

CLEAR THE STREETS! THE JUNIORS TAKE TO THE ROADS *THE INSIDE PERSPECTIVES OF YOUNG DRIVERS*

LILY SMOLACK

As we enter the next 12 months of our lives, we have reached a time when driving has become the most persistent topic of conversations throughout Grade 11. Driving is what everyone raves about: it is the new excitement, the new stress, the new distraction. And it all begins once you hit the age of 16.

Students have approached the point in their lives when they are finally eligible to receive their coveted G2 licenses, which come with the great power of pickups and drop offs, as well as driving one's friends wherever else they wish to go. 16 year olds quickly discover that having access to a car is not just a form of transportation that gets you to the next place to be, the car is the place to be.

So, what is the appeal of driving to teenagers? Why is it such a sought after rite of passage? How is it that one's life can change so immeasurably as a result of getting his/her license? I asked the students of Ulpana to share their thoughts. Below is what they had to say:

"It felt surreal, like a coming of age," Miya Moyal said after driving for the first time. "The degree of independence gained by being able to drive yourself around is unparalleled". Nava Rabinovitch complements this notion by explaining, "It's a milestone that represents growing-up, as well as maturity. We don't need to depend on our parents anymore."

For most teenagers, driving is something we

dream about, like a kid in a candy shop, as everyone wants to drive house to house to pick up their friends. According to Keira Benquesus, "We don't have to wait around for other people anymore. It's so freeing. This is a tremendous point because teenagers are given a sense of freedom when it comes to legally being allowed to drive on the roads alone. Moreover, when you no longer have to rely on parents to drive you places, you can go much farther afield to hang out with friends". Or, if you just need some alone time, Nava explains, "Even if I simply need a small, fun break, I can just go for a drive." With long school days and tests being assigned, particularly during Grade 11 - the year deemed to be the toughest of them all - juniors tend to become overloaded with work, and the need for an outlet becomes very necessary. As Nava mentioned, since driving is so accessible, it can be this outlet. And, as Miya claimed, going for a drive can help "clear our minds."

That all having been said, all the excitement is not without stress. The nerve-wracking and suspenseful worrying over passing the driving test, as well as the fear of actually driving next to other cars on the road only adds stress and anxiety to already-overwhelmed students. When preparing for and taking the test, young teenagers are afraid that they will not pass, especially after years of anticipating the moment

when they are finally able to drive. Novice driver Naomi Ross was subject to this fear before her test. Naomi shares with honesty, "I was horrified because it would be a huge inconvenience if I failed. I really just wanted my license - I waited so long."

Not only is there a pressure to pass, but students are also anxious about the actual driving itself. "I'm scared! I don't want to get in a crash," Keira, the soon-to-be-driver, fears. After driving for the first time, Nava says, "I didn't know what a lot of the buttons and gears did - I was worried I wouldn't be in control. It was nerve-wracking." For others who share this concern, Miya advises "remember to be confident, yet not over-confident. At the end of the day, it's all about balance."

As the excitement and fear of driving may not seem like the biggest deal to adults, to teenagers, such as myself, it truly is - so much so that you can hear the chatter of it around the whole school! Overall, obtaining a license is truly a significant chapter in a teenager's life, as it represents a major step into our adulthood. It is for this reason that driving has made a large commotion, integrating itself within the conversations at Ulpana. Watch out, as this year's juniors have never been more ready to hit the roads. As Naomi beautifully summarizes: "I feel like my life has finally begun." And to all other drivers on the road, drive safely! ■

HOW OCTOBER 7TH CHANGED OUR SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

SHAINDY WEITZNER

It's undeniable that the tragedies which took place on October 7th greatly impacted each and every individual within our school. Just like throughout the history of the Jewish people, we use the shadow of darkness to try and bring up some light. At Ulpanat Orot, one can observe the vast growth within our community as a positive response to the devastations of war. Our school has always been known for its tight and warm atmosphere, yet the student body and faculty have become even closer and truly united together post October 7th.

Achdut felt throughout the halls has greatly increased; people looking out more for one another, our school truly united. With everyone's suffering shared, it's easier to bond and remember to care for one another. For example, during RGC, students

were encouraged to speak up about what struggles they may be enduring as a result of this war, with the rest of the class there to comfort and commiserate. We are blessed to be part of a school which makes such an effort to bring to light all the possible methods of coping and reactions people may be experiencing. When teachers enlightened Ulpana students on the diversified ways of emotional expression after full-school davening in the morning, they spread awareness for those who may not understand their own suffering, or that of others. We are reminded of our compassion, and the vitality of conveying such.

Further, Ulpana has broadened its means of emotional space. After heartfelt assemblies and meaningful talks about the war by guest speakers, many students felt these presentations intensely, often triggering tears. Ulpana made sure to embrace these passionate sentiments by consistently reminding students that the faculty is here to listen and sympathize, empowering students to feel heard and express themselves as they may need.

On a spiritual level, our school has brought more positive light through deeper kavanah in tefillah. The corkboard and printouts of soldiers' names that students started handing out during davening

brought a stronger connection to the prayers being spoken. Furthermore, chesed across the school has expanded. Many committees and motions in honour of the soldiers as well as families affected by the war have been established. For instance, the substantial number of challah-bakes done in recognition of victims of the war, gathering then sending food and resources to the Israeli army, and writing cards to soldiers and their wives has let our school community contribute to the necessary support of the people of Israel. These meaningful acts inspired students to carry out a myriad more mitzvot.

Through assemblies, guest speakers, and charitable efforts, the cataclysm of October 7th will not be ignored or forgotten. We allow some good to come along with the pain, as the environment of Ulpanat Orot has been profoundly changed by the events of October 7th. As it's said, "times of great tragedy can bring out the best in the human spirit", which is shown through our school, as the aftermath of the war led to awakening our community's achdut, empathy, motivation for chesed, and kavanah in a way like never before, beautifully strengthening Ulpana overall. ■

ALL I SEE IS RED

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE NORTH VS. SOUTH COLOUR WAR

AVINOAM FRIEDMAN

Last year YOC had a revolutionary theme for colour war, with the red team representing the North and the black team representing the South. It was an exciting concept, but from the competition's first moments, all the North students could smell the faint stench of deceit permeating the air.

After a long day of intense competition, South was declared the winner of the colour war, and, at that moment, my suspicion solidified. North had won the colour war, and I knew it. I spent the following months searching for leads, trying to get any information that could lead me to the truth, but it was to no avail. I had almost given up hope, but the return to school reinvigorated my desire for justice and redemption of the North. So I finally turned to the one place I had once feared, the admin.

I first went to the primary suspect, the Bnei Akiva Schools Director of Education, Vice Principal and Head

Disciplinarian of Or Chaim, English teacher, loving father of three, and Scourge of the MPR: Mr. Jonathan Parker. I approached his office to speak with him, knowing this walk through the halls of Or Chaim may be my last, and there he was, standing in front of me. I began questioning Mr. Parker, and he became hostile when he realized what I was trying to do. For legal reasons and fear for my safety, I cannot disclose what happened in that office, but from then on, I knew I would have to be much more discreet in my investigations.

After laying low for a couple of months, my search continued, but I found it incredibly difficult to gather information while keeping a low profile. So I decided to once again risk my life in the pursuit of a fair world; this time around I would go after another potential culprit, the Dean of Or Chaim, Teacher, and Master

of the Intercom: Mr. Gerald Lazar.

The meeting began, and I quickly realized this would not go like the last one. The instant I mentioned colour war, the colour drained from his face. The look on his face got progressively more shameful as I continued to grill him. After three hours of intense interrogation tactics, which for legal reasons I cannot disclose, he finally cracked. He couldn't say what he had done to my face, so he sent me an email transcript that I will now share with you.

jparker@bastoronto.org: Mr. Lazar—Is it done?

glazar@bastoronto.org: Yes, the traps are in place.

jparker@bastoronto.org: Thank you. We must be absolutely sure this goes according to plan. We can't have any of the STUDCO interfering by accident.

glazar@bastoronto.org: Don't worry they know not to interfere, though threatening to frame them for arson seems a bit extreme.

jparker@bastoronto.org: You can't get soft on me now! We are so close to defeating those Thornhill

scoundrels.

glazar@bastoronto.org: I don't know if I can go through with this. This is too far.

jparker@bastoronto.org: Don't quit on me now, Mr. Lazar, I need to make those Northern vermin suffer.

glazar@bastoronto.org: I'm sorry, but I'm calling it off.

jparker@bastoronto.org: Okay, fine. But, unless you want the entire student body to know about your figure skating career you'll co-operate. Don't test me...

glazar@bastoronto.org: Please don't! I'll do it! Just make sure nobody finds out about that.

jparker@bastoronto.org: Oh don't worry. No one will.

No one except me. I take no pleasure in writing this and exposing the corruption of our school, but it must be done. We cannot stand by while the Southern elite oppress their brothers up Bathurst. After publishing this, I will undoubtedly have to go into hiding for the safety of myself and my family. Keep fighting. Stay strong. Long live the North. ■

WHAT THE 2024 US ELECTION RESULTS MEAN FOR CANADA

BEN DAHARI

On November 5th 2024, the American people chose Donald J. Trump to be the next President of the United States of America. One of the most divisive figures in American history with his controversial policies and rhetoric, will surely affect Canada drastically and result in extreme ramifications across the globe. This leaves Canadians to ask the question "What will this mean for us?" Whether it is being kicked out of NATO, astronomically high tariffs, or the radicalization of Canadian politics, Trump's presidency can bring potentially devastating consequences for Canada.

Canadian NATO spending

The military spending of Canada in 2023 was \$36.7 billion dollars which makes up 1.29% of the GDP. At the Wales Summit in 2014 Canada and the rest of NATO pledged to spend 2% of their GDP on their military by 2024. 23 out of 30 NATO members are expected to reach this goal this year,

though Canada will not be one of them. Donald Trump has frequently criticized Canada's military spending and has radically suggested that Canada, a founding member of NATO, should be kicked out of NATO. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has pledged to fix this issue saying, "We are on a clear path to reach two per cent in the coming years ... Canada, along with our allies, needs to be ready for it." Trump and the Republican party refuse to give Canada a chance to meet their goal even though Trudeau has expressed his determination to reach the spending goal by 2032 and willingness to work with the US to reach it quicker. It is of the opinion of Trump and the right wing faction in the US that Canada has deliberated far too much in its solving of the NATO spending problem. Whereas the Biden administration has been unhappy about Canada's NATO spending, they hadn't threatened kicking Canada out of NATO, nor other

serious consequences. A refusal to work with Canada aligns with Trump since he believes Canada is lying and is taking advantage of the US, while Biden would have likely pushed to have the current multi year plan shortened significantly. And so, Trump still calls Canada out specifically despite many other countries such as Luxembourg, Belgium and Slovenia paying less percent of GDP than Canada while being more at risk from Russian aggression. In doing so, Trump disregards the billions of dollars and advocacy against the Russian aggression towards Ukraine which Canada has committed, emphasizing his own radical agenda that doesn't actually protect NATO members' sovereignty from Russian aggression.

Impact of Trump's Tariffs

The issues with NATO are very worrying, but do not directly impact Canadians as much as high tariffs from Trump could affect Canadian's pocketbooks drastically. Trump has

threatened a 25% tariff on Canadian goods and services, and this could cripple industries that rely heavily on trade with the United States, Canada's largest trading partner. In his previous administration, Trump imposed tariffs on Canadian aluminum and steel, sparking a brief trade war and straining relations between the two nations. A return to such protectionist policies would significantly impact key Canadian sectors like agriculture, automotive manufacturing, and energy exports. According to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce this would cost each Canadian \$1900 CAD annually and each American \$1300 USD. Thankfully our Prime Minister seems to have started to get things under control through his meeting with Trump at Mar-a-Lago Resort. After the meeting, both Trump and Trudeau praised the successes of the meeting and expressed their intentions to cooperate with each other.

THE WEST MUST GO ALL IN

COBY BERGER

On November 27, 2024 the rebels in Syria launched a shocking and surprising offensive against President Bashar al-Assad. They quickly swept through the surrounding area, and took over Syria's second largest city, Aleppo, within days. This re-escalation came as a shock to many who had forgotten that this war still existed. The conflict in Syria began with the Arab Spring in the early 2010s when protests broke out across the Arab world, as a result of a mass movement to dispose of corrupt Arab governments.

In Syria, this widespread Arab protest movement initially became

present in mass demonstrations against the Syrian government. This was followed by different Syrian opposition factions joining together in a common purpose of overthrowing the government. The civil war went on for a decade, until 2020, when Russia and Turkey were able to work out a ceasefire that limited the rebels to the province of Idlib. For the last few years, things appeared to be more stable. However, after the different rebel factions recently regrouped in a coalition called the 'Military Operations Command', this conflict has reignited in all its might.

It is important to note that the Syrian civil war never truly ended. It was merely a stalemate, a regrouping of sorts in order for the rebels to regather their wits and try again. And this isn't the only war in the world that hasn't officially wrapped itself up.

The Korean War? There's a longstanding ceasefire, but the war never came to a definitive conclusion. Afghanistan and Iraq? Technically you could say that Afghanistan ended with the American withdrawal (at the expense of the rise of the Taliban), but American forces are still in Iraq to this day. And the list goes on.

The problem nowadays is that conflicts don't come to a complete and full end. They only pause in temporary ceasefires and stalemates that ultimately wear down over time. Wars must be won. When wars are not completed, it leads to violence, which leads to instability, and ultimately the rise of extremists and terrorists who thrive on political instability. The West must learn from Syria and make sure that if they are to enter or support a war, that they will put their full force into it. If they are going

to help opposition forces in Islamic and totalitarian states they had better be going all in behind them. When China invades Taiwan, for example, The West needs to be prepared to defend it completely. Because if they don't, then just maybe it's better that the West doesn't get involved in the first place.

It's a scary time to be living in right now, with perhaps the most tension felt since the Cold War era, or perhaps even WW2. It is vital for our countries to back their allies in full, and not partially, and to fight against forces of evil. Because if we don't support our allies, what kind of friends are we? ■

Exportation of MAGA Extremism

The influence of Donald Trump and his MAGA movement extends beyond trade and NATO, seeping into the fabric of Canadian politics, fueling polarization and radicalization. His dangerous rhetoric and divisive policies embolden far-right groups in Canada, amplifying xenophobic, anti-immigrant, and anti-establishment sentiments. Canada's right wing now repeats Trumpian ideals, such as prioritizing "Canada First" policies, rejecting climate initiatives, and promoting conspiracy theories, gaining traction among disenchanted voters. As these influences grow, Canada risks straying from its traditionally moderate, inclusive political landscape, to a more fragmented society between extremists on the right and centre left moderates.

The election of Donald Trump marks the beginning of a likely devastating point in Canadian history damaging its international alliances, economic stability and political landscape. As Canada struggles in response to the ripple effects Trump's presidency will cause, it must meet these challenges by reinforcing its commitment to multilateralism, economic growth and combating extremism. Hopefully, our Prime Minister will be able to curb Trump's radical vengeance for Canada and more or less leave us at the status quo. ■

THE RED TSUNAMI

NETANEL YOSIPOVICH

Donald Trump's political career was over. He had just lost the 2020 election convincingly, his supporters incited a mob at the Capitol, and Nikki Haley was the likely candidate for 2024. Also, he got convicted on 34 felony counts, in a New York court with a judge who had a conflict of interest, with a \$15 donation to Joe Biden's campaign, NBC News reported, as well as \$10 donations to groups called the "Progressive Turn-out Project" and "Stop Republicans" (Business Mirror, 2024), and by a jury of his 'peers', 12 people from Manhattan (86.4% of Manhattanites voted for Biden in 2020) (Best Places, 2024), on a prosecution which Democratic Sen. John Fetterman called "politically motivated and weaponized" (Fox News, 2024a).

Things were looking bad for Trump, but then came the debate and Joe Biden's political death on stage (NBC News, 2024a; Sky News Australia, 2024b). Top Democrats were shocked that he couldn't finish a sentence to save his life (Axios, 2024), either because the Adderall they gave him before the debate wore off (New

York Post, 2024), or because they actually believed Kamala Harris when she said that Joe was in perfect condition (Sky News Australia, 2024a). And to make things even worse for the Democrats, two and a half weeks later at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania, Trump came within two centimetres of dying and came into the nomination ceremony at the RNC a martyr who took a bullet for liberty. Obviously the Democrats couldn't have that, so top level Democrats got together and proceeded to take Joe Biden out back, put a metaphorical shotgun to the back of his head like George did to Lennie, dump his body in the woods, and claim his life insurance (PBS News, 2024).

The "elderly man with a poor memory", as Special Counsel Robert Hur put it (NBC News, 2024a), was deceased from politics, so now the Democrats could inject new life into the party. That new life came in the form of one of the most unpopular Vice Presidents in the history of America, Kamala Harris (Wisconsin Watch, 2024), a Jamaican-Indian woman who had risen the ranks of California politics by having an affair with married man San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown (Reuters, 2024), who gave her several promotions and kickstarted her political career (Snopes, 2024). She ran for

President in 2020, but was the first one to drop out to avoid losing in her home state of California (CNN Politics, 2020), and since Joe Biden said he would choose a black woman to be vice president (CNN Politics, 2019), he picked her. Ignoring her background, the media began its 14 and a half week campaign of non stop incessant praise, calling her 'joy' (New York Magazine; NYT, 2024a), 'vibes' (NYT, 2024a; TIME, 2024), 'brat' (The Conversation, 2024; NBC News 2024b, Vanity Fair, 2024), and 'the sort of generational change that voters want' (NYM, 2024; MSNBC, 2024a; The Sun, 2024), and Democrats were eating it up. She also inherited all of Biden's donor money, \$1 billion dollars. The second debate came and went, with Donald Trump looking like a shell of his 2016 self, always getting sidetracked and not answering questions, while the tag team of Kamala and the two moderators proved enough to win the debate for Kamala (Fox News, 2024a).

In the final weeks of the election cycle, both parties tried different strategies to get voters. Trump shored up young male voters by appearing on podcasts with a large male audience, like Joe Rogan or Adin Ross,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

A SEASON TO REMEMBER

HAYELLA KERBEL

As captain of the Knights girls' basketball team, I couldn't be prouder of what our team has accomplished this season. After months of intense practices, tough games, and unforgettable moments, we finished in third place; a reflection of the hard work, heart, and hustle every player brought to the court. Looking back, this season has been nothing short of amazing. We faced fierce competition along the way, but we worked together to overcome obstacles. We've become more than just a team; we're a family that supports each other through every win, loss, and practice drill. Our coaches have pushed us to be our best, both on and off the court, and I'm grateful for their leadership and belief in us.

Now, we're gearing up for the Fuchs Mizrachi Basketball Tournament in Cleveland this weekend. It's

a chance to leave everything on the court and show what Knights basketball is all about: passion, determination, and grit. We've been working hard to perfect our skills and strengthen our team chemistry, and we're excited for the opportunity to compete at the highest level. As captain, I know we're ready. We've faced adversity, celebrated victories, and grown together as a team. No matter what happens this weekend, I'm proud of how far we've come and the journey we've shared.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us throughout the season—you've been our biggest motivators. Now it's time to give it our all and make this tournament a memorable one. Go Knights! ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

and Kamala appeared on the 'Call Her Daddy' podcast, attempting to court all of the young liberal women who were voting for her anyways (Newsweek, 2024). Trump tried to make himself seem relatable to voters, working the fry station at McDonalds and riding in a garbage truck after Biden called Republicans 'garbage.'

Going into Election Day, every news channel gave her the edge, (MSN, 2024a; Vox, 2024; Yahoo News, 2024a), and they had good reason to think that. People thought that nobody who didn't vote for him last time would change their minds, but on November 5th, the American people got the final say, ending the historic campaign of Biden/Harris and propelling Trump to the greatest

political comeback in history, and whether you love the guy or hate him, this resounding victory smells like divine intervention. Anti-Zionist networks like MSNBC (2024a, 2024b) and CNN (2024a, 2024b, 2024c, 2024d) both lost over 30% of their viewership in the weeks following the victory (Yahoo News, 2024c), and suddenly other countries are more willing to work with the U.S towards peace. Trump has pledged a lot of things and it's easy to be hopeful, but only time will tell if things get better or the Democrats were right. ■

REFERENCES FOR "WHAT THE 2024 US ELECTION RESULTS MEAN FOR CANADA" BY BEN DAHARI AND "THE RED TSUNAMI" BY NETANEL YOSIPOVICH CAN BE FOUND BY SCANNING THE QR CODE.



FIVE KEY DIFFERENCE MAKERS THAT WILL TAKE THE BILLS TO THE SUPERBOWL

EITAN YUNGER

After 13 weeks of football, the Buffalo Bills are sitting comfortably as the 1st seed in the AFC East, having already clinched the division title and its guaranteed playoff spot. In the offseason, many experts wrongly predicted that the Bills would use this season to do a "mini-rebuild" and compensate for the loss of their two most productive wide receivers (Stefon Diggs and Gabe Davis), their star center (Mitch Morse) and arguably the best safety duo in the NFL (Micah Hyde and Jordan Poyer). On the contrary, the Bills have dominated thus far this season, and after a recent win against the Chiefs, they are the undisputed best team in the AFC going into December. But what caused this? I am going to highlight six players whom I think made a huge difference so far, and if they keep it up, could take the Bills all the way this year:

1. Keon Coleman

After the losses of Davis and Diggs, the Bills were in desperate need of a new receiver. And lucky for Buffalo, rookie Keon Coleman stepped it up. Drafted in the second round by the Bills, he has created amazing chemistry with QB Josh Allen, and is making impressive catches that usually only veteran receivers can pull off. If he keeps it up, the Bills can have a solid duo of him and the recently traded for Amari Cooper going into the playoffs.

2. Connor McGovern

After Mitch Morse's departure, Connor McGovern has really stepped up and proven his worth as an elite anchor in the Bills offensive line. Many fans were worried that the offensive line would fall apart because Morse was gone, but McGovern proved them wrong and has done

an excellent job protecting Josh Allen so far. Allen is on track to record a career low 20 sacks this season thanks to McGovern's blocking.

3. Matt Milano

The Bills have done great so far without the All-Pro linebacker, who has been out the entire season with a bicep injury, but his return could really cement the Bills' defense as Superbowl caliber.

4. Damar Hamlin and Taylor Rapp

Both Hamlin and Rapp were backups for Hyde and Poyer last season, and now that Hyde and Poyer are gone, they became the starting safeties. Hamlin and Rapp stepped it up, are putting up impressive numbers and are shutting down some of the best offenses in the NFL, such as Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs recently. Hyde and Poyer combined for 154 combined tackles last season, and Rapp and Hamlin are projected to get around 200 this time around. Special shout out to Hamlin who is doing all this, despite nearly dying on the field two years ago versus the Bengals.

5. Josh Allen

There's not much to say about Allen. He once again is putting up an MVP-caliber season (-250 MVP odds), even though the team around him has changed drastically. He is cementing his legacy as one of the Bills' greatest players ever, and is looking as impressive as ever. The future looks bright in Buffalo! ■

Works Cited:

ESPN. (2024). Buffalo Bills stats. ESPN. https://www.espn.com/nfl/team/stats/_/name/buf/buffalo-bills