improve as rapidly as I would like it to due majority of the community members being Anglos.

I have often said that it is a mitzvah to live in Israel but it is not a mitzvah to be Israeli. It is amazing that in such a small country, you can really have your pick of lifestyle and culture depending on where you choose to settle. So, no matter who you are or what you want out of life and out of your Judaism in particular, Israel has it all.

We are all settled in our new house and I look forward to hosting all the Ulpana grads, which may alleviate some of the homesickness I feel for my Ulpana family. My own kids are in a great school and are learning a lot. My daughter just started Parshat Lech Lecha. It is an unparalleled feeling to know that we are following in the footsteps of Avraham Avinu, leaving our homeland to come to the Land of Israel. We are not just learning about this journey from the parsha--we are living it.

Of course, not everything is all roses. Socialized medicine has never been a favourite of mine and we could really use Sobeys around here...

At the end of the day, though, I find myself in a place with amazing parks, fantastic weather, and life feeling very purpose-driven at every moment. I love having that 'only in Israel' feeling often, like when the buses have a 'chag sameach' banner

on them, or even when people are rude on the road because you are not driving fast enough. It all serves to remind of me of where I am and why I am here.

## StandWithUS

### Representative Visits Ulpana Students Receive Tips on Combating BDS on Campus

Shana Edery

We at Ulpanat Orot were privileged to have Shanel Jacobs, the Canadian High School coordinator from StandWithUs, come to our school to talk to us about her experience single-handedly diminishing BDS from her college campus. Her story was fascinating and she taught us many very important lessons, as well as a strategy called, "ARM," in order to properly respond to BDS supporters and anti-Semites.

ARM stands for- Address, Respond, Message. When someone comes up to you with a hateful and false comment towards Jews and Israel, the first thing we do is respectfully *address* their argument. Next, *respond* with facts. *Lastly*, we want to leave this person with a final message.

Perhaps the most important thing Shanel stressed to us was the fact that we as Jews have to stay together and support each other. Shanel was one of very few Jews in the college she attended. Rather than lending her a hand, Shanel's fellow Jews on campus left her all alone to fight against thousands of BDS supporters on campus. The only way in which we can even hope to succeed in spreading the truth about Israel, is if all Jews unite. We have to be there for each other in order to show the world "the *real* Israel."

We are fortunate to be living in such an incredible community where we can freely practice our religion, but when we get too comfortable that is our downfall. A lot of Jews will get to University and encounter anti-Semitism and will have no idea how to react or what to respond. Instead of waiting for that to come, Shanel taught us to be proactive and become educated. This way, when we get to university we will be prepared to fight back using methodic, appropriate tactics.

Ulpana students were privileged to have such a passionate woman with so much skill and knowledge come and share her ideas and tips. Now, there is no doubt that Ulpana

students will be both prepared and proactive in their battle against BDS.

## The Good Neighbor

### Israel's Mission Supporting Syrian Refugees

Ahava Helfenbaum

Recently, the Israeli military revealed the scope of their humanitarian aid project in Syria which is called "Operation Good Neighbor". The project began in June 2016 along the Israeli-Syrian border in the Golan Heights. Israel felt that this mission was one of grave importance, as the fate of the Syrian people is something the Jewish people can relate to. The concept of being a refugee can evoke strong feelings and memories for Israelis. It immediately reminds us of our history as a nation of refugees, in which we were at the mercy of others.

Now that we have established a strong military and a flourishing state, the IDF, like in previous crises, has focused its efforts on supplying food, generators, fuel, shoes, baby formula, antibiotics and several vehicles to the struggling refugees.

Many media outlets brush aside the remarkable acts of kindness by claiming that the IDF is simply trying to burnish their reputation from that of an occupying force and formidable war machine to that of a compassionate and protective security service.

But if Israel's incentives were purely political, then how could one explain a person like Tamar Dressler? Dressler is an Israeli journalist who works day and night to bring Syrian civilians to the safe haven of Israeli soil. She has been an aid worker for 15 years and co-founded the "Imagine Project", which helps refugees in Greece obtain skills that will serve them in their new lives.

In fact, Israel has been making notable efforts to prove that the aid which they are providing is apolitical in its nature. After all, Israel's diplomatic ties with Syria have been strained at best since Israel conquered the Golan heights in 1967. Israel has repeatedly stated through politicians, officials, and volunteers that they are involved in aid simply because they will not stand by while their neighbours are gassed and burned outside of their homes. "The sight of people being gassed by their regime is something

that understandably makes us cringe." Dessler adds, "We are here so that the refugees will remember that at least someone along their journey cared for them."

## Government Policy vs

### Jewish Values

#### French Organ Donation

#### Controversy; How it Stands

#### According to Jewish Halacha

Yochanan Goldstein EDITOR

One of the most controversial issues in Judaism and Halacha is organ donation after a person's physical death. In the secular world, organ donation is considered to be a meritorious deed. In many cases, the donation of important organs such as a functional liver or a heart after its purpose is no longer needed for the original "owner" can mean saving or greatly improving the life of another person.

In recent news, as of the beginning of 2017, France implemented a new controversial policy which presumes an automatic consent for organs to be removed from human bodies and used for various purposes after a person dies. This may seem strange and out of the ordinary for this to be implemented as a national law, but this regulation is actually also in effect in several other countries, such as Spain and Austria.

The reason why these government decisions are rejected and looked down upon by many is because whether due to familial wishes, personal beliefs, or religious factors, not everyone is interested in having parts of their own body removed and taken elsewhere, merely because they are dead, and therefore the parts are not in direct use. Those who wish to not have their organs taken from their body after death must apply for the "Registre National des Refus" (National Rejection Register). According to The Guardian, over 150,000 people have signed up already.

This is what France's "agence de la biomédecine" (Biomedicine Agency) had to say on the matter [translated from French]: "The law [in France] says that we are all presumed to be donors of organs and tissues, unless we have expressed refusal of organ removal in our lifetime."

At the time of death, before considering organ and tissue removal, a medical team will verify that you are not registered on the National Rejection Register. If this is

not the case, it will be checked with the relatives that you have not asserted during your lifetime your opposition to the process [whether in written or oral expression]. In the case of an oral expression, a medical team will ask the relatives to specify the circumstances and to sign the transcription in writing."

According to Halacha, saving one's life is an extremely important ethical duty. The Mishna even states in Sanhedrin that saving one's life is "equivalent to saving an entire world".

Jewish law distinguishes between donating organs during your lifetime and organ donation after death. Generally speaking, Jewish law is extremely supportive of donating body parts (while a person is alive) which one can live without and things that will naturally replenish themselves over time, such as blood or bone marrow. Doing this in order to save or improve someone's life is extremely virtuous.

According to this logic, why would the donation of organs after death be an issue? The reason why organ donation after death is controversial is because many authorities argue that all Jews must be buried whole, and some suggest that it is forbidden to tamper with a dead body unless doing so means to directly and immediately save another person.

The issue with the law in France is that it is very difficult for there to be a guarantee that an organ will, in fact, be *immediately* used to directly save another person. A lot of the time, a donated organ may be used for medical or scientific research, or may be stored away for long periods of time or may even be discarded if it is no longer needed. This is the reason why many Rabbis reject this policy.

Regardless, the implementation of organ removal after death as a national law is indeed a controversial ethical policy. Judaism is constantly finding new ways to understand Halacha, and with the help of the Torah, we can guide our life decisions and understand how to deal with emerging modern issues.

## Justin Trudeau and

### Feminism

#### Trudeau: Feminist or Puppet of Political Correctness?

Naomi Glogauer

Justin Trudeau; Canadian prime minister and self-proclaimed

feminist. Trudeau's intentions in regard to feminism may seem pure, however, after a closer observation of his actions, his supposedly feminist values abruptly prove to be insincere and internally contradictory. Very early on in his political career, Trudeau expressed his interest in gender equality in Canada. While this is commendable, his actions while in office have not proven to hold the same motivation.

When appointing his cabinet, Trudeau ensured that half of the appointees were women. His intentions, while noble, were completely misguided and not the step forward for the feminist movement that it was portrayed to be. When asked why he had chosen to have a balanced cabinet, Trudeau's response was: "It's 2015". While his observation skills were noteworthy, his statement revealed his underlying ideology, which has absolutely nothing to do with feminism.

A true feminist believes in the equality of men and women, not the elevation of women based on their gender. Mr. Trudeau, however, apparently chose women, not based on their credentials, but based on their gender. Had he hired these women based on their merit and not based on their gender, he should have been indignant over the question. The basis of the feminist movement was to obtain equal rights for both genders, not to focus on the gender of the candidates.

More recently, Trudeau's government rewrote the study guide for the Canadian citizenship exam. The guide has not been published yet, but the draft contained shocking material. An example of this would be the removal of references to "barbaric cultural practices". These 'barbaric cultural practices' caused trouble for Mr. Trudeau in 2011 after he commented on the usage of this term, saying that "in an official Government of Canada publication, there needs to be a little bit of an attempt at responsible neutrality." At the time, "barbaric" was used to refer to honour killings, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and other gender-based violence. Despite his apologies after the fact, the most recent draft shows that Mr. Trudeau still has not changed his tune on this issue.

In the draft, not only are any references to barbaric cultural practices removed, but respecting the human rights of others is not described as an obligation of a

Canadian citizen, rather as a voluntary responsibility.

As an ardent advocate of gender equality, shouldn't Mr. Trudeau support the use of strong language in regards to the clear imbalance of rights within the targeted communities? Shouldn't he be mandating that new citizens of the country respect the rights of their fellow citizens?

It is clear that Mr. Trudeau is more focused on political correctness and pandering to "feminists" in the hopes of receiving approval from them. So far, it seems to be working. That doesn't mean that his ideology is any less of a farce though.



## Controversial Bill Passed in Ontario

### Bill C-16 Sparks Protest

Layla Frischman EDITOR

Bill C-16 is a proposed amendment to the Canadian Human Rights Act to add gender identity and gender expression to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination in Ontario.

How exactly do these changes manifest themselves practically? Let's say Joe is looking for a tenant for his apartment. He meets a potential renter but decides not to rent it out to him or her. That person can then go to the Human Rights Council and claim that they were rejected due to that landlord's personal biases regarding "race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted." These are the guidelines currently set out by the Canadian government. Now, the goal of Bill C-16 is to add gender identity and expression to this list.

According to Bill C-16, it is illegal to discriminate against someone in the workplace or to deny them a service because they may possess a characteristic from the aforementioned list. The bill also aims to protect individuals in court who may be unfairly subjected to the biases and prejudices of a jury.

Lastly, Bill C-16 aims to protect these so-called vulnerable groups of identifiable minorities from violence and genocide.

On the surface, it seems that the government is passing this bill because they recognize the mistreatment of transgender people and other minorities in society. The government wishes to promote tolerance and respect of such groups at the legislative level.

This all sounds fine and well. After all, we need more respect and tolerance in our society as a whole, right? So why, then, is this bill so controversial?

There is an important distinction to be made between the current characteristics which are prohibited grounds for discrimination, and the addition of gender identity and gender expression to the existing list. The Ontario Human Rights Commission has stated that "refusing to refer to a trans person by their chosen name and a personal pronoun that matches their gender identity ... will likely be discrimination". This means that if a person fails to use certain words, they may be prosecuted for behaving in a discriminatory manner.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines discrimination as "treating a person or particular group of people differently, especially in a worse way from the way in which you treat other people, because of their skin colour, sex, etc". This definition implies that the treatment of a person in a negative manner constitutes discrimination. The Ontario government defines discrimination as "not individually assessing the unique merits, capacities and circumstances of a person". The distinction here is crucial in our understanding of Bill C-16: the Ontario government views discrimination as the *lack of* performance of certain actions, while the traditional definition views discrimination as the *performance* of certain actions.

This issue is unique to the categories of gender identity and expression. With Bill C-16, there is not only *prohibition* of certain language and actions, but there is also the *enforcement* of certain language towards a specific group.

Jordan B Peterson, a world-renowned psychologist at the University of Toronto has published over one hundred scientific papers exploring the true nature of personality. After releasing a video last year in which he stated that he

would refuse to use any pronouns other than 'he' and 'she', Dr. Peterson has become a highly controversial figure and an outspoken critic of Bill C-16.

After the release of his video last year, Professor Peterson received two letters from the University of Toronto in which they warned him that his actions are "contrary to the rights of those persons [who are entitled] to equal treatment without discrimination based on their 'gender identity' and 'gender expression.'"

On May 17, 2017, Peterson was a witness at a senate hearing on Bill C-16. In this hearing, members of the senate questioned Peterson on his concerns regarding the bill.

In front of the senate, Dr. Peterson argued that gender identity is objective, as recognized by the relevant developmental psychological authorities. He highlighted the importance of the freedom of speech, arguing that one's ability to fully express one's self is crucial and ultimately more essential than respect. He revealed how those transgender people who have supported Bill C-16 are not accurate representatives of the entire population, as there was no democratic voting process. Dr. Peterson has also received many letters of support from transgender people. He voices how "the failure to use [gender neutral pronouns] is something that can carry a criminal penalty" which is quite absurd considering that the long gender-neutral pronoun list unsuccessfully evolved into the language naturally.

When Jordan Peterson expressed his views on Bill C-16, he became a polarizing figure at U of T and beyond. On campus, Dr. Peterson can be seen surrounded by hundreds of students loudly voicing their opinions, ranging from enthusiastic support to radical disagreement. This however, is a small depiction of the debate which is flaming all throughout the province.

Ultimately, Canadian citizens better watch what they say, because who knows what else the Human Rights Commission has in store.

## The Donald

### A Look Back at a Year of Trump

Ben Nemirov EDITOR

November 8, 2016 will forever go down as one of the most notorious days in modern history: Donald J.

Trump was officially elected as the 45th President of the United States of America.

It has now been over a full calendar year since the now infamous tally came in declaring “The Donald” and his Republican Party as the next head of State. Since then, it has truly been an unforgettable year, for all too many reasons.

Under Trump’s strong-willed leadership, we have had the privilege to bear witness to such events and stories as his infamous Covfefe tweet, his many spats with Hollywood celebrities, with NFL and NBA athletes, all in addition to hear him uttering the oh-so-famous claim of “fake news” to any information he does not happen to agree with.

Towards the beginning of his term in office, his claims of providing more jobs brought back to America provided hope for many American citizens. Soon thereafter, it was discovered that the president himself had factories in over 12 other countries including China and Mexico, both of which he has accused their citizens of stealing American jobs. Saying one thing and doing another has proven to be a trend of The Donald.

Consistently we have been able to hear Mr. Trump rant and rave on about his plans for building his great wall across the border between the United States and Mexico. Further, he claimed that it was Mexico who was going to pay for it. Yet, here we are, a year later and the plan has not come into fruition. That being said, is a wall really the answer to creating more local jobs?

More recently, we have all grown closer as a worldwide community out of fear for our lives as a result of Mr. Trump referring to Kim Jong Un as “Little Rocket Man”. This nickname coming despite the very real threat of Nuclear warfare, which is no laughing matter. Although, this is what happens when two heads of states bicker at one another like school boys.

With the bad, however, there has been some good that can be taken away from Trump’s presidency thus far. Whether you agree with his methods or not, he has taken measures to sure-up National security with his travel ban. As well, some American companies such as Ford are seeing increases in local jobs. Further, has had ensured to refortify ties with Israel.

Looking back, amidst many negatives, there are some positives that have resulted from Donald

Trump’s election. While some are happy he was elected, others are not. But this would be the case no matter who is in office. Like it or not, it looks like there will be another three years of Trump ahead.

So, here’s to hoping for three more interesting and, hopefully, more reassuring years to come.

## **Gun Laws Laws in Question After Deadly Shooting**

Yehuda Zahavi

Gun laws have been a controversy in the United States for a long time, but after the Las Vegas shooting on October 1st, the discussion has risen strongly yet again. The shooting, just one out of the 50,039 gun incidents in America during the year of 2017, has left 58 dead and 546 injured, making it the deadliest mass shooting in America committed by one individual. While this has only physically affected a tiny fraction of America’s population, it has left most of America worried about the safety of themselves and the people they love. Despite all the evidence of America’s gun problem, however, the government, and some citizens, believe that they need guns. This is a big problem.

It is known that to fix something wrong, you have first be able to admit that it is wrong. In the case of gun violence, America has done just the opposite as an overwhelming number of citizens continue to preach that it is their “personal freedom to have a gun” and that “they feel safer with a gun”.

A lot of these people do not realize that the distribution and selling of guns is what is making them feel unsafe in the first place. What is an even a bigger problem is the NRA; they are an extreme group focused on making less-strict gun laws. The NRA completely fights against all forms of gun control and they say it makes the country safer to have *more* guns. This is incorrect because a fifth of white people, a third of African Americans and 24 percent of Hispanics say that someone they know has experienced gun violence, showing that the NRA is wrong that guns make the country safer. All that the NRA is doing is making the end goal for stricter gun laws a lot harder to achieve, which will continue the happenings of mass shootings and gun violence in America.

A lot of Americans also believe that without guns the country will not function well, but this is not the case.

Canada, for example, supports individuals owning guns, however strict the laws might be, and still being able to function properly without having a problem with the gun-related violence. In fact, most of Canadian violence related crimes do not involve a gun, and most of them that do are from either suicide, legal intervention, or an accident. Most Canadians do not live in fear of gun violence, rather we feel safe in expressing our opinion, defining our rights as human beings, and much more. The overall environment of safety has given Canadian citizens the ability to focus more on other issues rather than worrying about guns.

Overall, America should have dealt with the gun problem much before the Las Vegas shooting, but it is better late than never. Guns can be good in certain cases, so it would be best to reduce chances of future attacks from happening by making stricter background checks - especially for private gun shows and gun sales.

If Americans can put their pride aside (for once), The United States of America can become a safer place for all races and religions existing within it. Canada has proven to be a successful and relatively safe country with very strict gun laws and so America should take some notes and become a better and safer country.

### **The BASH Team**

#### **Ulapanat Orot**

Layla Frischman

Adina Weitzner

Rivka Werner

Marya Nurgitz

Dorothy Paling

Sarah Birnbaum

Sara Green

Temima Tova Gerstl

Malka Daniels

Hadar Werberger

Zahava Fortinsky

#### **Or Chaim**

Eitan Markus

Ben Nemirov

Yochanan Goldstein

Avery Hoffer

Shmuel Laitman

Avi Weinberger

### **Faculty Advisor**

Mr. Saltsman