

The BASH

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A WINTER TO REMEMBER



INSIDE

SCHOOL EVENTS
PHOTOS

POETRY CONTEST
WINNERS

OP-EDS
SPORTS

THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH FILM SCREENING

EITAN LIPSON

In his first solo directing project, Joel Coen admirably attempted to make a piece of art with *The Tragedy of Macbeth*.

The film takes place in a vacuum, achieving his goal of aesthetic minimalism, which symbolizes the void of Macbeth himself. The walls of his castle are barren just like his (Macbeth's) life. The fog transition at the beginning of the film only reinforced this. It was as if there was an extra main character besides Shakespeare's, and I am not speaking of the strangely ambiguous role of Ross played by Alex Hassell. The minimalism of the scenes, the barrenness of the walls of the castle, the eerie emptiness of the forests were in themselves characters that added another dimension to film.

If Coen's goal was to make the film feel like a stage play, mission accomplished. The lighting was a thing of beauty. Seeing the contrasts of light and dark bathe the faces of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth as they plotted to take power was a delight to behold. The stark, crisp black and white set the tone throughout the movie. It subconsciously warns the viewer that not everything is as it seems, and, in this writer's opinion, is a perfect way to shoot such an intriguing tale.

As for the performances, Denzel Washington was stellar as Macbeth. Sometimes his expressive delivery didn't match Coen's trimmed script, however, for the majority of the play, Denzel seemed to be channelling what Shakespeare himself would have wanted from his leading man. Washington perfectly depicts a flawed,



power-hungry man descending into madness, betrayal, and paranoia. He makes everyone in the audience believe that he is going mad.

As Denzel perfectly portrayed his own version of Macbeth, he set a high bar for Frances McDormand, playing Lady Macbeth. This she certainly met. There was no chemistry between the two, which actually makes a lot of sense, because the characters themselves don't have much chemistry to begin with. McDormand is a true thespian, and made a manipulative character come to life before our very eyes.

Kathryn Hunter's portrayal of the witches is downright freaky. She made it her own and was

wildly successful. She probably could have played Gollum without breaking much of a sweat. As she prophesied the future to Macbeth and Banquo, I was totally and utterly uncomfortable.

Coen's version of Macbeth is indeed a work of art, despite not being a movie for the masses. Though, regardless of how you feel about works written during the Elizabethan Era, you have to give credit where credit is due: the film is visually stunning. Would I watch this movie again? No thank you. Will this get Denzel an Oscar nod? Probably. Did Joel Coen do a masterful job at putting his own spin on a 420-year-old tale? Yes indeed.

UO COLOUR WAR RECAP

HANNAH HALBERSTADT, UO STUDENT COUNCIL PRESIDENT

This year more than ever, Colour War was welcomed with great excitement and enthusiasm. After the confetti poppers were released, the ultimate battle of the Northies and Southies began.

Between the paintings, Minute to Win It, full team dodgeball, human Hungry Hungry Hippos, the photo scavenger hunt, cheerleading routines, theme inspired fashion shows and more, the two days were filled with seemingly endless ruach and happiness.

Whether it was making Bubby's Bagels or Centro Pizza out of graham crackers, candies, and marshmallow fluff, painting the gym walls with a lion, or 7-Eleven slushies on Har Sinai, students were able to express their creativity with full freedom.

Each student worked hard to bring home the victory for her team and prove once and for all who was better, Northies or Southies!



SHABBATON: THE SEQUEL

An Unforgettable Weekend in Niagara

AVIVA EIZICOVICS

Many people believe that an “original” is always better than its “sequel”. This way of thinking is prevalent when evaluating movies and books in particular. However, the recent Ulpana Shabbaton in Niagara certainly proved that the sequels can be equal to, if not better than, their original!

The yearly Fern Shabbaton sets a pretty high bar; the ruach, achdut, and pre-Shabbat pictures are a highlight of the school year. That said, the Niagara Shabbaton gave students of Ulpana another incredible bonding opportunity for the ages!

The days of March 25th–27th were filled with a plethora of learning opportunities, inspirational Divrei Torah, and endless smiles. The adventure began Friday afternoon (after morning classes, obviously!) when students were driven to Clifton Hill to browse patriotic gift shops, ride the ferris wheel, and admire the Falls. We were later treated to guest speaker Mrs. Kathy Laszlo, founder of the DANI organization, who enhanced our weekend by sharing her life story and by sprinkling words of wisdom after meals. On top of that, the world renowned acapella band the Maccabeats blessed our ears with their catchy tunes and parodies - and most importantly elevated the flow and sound of our tefillot. As well, our students were religiously motivated through the Big and Little Sister learning programs, where they focused on the messages

of Pesach. We also had time slots to learn with teachers and rabbis and get to know their families. Activities filled with insight, morning shiurim, and nightly tisches ensured students could get the most out of the Shabbaton.

When not at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, the school united at the parallel Chabad centre, our temporary home, lunchroom, and shul. On Motzaei Shabbat, students of all grades were driven to a fully reserved water park where they got to enjoy each other’s company while splashing around. Afterward everyone headed back to the restaurant of the Chabad centre, where they

enjoyed a pizza dinner and got autographs from the Maccabeats. Soon after, bags were packed, lights were turned off, and students prepared for departure the next morning.

“Don’t cry because it’s over, smile because it happened” was the clear mindset of this past Shabbaton. The Ulpana Shabbaton “sequel” truly surpassed all expectations thanks to the incredible admin and staff that worked tirelessly to make it a reality. The families who attended and the energy that students came with made it such a positive experience for all. To many more adventures, Shabbatons, and trips to the Falls!



RABBANIT PURIM 2022: A SHREK/PURIM MASHUP

MALKA MOSHKOVITS

Forgotten lines. Microphones left on. A short man with a bob. The 2022 Rabbanit by our incredible Juniors was entertaining to say the least. There were some incidents and mishaps, but the show continued, and hilarity ensued.

The play began with Prince Charming hosting a party that his wife refused to come to, so he had his servant kill her. Ironically, he then missed having a wife, so he found a new girl, Fiona. The only problem with Fiona was she was trapped in a tower guarded by a fire-breathing dragon. The prince’s advisor, Lord Farquaad, suggested he send Fiona’s uncle Shrek and his friend Donkey to save Fiona. Soon after, Lord Farquaad, proud of his status, demanded that all the villagers dance for him, though Shrek refused to do so. This angered Farquaad and he swore he would kill all fairy tale creatures on the 14th of Adar.

Shrek and Donkey rescued Fiona and brought her to the beautiful wedding. On the way out of the castle, the pair overheard two guards plotting to kill the king. Shrek told Fiona, who told Prince Charming, which saved his life. Prince Charming was grateful and decided to honour Shrek by having Lord Farquaad lead him around the village on his donkey. This only angered Lord Farquaad



more. Fiona then finally confronted Prince Charming and Farquaad about Farquaad’s evil plan and revealed, with the utmost drama, that she was also an ogre. Lord Farquaad was killed, and the fairy tale creatures got to live happily ever after.

The play was chock-full of lively performances and unforgettable moments. A highlight was certainly the guards’ scenes (Adiel Benezra and Shira Mamman), part of which was improvised! Their accents, sass and rhythm were all on point. Fiona (Esti Schweitzer) stunned the audience with her incredible voice. Shrek (Sarah Paskowitz) and Donkey (Nava Edery) made the audience’s cheeks hurt from laughing so much. Lord Farquaad’s (Mia Beldeb) songs and costume simply stole the

show. Prince Charming’s (Hannah Fine) duet with Fiona was well rehearsed and performed admirably. As well, all the dances were incredibly in sync and looked professional. On top of that, a funny moment that everyone enjoyed was when a microphone was left on and everyone heard a girl say, “Oh great, my one scene is finally over.” Another comical part was the number of forgotten lines throughout the play. It was truly an incredible play and a unique experience to have been a part of. Congrats to the Juniors, and especially to the directors Aleeza Glogauer and Yasmin Rutman, for pulling off a night we will always remember.

As part of the Rabbanit program, the Juniors choose an exemplary girl to be their Rabbanit and a charity to raise money for. Congratulations to Chana Levi, our Rabbanit. She is a kind girl who is considerate and caring to everyone around her; she deserved to be our Rabbanit. To end this off I’d like to introduce you to Friendship Circle, the organization we chose to give our donation to. They are a non-profit organization that builds connections between people with special needs and other members of the community. Their volunteers participate in a number of programs that help to make people with special needs feel like they are a part of the community. To volunteer or donate to them go to www.fctoronto.org.



MICHAEL_SWAN/FLICKR. (CC BY-ND 2.0)

MR. TRUDEAU, TAKE A STEP BACK

An Open Letter

NOAH BERGER

Dear Mr. Trudeau,

Who do you think you are? Do you think you have the right to go on television, and state about the unvaccinated, *“They are extremists who don’t believe in science, they’re often misogynists, also often racists. It’s a small group that muscles in, and we have to make a choice in terms of leaders, in terms of the country. Do we tolerate these people?”*¹

According to a Statistics Canada survey investigating COVID vaccine hesitancy amongst all groups, visible minorities were amongst the most hesitant to receive the injection.² You, who pride yourself on your tolerance for *all*, clearly have exceptions to the rule as you contradict yourself by calling those who are most often victims of racism racists themselves. When you ask the spine-chilling question “do we tolerate these people?” you set the precedent that allows Canadians free reign to discriminate against those who hold opposing beliefs. When you first addressed the nation at your father’s funeral in 2000, you said, “We need genuine and deep respect for each and every human being, notwithstanding their thoughts, their values, their beliefs, their origins.” Oh, how far have you deviated from that. You, once widely regarded as a genuine person, have fallen into a deep pit of political desperation. You have gone so far as to launch smear campaigns, an unacceptable

tactic in an enlightened democracy such as Canada, just to gain votes.

Just weeks ago, after months of disenfranchising those who made a different medical choice regarding the COVID vaccine and their supporters, many of whom were fully vaccinated, folks snapped. On January 15th, the mandate that truckers crossing the Canada–U.S. border must be fully vaccinated came into effect. One week later, a convoy of trucks left British Columbia en route to Ottawa. They camped there for three weeks. Over that time, the mass lifting of COVID restrictions took place across Canada, a testament to the success of this protest. Yes, there were heinous acts such as swastikas and confederate flags being waved, public urination on national monuments and blocking key border crossings such as the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, Ontario. These acts should absolutely be condemned, and law should be enforced, but with a protest of that magnitude, a few bad actors are always expected and do not represent the values of those present. Just two summers ago, after the death of George Floyd, protests flooded North America and just like any protest, bad actors were present as well. However, you met and supported the peaceful protests then, something which you should have done with the Trucker Convoy as well.

Mr. Trudeau, in March 2020 you tweeted,

*“While many of us are working from home, there are others who aren’t able to do that - like the truck drivers who are working day and night to make sure our shelves are stocked. So when you can, please #ThankATrucker for everything they’re doing and help them however you can.”*³ This was a tweet once regarded as a gracious thank-you to pandemic heroes; you have gone from appreciating heroes to accusing them of treason and domestic terrorism. Your aspirations for a future in which everyone has “genuine and deep respect for each and every human being” is hard to achieve when the second part of your sentence “notwithstanding their thoughts...” is tossed away. Mr. Prime Minister, when you make room for all, the room stays intact. But when you make room for some, the room collapses.

Sincerely,
Noah Berger
Student at Yeshivat Or Chaim

- 1 www.torontosun.com/opinion/columnists/warmington-opposition-shockingly-silent-on-pms-hatred-of-unvaccinated-canadians
- 2 www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2021001/article/00011-eng.htm
- 3 <https://twitter.com/JustinTrudeau/status/1245139169934016517>

HOMOPHOBIA IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

NAVA REMER

Recently a guest speaker was brought to talk to the Grade 12 class at Ulpana about Jewish marriage. During her speech, she expressed homophobic ideas and dismissed the validity of the LGBTQ2S+ community. Although I am sure this was not her intention, it not only made me uncomfortable, but also opened my eyes to how some within our community view people who do not fit the predetermined mold.

In our community, the LGBTQ2S+ is generally viewed as something “strange” and taboo; something that should not be talked about. This avoidance stems from fear. Fear that Jewish individuals will stray from what we learn from the Torah, and

fear that they will identify themselves as a part of the LGBTQ2S+ community. These individuals grow up in a community that tells them that whatever they may identify as, whether it be sexuality or gender, is not okay, and must be hidden in fear of ridicule and judgement.

This kind of prejudice can cause long-lasting effects to one’s physical and mental health that cannot be reversed. That is not a community I can be proud of. We pride ourselves on being accepting and loving of everyone we encounter. Judgment and discrimination based on something a person does not choose is not acceptance, and it is most certainly not love. One of the first mitzvot we learn as children is *“וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ”*, “love your fellow as yourself.” Isn’t it our obligation to love fellow

Jews as we would love ourselves?

It is important for us to recognize that we have power as a community. We have power to influence others in our community, and to not spread hate where hate should not be spread. We have the power to throw away the preconceived notions we may have about people who are different and encourage each other to love your fellow Jew as you would love yourself.

It is important for us to know that while there may be fear concerning the LGBTQ2S+ community, there is and always will be Jews who identify with it. The sooner we accept that different is *not* bad, the sooner we can grow as a school, and as a community as a whole.

מדוע צפייה טובה עבורך

חושב "וואו, היא משוגעת, אתה לא יכול ללמוד את כל זה מצפייה", אבל זה נכון! אני בטוחה שרובכם צפיתם במאסטר שף, Nailed It!, רייצ'ל ריי, או תוכניות בישול ואפיה אחרות. ואני בטוחה שהם נתנו לך השראה לנסות וליצור משהו. אני יודעת שקיבלתי השראה להתחיל לאפות, ולהפתעה שלי ושל משפחתי, הצתתי אש רק פעם אחת! ולאילו מכם שפעם אהבו את דורה (או שעדיין אוהבים, אני לא שופטת), אני בטוחה שלמדתם כמות יפה של מילים בספרדית, אני יודעת שכן! (Hola!). ולחיוזק אוצר המילים שלך, זה כנראה נשמע די מוזר אבל זה נכון. אין לי אוצר מילים גדול במיוחד, מכיוון שמעולם לא קראתי ספר, אבל הייתי במקומות שבהם הצלחתי לומר שאני יודעת על מה הם מדברים בגלל הופעה. אל תשאל אותי למה, אבל לפני כמה שבועות אני וחברים שלי דיברנו על קניבליזם (cannibalism). ברגע ששמעתי את המילה, חשבת, אני יודעת את זה! זה היה ב-Brooklyn 99. אחלה סדרה דרך אגב, גם חינוכית מאוד!

בסך הכל, אני מקווה שיש לך עכשיו מידע מוצק מדוע צפייה טובה עבורך. זה יכול לעזור לך להירגע ולסדר את המוח. זה יכול לעזור לך להתאמן. זה יכול לעזור לך ליצר קשר עם המשפחה והחברים שלך. וזה אפילו יכול ללמד אותך דברים רבים על העולם שסביבנו. אני מקווה שזה יעזור לך בפעם הבאה שההורים שלך יגידו לך לכבות את המסכים שלך. וכמובן, זה מובן מאליו, בפעם הבאה שתהיה לך הזדמנות להרים ספר, אל תרימו! צפו בסדרה!

יש כל כך הרבה פעמים שאני מצפה בתוכנית כשאני על האליפטיקל (elliptical), או מחפשת סרטון אימון מהנה ביוטיוב (YouTube). כשאני צופה, אני לא מתמקדת בעובדה שמעייף אותי, אני מתמקדת בתוכנית שלי. זה שניים במחיר אחת אם תשאלו אותי!

העובדה השנייה מדוע צפייה חשובה היא כי זה יכול להיות זמן התקשרות טובה. על פי מחקר נוסף ב-*Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, צפייה עם מישהו אחר יכולה למעשה לעזור לאנשים להתחבר ולהתקרב ביניהם. בכל פעם שיש לכם ערב סרט משפחתי או ערב סרט של חברים, אתם מתחברים. אם אתה חושב על זה, כשיש לך חברים שבאים לישון, הדבר שאתה תמיד עושה הוא לראות סרט! או כשיוצאים לדייט, זה תמיד ארוחת הערב הקלאסית וסרט. או לכל המעריצים של Gray's (ואני יודעת שיש הרבה מכם), אני בטוחה שאתם מצפים ללילות חמישי כדי לצפות בפרקים האחרונים עם בני משפחה או חברים. וגם אם אתה צופה בזה לבד, אני יודעת שתדון בזה עם מישהו אחר בשלב מסוים. אז כשחושבים על זה באמת, צפייה היא כנראה דרך המוביל לקשר עם מישהו.

העובדה האחרונה מדוע צפייה חשובה היא תירוץ שאני אומרת להורי לעתים קרובות מאוד. צפייה בטלוויזיה היא חינוכית! אני לא צריכה לחפש בגוגל הוכחה לגבי העובדה הזאת כי אני יודעת שזה נכון. צפייה יכולה לעזור לך ללמוד לבשל, ללמוד שפה, לחזק את אוצר המילים שלך ועוד! עכשיו אתה בטח

חני שול

ההורים שלך אמרו לך פעם שאתה צופה יותר מדי? או לכבות את הטלפון וללכת לעשות שיעורי בית? או דברים מעצבנים אחרים כאלה? גם ההורים שלי! זה תמיד אותו דבר: "צפייה היא בזבוז זמן ויש עולם יפהפה מעבר לטלוויזיה ולטלפון שלך". אבל מה אם אתן לכם כמה עובדות על למה צפייה בטלוויזיה טובה בשבילך? כמה עובדות שאתה יכול לספר להורים שלך, ואולי, רק אולי, הם יפסיקו להציק.

העובדה הראשונה מדוע צפייה בטלוויזיה חשובה היא שזה באמת יכול לעזור לך לסדר את המוח אם אתה בלחץ. צמד מחקרים משנת 2012 בכתב העת *Social Psychology and Personality Science* אומרים שלפעמים כשאתה צופה מחדש בכל הסדרות האהובים עליך, זה באמת יכול לתת לך קצת כוח מוחי. אני יודעת שכל פעם שאני חוזרת הביתה מיום ארוך בבית הספר ואני צריכה להכין שיעורי בית, אני תמיד עייפה מדי והמוח שלי עייף (אני בטוחה שכולכם יכולים להזדהות). גיליתי שאם אני מצפה בפרק של משהו, זה ממריץ את המוח שלי ואני יכולה להיות מוכנה לעבודה. יתר על כן, צפייה יכולה גם להגביר את הבריאות הגופנית שלך. אני יודעת מה אתה בטח חושב: "לאן היא הולכת עם זה?" כי בדרך כלל כשאתה צופה אתה יושב וממלא את הפנים שלך. אמנם זה מה שקורה בחלק מהזמן, אבל במקרים אחרים אתה יכול לצפות בתוכנית האהובה עליך תוך כדי פעילות גופנית.

FANDOMS THROUGH ROSE COLOURED GLASSES

ADINA SHOSHAN

When COVID was at its peak, and millions of anxious teenagers were stuck inside their rooms, their lives completely devoid of social interaction and therefore meaning, they took to the one thing that could possibly give them any fulfillment and boost their egos: the Internet. Well, that might be a bit of an exaggeration, but there was a significant rise of Internet usage and people watched more shows, more movies, more streams, played more video games, and talked more about them all online. More folks became heavily involved in these nooks of the Internet known as "fandoms."

Fandoms are online communities made up of fans talking about and creating their own content for the media they are interested in; music artists, YouTubers, books, streamers – the possibilities are practically endless. People congregate on online platforms to post art, write stories, and theorize. Through that, they meet other fans who enjoy the same media they do and bond over it. There have been many well-known fandoms over the years, from One Direction to Steven Universe. Ironically, fandoms are now considered female-dominated spaces, whereas the term "fandom" originally applied to men in the late-1800s who liked science fiction.

Over these last two years, people were consuming a great deal of new content, which, in turn, led them to get involved in many different fandoms throughout quarantine. Unus Annus is an example of an extremely popular fandom that began in

*"Keep me up 'till 4AM, I'll stay up for you,
Lost in shimmering light..."*

—Derivakat, 4AM

November 2019, right before quarantine began. It was a project started by YouTubers Mark Fischbach and Ethan Nestor, in which they posted a video every day for 365 days doing anything and everything weird imaginable. In November 2020, though, the channel on which they posted the videos was deleted, as this entire project was meant to emphasize the importance of memories and lasting impressions. It is important to note that although Unus Annus is long gone, the fandom is still alive. There are still people who post fondly about their favourite moments from the project as a whole, or theorize about the codes hidden in the videos, or draw fanart of the characters. Fandoms can take on lives of their own and become something far greater than the original content.

It was through these fandoms that people made friends online and bonded. Fandoms like this one were a huge part of many people's lives, especially during the pandemic, and got them the social interaction they so desperately craved. Individuals were able to find comfort in the content, as well as finding comfort through the fandom. Further, these fandoms gave folks a sense of belonging (being together with like-minded people) that brought fans together as a community.

Some might point out that there are a lot of negatives to fandom, too. A prime example is how

little sleep one gets when sucked into content – it's extremely common for those in fandom to say, "Just a couple more minutes," and hours later, they'll be blinking blearily at the clock in the early hours of the morning. As well, even though fandoms can bring millions of people together, often petty online disagreements can split them apart. Just like communities in real life, communities online have their own issues too. Fandoms can have overly toxic fans; people who send death threats, harass others, and release the personal information of others (known as "doxing").

If it weren't for the restrictions and closures due to COVID, it just might be that the negatives would have outweighed the positives with respect to fandoms. However, given the shortage of venues available for self-expression and connection during quarantine, the positives heavily outweigh the negatives. Fandoms have been a necessary outlet for millions of people of all ages throughout the heart of the pandemic.

Now, life is slowly returning to normal. People are spending less time online, and people will not be interacting with fandoms as much as they used to. That being said, fandoms will stick around. People will still use fandoms as a form of escapism and comfort, as they had long before COVID was an issue in our lives. Although (hopefully) quarantine is a thing of the past, you can bet that teenagers for the foreseeable future will be absorbed in fandom at 4AM.

ARE NHL PLAYERS UNDERPAID?

SHMUEL FISCH

Tom Brady, LeBron James, and Steph Curry are each massively famous athletes who get paid tens of millions of dollars a year by their sports teams, respectively. Then, there is Patrick Mahomes, quarterback for the Kansas City Chiefs who signed a 10-year \$500 million dollar contract! He now makes \$50 million *per season*. Does anyone deserve that kind of income? Well, Mahomes is the face of the NFL (the most popular sport in the United States), he won a Super Bowl, and he genuinely is a great ambassador for the game. So, as crazy as it sounds, yes, Patrick Mahomes is worth his \$50 million/year salary (as much as anyone could be).

How does the face of football match up against the face of hockey? Connor McDavid is the best hockey player in the world. The Edmonton Oilers centreman may even go down in history as the best to ever lace up skates when all is said and done. McDavid gets paid 12.5 million dollars a year. Although nothing to sneeze at, this effectively means that the best player in the NHL, who puts on a show every single night he steps on the ice, gets paid one quarter of the highest paid player in the NFL. NHLers deserve more money!

Since stars such as Connor McDavid and Auston Matthews joined the NHL, viewership of NHL games has gone up by roughly two million per season. Since stars like Patrick Mahomes or Josh Allen have joined the NFL, viewership has increased but has only been going up 1.2 million views per season. These stars have made a massive impact on the sport of football, but the NHL stars have been bringing a lot more attention to their sport.

The money from the views goes straight to the league and not the players. Every single major sport league like the NFL, NHL, NBA etc. (besides the problematic MLB) has a salary cap. The idea behind the salary cap is to make poorer teams able to pay their players an equal amount to richer teams. The higher the salary cap is the more the players get paid, and the lower the salary cap is the lower the players get paid. The NFL's salary cap is \$208.2 million. The NBA's salary cap is \$121 million. That is why their players get paid a lot more. That is fair because almost every team in both leagues is rich and the players in the league make the owners of the league money. That is why you see guys like LeBron or Mahomes get paid a ridiculous amount. The NHL, on the other hand, is operating with a hard salary cap of \$81.5 million. Further, the cap is integral to the league's success because poorer teams like the Arizona Coyotes are able to have the same amount of money to spend as rich teams like the Toronto Maple Leafs. A player on a given NHL team, however, can only earn, at most, 25% of the salary cap space.

I think the NHL should just wake up already and raise the salary cap and pay their players more. Most NHL players make only a fraction of what the average NFL player makes. I get there is a salary cap, but if NHL stars are the ones who are making you your money at least consider raising the salary cap a significant amount and not pay them a fraction of what other leagues are paying their superstars. NHL players are underpaid and deserve so much more recognition and pay.



COURTESY ETHAN WEREK / FORWARD.COM

ETHAN WEREK: THE GROWER OF THE GAME

AHARON TORCZYNER

Gordie Clark has been involved in the NHL since 1989 and was part of the New York Rangers group that drafted Markham-born centre Ethan Werek in 2009. Clark had a high opinion of Werek, specifically his clutch scoring. He told the Rangers that he had “that kind of scoring ability to be that kind of scorer [in the NHL].”¹ There was obvious proof to back up this statement. After all, Werek scored 30+ goals in the two seasons leading up to the NHL draft. The problem was that Werek never got to score any goals in the NHL because he never ended up playing a game. Some suggest that his poorer skating ability held him back, or possibly that the Rangers had too many centres ahead of him on the depth chart. The Rangers were, after all, a playoff team and couldn't afford to develop a prospect on the fly while they were trying to win the Cup. However, even after being traded to Arizona in 2011, Werek couldn't crack an NHL line-up. He did, however, play for nine North American teams over eight years. While he probably would have preferred to be playing in the NHL, Werek has carved out a career for himself playing professional hockey. He even played in the 2022 Beijing Olympics... for China.

Four generations earlier, Werek's great-grandparents were living in pre-World War One Russia, which would soon become the Soviet Union. To escape the war, his family moved to Harbin, China. Jews had been migrating there ever since the late 19th century. By 1908, there were about 8,000 Jews in the city. That number increased substantially during World War One, the Russian Revolution, and the Russian Civil war, reaching 10,000–15,000 by the early 1930s. This growth of the population led to a Jewish secondary school, a hospital, a Jewish library, a new Shul, a school for professional education for women, and a hostel for the elderly were established. In addition to the day-to-day Jewish life increasing, the

Zionist movement did as well. Zionism was banned in the Soviet Union, but not in Harbin. The first of three Zionist conferences of the Jewish communities of the Far East was held in Harbin in December 1937.

There were problems living in Harbin, though, such as the economic crisis in 1928, as well as the Japanese occupation of the Manchurian province (which includes Harbin) that caused terror and extortion to the Jews. Yet, as is their wont to do, the Jews held on, even through the Soviet occupation of Harbin from 1945-1947 that saw many of their leaders hauled off to Russia.

By the time the State of Israel was established, the Jews in China sought out their next opportunity. Most of them emigrated West, including about 3,500 who settled in Israel, establishing a society of Chinese Jews. In that group were Werek's grandparents and their family. His father was born in 1950, and soon after, their family moved on to Canada.²

Werek is proud of his family's Chinese roots. The opportunity to play for the Chinese national team was not lost on him: “I kind of pinch myself every morning, I just feel so lucky to be given this opportunity.”³

So, what happened in Beijing? Werek and his team were blown out in every game. As for Werek, he put up one assist in four games, so it wasn't exactly a great showing for him either. But don't think for a moment that he'll stop playing the game he loves. This summer he plans on being in Tel Aviv to help run the Israel Elite Hockey League; a one-month semi-pro league. Simultaneously, Werek organizes hockey camps at the two rinks in the Tel Aviv area with part of the goal to make equipment more accessible to kids.

Ethan Werek, despite never making the NHL, is more than well-off. His heritage and his skills give him the opportunity to have a post-playing life teaching the *Continues on p.7*

BLACK MONDAY

The NFL's Broken System of Hiring Management

AMI PRISMAN

Coaches in the NFL have arguably a bigger impact on their team than coaches in any other sport. When a team's record starts to dip, or the team enters a different phase in its lifespan, managers and owners have been known to switch things up coaching-wise. The day after the NFL season is known as Black Monday because of the large number of firings that occur. Among the four coaches fired on this year's Black Monday was former Miami Dolphins head coach Brian Flores. This came as a bit of a surprise to me.

When Flores started his tenure as coach, many considered the Dolphins to have the worst roster in the league. Yet in his final two seasons he led Miami to winning records, a very impressive feat, and a testament to Flores's coaching ability. When the owner of the Dolphins released the news of the firing, he stated that "the dynamics of the football organization were not functioning at the level that [he] wanted to." Basically, Flores refused to break the rules for the Dolphins. The relationship between a head coach and an owner is a difficult one, as they often want different things. Flores revealed to the world that owner Stephen Ross offered him \$100,000 for each loss.

While it may be confusing to see an owner providing an incentive to lose, note that the more a team loses, the better pick they get in the upcoming draft. In a true show of competitiveness and morality, Flores denied the offer and ever since has been clashing with the Dolphins' management. It has also surfaced that Stephen Ross urged Flores to tamper with a prominent quarterback whose name has not been revealed. Flores denied this pressure as this would be in clear violation of the NFL's collusion rules and destroy his integrity. Considering all of these factors, it seems to me as though Brian Flores was fired for refusing to violate the rules.

A bigger issue, perhaps, happened after the fact. When Flores was fired, he left Mike Tomlin of the Steelers as the only black coach in a league of 77% black players. Still a very talented and competent coach, Flores reached out in search of his next position. He set up an interview with the New York Giants, whose former coach was fired the day after Black Monday. Before Flores had even interviewed with the Giants, he received a text message from six-time Super Bowl champion coach and former colleague Bill Belichick, congratulating him on getting the job. Confused, Flores texted



BASH ILLUSTRATION. PHOTO BY ADRIAN CURIEL ON UNSPLASH

back in hopes of confirming Bill had the right guy. As it turns out, Belichick intended to send the message to Brian **Daboll**, not Brian **Flores**, who publicly received the position a few days later. If Belichick knew who had the job before Flores even interviewed, it would suggest that Flores was only interviewed to satisfy the Rooney rule and wasn't a legitimate candidate. The Rooney rule requires NFL teams to interview ethnic minorities for vacant coaching and management positions. I can understand how it would be insulting to an accomplished coach to be sent on an interview with the purpose of just checking off a box. He also had a similar experience with the Broncos in 2019 where the organization also hired a white coach instead.

Flores is now suing the NFL for racial discrimination, claiming it violated his civil rights, and even compared the league to a plantation. Frankly, Flores's firing is much more problematic than his issues with the Giants. It would appear Flores was fired for actions that the NFL should appreciate, as he prevented tanking and collusion. I believe that it is also possible that his hesitation to break the rules for his owner decreased his value as a head coach and that could be why he didn't get the Giants' job. After all, why would a team hire a coach who is moral and won't do whatever the

organization wants?

To me, the Rooney Rule is worthless and counterproductive. Of course, if there is a rule that states that you must interview people of certain races for a position, then you will end up with teams interviewing candidates they have no interest in hiring purely because of their race. Moreover, the man that the Giants ended up hiring was more than qualified for the position. Gabel was the offensive coordinator for the Buffalo Bills who had a top five offense last year, and he developed Josh Allen from a wildly inconsistent rookie into a top five quarterback in the world. I don't think the issue here is racism. The real culprits are poor management, ineffective rules, and powerful owners in the NFL.

I do not believe that Flores did not receive the Giants head coaching position because he is black. Unfortunately, I do believe the fact he is black is the true reason he was interviewed. I still think that Brian Flores should be entitled to some compensation because he was embarrassed by the NFL, and especially the Miami Dolphins. He is a well-established coach being sent on sham interviews due to his race because of the NFL's rules, and I think he was wrongfully terminated by the Dolphins. It even became known that he turned down millions of dollars to sign a non-disclosure-agreement with the Dolphins after he was fired, which hints to onlookers that the Dolphins did indeed break some rules.

In related news, since the debacles with Flores became public, Lovie Smith was hired as the Head Coach of the Houston Texans, making him the second black head coach in the league. He is also proof that black coaches can and *do* get hired. This does not work in favour of Flores's case, as it shows that black coaches can succeed and are not just pawns to check off boxes in interviews. Perhaps more interesting still is that Flores has since been hired to be the linebacker coach for the Pittsburgh Steelers, a team that already has a black head coach. Is the Steelers' front office and ownership less racist than the average NFL team's? Did they specifically hire Flores for the publicity? I'm really not sure. With today's NFL really anything could be possible. The situation is likely to change, with new information popping up all the time. I will do my best to keep you updated.

WEREK, CONTINUED

game of hockey to those who were never exposed to it. He is able to teach skills to those who have barely seen them before, as well as the values that can be learned from the game such as working together as part of a team, sticking with a game plan, processing challenges at a high speed, and having fun at the same time. When all is said and done Werek will be able to boast that he has been

able to grow the game of hockey in both Israel and China; a claim few others to strap on a pair of skates can make!

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- 3 Keene, Louis. "His great-grandparents found refuge in China. Now this Canadian Jew is starting for its hockey team. – The Forward." *The Forward*, 8 February 2022, <https://forward.com/news/482168/ethan-werek-canadian-jewish-hockey-player-beijing-olympics/>. Accessed 9 March 2022.

Thank you to everyone who sent in a poem for this issue's writing contest!
 Congratulations to all the winners, and thank you to Dr. Nadler, Mr. Parker, and Mr. Rapp, who judged the contest!

Next issue's challenge: Write a story only 6 words long! Send in your entries to
 yael.gryn@uostudents.org, joseph.newman@yocstudents.org, or chaim.straus@yocstudents.org.

FIRST PLACE: *THREE BELLS RING* BY GRADE 12 YOC STUDENT

hear Him walk, as He comes. hear the beat, your heart drums. hear Him stalk, can't move your feet. hear Him talk – "let us meet." hear your heart, beat faster still. frozen in place, against your will. dare not move, dare not shout. something Evil, creeps about. hear His fingers, scratch the wall. hear Him creep, down the hall. although He lingers, dare not weep. for if He hears – eternal sleep.	something Evil this way walks. something Evil this way stalks. make no sound, yet start to pray. hope the footsteps fade away. hear the tapping of His thumbs. make the sound of he who grieves. something Evil this way comes, and something Evil this way leaves? breath a sigh of relief. the end was nigh, now no more grief! shed your tears, oh ye of faith! shed your fears – of the wraith! cheer in joy, you escaped your fate!	when Evil came a-calling, you escaped His hate! when Evil came a-hunting, you escaped His net – when Evil came a-searching, you denied His threat! callout and celebrate! you escaped your fate! cry out and cheer! at Evil, jeer – for when Evil came a-coming, you would persevere! silence quiet – hush – make no sound – but start to scream. hear Him croon, hear Him sing, hear His tune. And Three Bells Ring.
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SECOND PLACE: *BLACK CROW* BY MALKA MOSHKOVITS

The black crow cries
 I know what that black crow feels

The black crow cries in pain
 Life was so painful

The black crow cries without a hope in sight
 I drowned in my hopeless thoughts

The black crow cries because it can't speak
 Selective mutism they called it

The black crow opens its mouth but all that can ever come out is that cry
 Alone, in pain, hopeless, silent

The black crow cries with me as everyone says goodbye
 The black crow flies away as I settle in my eternal destination

THIRD PLACE: *GREAT DAY FOR UP!* BY DOVID KARK

Today, I plan to – Enough! Of what? Of sitting at the dusk Of the undecided day, Of sitting away from the creativity, The life, Waiting is like a knife! We must go. Where? Nowhere! It does not matter, We just must go now – I don't care how – Just start the day without a loss, Don't just brush and floss. Write your checklist of the day, But at night, when all the activities have been put away And we sit down on our carpets with Reflection.	What? Is it already one, And we haven't had fun, Just our breakfast, And we've been lying in bed With only thoughts on our head, And we pretend to be sleeping So that excitement doesn't come in peeping? Don't you know of people who wake up before the sun? Doctors, and 7/11 Workers – Those who have purpose in their lives! Repetition helps forge something greater. Never mind the habit-hater! Oh, you, lover of this time waste, Run out of your doors and make haste! We don't have time for such things, Our bodies are only puppets, and our minds control their strings.	And no pause for thought – Time can't be bought Like eggs or milk Or potatoes or silk. There is no Amazon for time Which makes it so sublime And out of reach. We can only teach Others to be Careful with it. Time isn't free. Or is it? You can use it to make a visit To a friend or cousin. Do things by the dozen! But time is consumed by all, Or is all consumed by it? Oh, How time falls from the sky, like snow. You burn it and kill it, and think I don't care; Time is plentiful, until it becomes rare.
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I OPEN THE BOOK BY LIR YISSAR

I open the book and so the journey has begun,
 Falling deep into a new world,
 Some worlds are devastating and others fun.

I open the book and all my troubles disappear,
 It's just me and my book with no one else near.

No noise can be heard other than the flipping of
 each page,
 Nothing can get me out of the hardcover cage.

I open the book and only then do I feel free,
 Free from worries and responsibility.

—HONOURABLE MENTIONS—

I close the book and the journey comes to an end,
 I am forced to say goodbye to my newfound
 friends.

I close the book and reality stares me down,
 The only thing I can do is frown.

I close the book but the story stays close,
 I cherish it like I would a rose.

I close the book, struggling to let go,
 But I'll be opening a new one again before the stars
 begin to glow.

1928 BY ADAM SCHWARTZ

It seems like our world is afloat
 It's more buoyant than a boat
 I just bought a Gucci coat
 While our wives got brand new totes
 My Rolls Royce just broke
 I didn't even let out a croak
 No one will ever be broke
 No iceberg with sink our boat
 1929 will be afloat
 Or the bank will come for my throat