

THE LION'S ROAR

The Leffell School • April 2024



A True Renaissance Man: A
conversation with Ira Huttner pg. 6

Letter from the Editors

Hello. We are thrilled to publish our first edition as the new Editors-in-Chief of The Lion's Roar. In our new term, we have collaborated with Leffell Voices, another TLS publication, and we are proud to have a staff of hardworking, creative leaders.

This issue features some of our new initiatives, including articles from each grade in the high school, as well as an eighth grader. We have games, art-work, and a focus on culture, and we are incredibly proud of all of the work that our staff and contributing members have put into this issue.

Please continue to check our Instagram (@tlroar) and website for new articles, and we hope you enjoy this issue.

Sincerely,

Ary Hammerman and Sophie Zuckerman

Editorial Policy

The Lion's Roar is a student-run newspaper, published periodically throughout the year, as well as continuously online. Student editors make content decisions, and the newspaper is considered a forum written by and for the students. It is, however, reviewed by the administration prior to printing, and the administration reserves the right to withhold from publication any articles it deems inappropriate. Suggestions and comments are accepted and encouraged, and they can be made anonymously. Signed Letters for the Editor are also encouraged. The Lion's Roar reserves the right to edit letters for space or content in order to maintain our standards, and letters will not be considered for publication if deemed inappropriate or if unsigned.

Mission Statement

We aim for transparency.
 We aim for objectivity.
 We aim for accuracy.
 We aim for timeliness.
 And most importantly, we aim for truth, while maintaining the utmost respect for our school.
 We promise to voice public opinion.
 We promise not to skew information to our own interests, and we promise to uphold the same high standards for every article we publish.
 We hope to establish our publication's role as the voice for the student body, and we

Note on Current Events

The Leffell School stands with Israel during the ongoing situation in Israel and Gaza, and we pray for the safe return of all of the hostages taken since October 7th.

Connections Answers

Dr. _____: Dr. Aviv, Dr. Blank, Dr. Kay, Dr. Wassser, **History department**: Mr. Shontz, Ms. LaGreca, Ms. Moskowitz, Ms. Goldman, **Goes by first name**: Elisha Andon, Rachel Kirshbaum, Cara Levine, Tavi Kaslowe, **Children in the school**: Ms. Bennett, Rabbi Pell, Mr. Mond, Morah Abecassis

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Making Every Minute Count: Debating the school schedule at TLS

by Ranit Berman

The bell rings. Everyone rushes to class, knowing that the second they step foot into the classroom, they will begin a cycle of classes that won't end until Kehilah begins at 3:50. But before they can think about anything past lunch, they have to sit through a 70-minute first period class. And for some, it's not that easy.

Many public schools let out school up to two hours before TLS. There have been designs set in place to allow students at Leffell to take nine courses, which include both secular and Judaic studies. There are several opinions about the length and structure of a typical day at TLS.

"Today our students take 7 required courses and up to 2 elective courses," High School Principal Eric Bassin said. "Having enough time for all those, plus the things we do besides classes like Tefillah, lunch, advisory, PE, and things like that - all those were part of the factors that not only determined the length of the day, but also the start time and end time specifically."

Along with the nine main courses, TLS students also have Kehilah after school every day. Freshman Olivia Goldman mentioned that to her, Kehilah is not necessary and should be made optional.

"It's pretty hard to work during Kehilah," Goldman said. "And it is difficult for me to work in an environment where everyone's talking."

Many students use their Kehilah time to either get work done, meet with teachers, make up tests, or hang out with friends. When they are not in the main building with the others, the players from TLS sports teams are getting ready for sports practice, or warming up for a game.

"The question was," Bassin said, "how late in the day can we go where student-athletes would not have to leave class early but it wouldn't be too late that they can't start a game on time."

Not only can it be difficult for students to get home so late, but the day starts early, and it can be hard to get up early in the morning and come to school well-rested after being up for a lot of the night working on homework.

"If I could change anything, I honestly just want school to start later," Goldman said. "We could have a lot more time to sleep in the morning because even just the change from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. wake up could have a huge positive impact on people who have to stay up really late."

Many people get home late after various after-school activities and then have to be able to finish their homework in time. On top of this, some students have other personal obligations that postpone their homework to even later. When confined to a very tight schedule both in school and out, many people expressed



that the 70-minute class periods have both pros and cons.

"I'm unable to sit still for 70 minutes straight," Goldman said. "I think that the classes throughout the day are good lengths, but 70-minute periods should not exist."

Some teachers recognize the 70-minute class periods can be very overwhelming sometimes.

"I would say that the first period, the 70-minute classes sometimes feel a bit long," High School English Teacher Rebecca Samel said. "It's kind of hit or miss for me. I would say sometimes I have the perfect lesson and I'm really thankful for the extra time, and sometimes I just think that no one's attention span is this long. This is too much. The kids are tired. I'm worried that I'm sort of losing students by the end of those classes."

Similar to Samel, Bassin also feels like the 70-minute class periods could be a "hit or miss", depending on the lesson plan and if it can hold the attention of these students for more than an hour.

"It's often more a function of what is happening during the class than the number of minutes itself," Bassin said. "You could have a 70 minute period that feels really quick because you are doing two or three or four different activities or doing a lab or something in depth, interesting, engaging and interactive. Or you could have a 70 minute period that feels really long because it is just a 70 minute lecture. I think the 55 [minute periods] feel about right."

Since Samel had worked in the middle school here at TLS prior to her switch to the high school, she shared her opinion on the structure and length of the day here compared to the middle school.

"The middle school day felt pretty jam-packed and like 'go go go' to me," Samel said. "The class periods are shorter, which also meant that my prep periods were shorter. We also had three supervisory duties to do every week. As opposed to here, we only have one that we have to do every week. I felt like I had a lot less time to kind of plan and get ready during the school day, and it just felt kind of like faster paced and a little bit more exhausting at the middle school, but I appreciate that the middle school gets out earlier."

For many of us, it is clear that the school start and end times are the most difficult part of the day, and the structure isn't a concern to most people in their different roles.

BATTLING BURNOUT

Navigating mental health in high school

by Gabriella Rascoff

Mental health is incredibly important, yet can be easily overlooked when it comes to burnout. Some symptoms of burnout include feeling worn out, tired, and experiencing loss of appetite, increase of appetite, or headaches.

"Sometimes it feels like there is too much work to be done to overcome burnout," said TLS psychologist Dr. Bill Blank. Feeling as if you are nearly drowning beneath the tremendous workload may lead high school students to feel overwhelmed and burnt out.

"There is too much to be done, as well as soccer or dance or theater," said Dr. Blank.

High school students have the tendency to receive an overloading amount of work over weekends, there is little time for them to completely feel ready to go into the next week relaxed and well rested.

"An important part of burnout is not being able to recharge," middle school psychologist Dr. Michelle Jasper-Brody said.

Although it may be difficult not to diagnose yourself with burnout the minute

you feel anxious or stressed, burnout is mostly caused by a long term stress inducer. For some, burnout can feel as though you have no energy or motivation, but for others, it can manifest itself as increased or lowered hunger and/or fatigue. Burnout appears differently on different people, so it may be difficult to see burnout in someone else- especially if they are struggling with different symptoms than yourself.

"I think burnout happens when people are stressed; but not just for a short period of time, for days and days or a week at a time," Dr. Blank said.

Overall, burnout is unfortunately pretty common amongst high school students, and it is very beneficial to understand what is causing your or one of your friend's burn out, and how you can assist them in recovering from it.

If you are grappling with burnout, doctors recommend a few ways for your mental health to recover. Incorporate five minutes of meditation or breathing into your day. Try the Headspace app for inspiration. It can never hurt to be kind. In fact, showing kindness to others can actually help you feel happier. It can make your sense of community feel stronger as well. Being kind can be as simple as holding the door open for someone.

Ignite Your Light - WRITE!

by Jakey Lebwohl

Among the skills that our school seeks to impart on its students, the ability to write stands alone. I am not talking about the handwriting classes we had in elementary school; to write successfully is to be expressive enough to get your thoughts on paper, stylistic enough to develop your own voice, and relentless enough to revise your work until it makes any sense at all. Nothing is more unnatural and more frustrating. Yet the skill is undeniably crucial to us as learners, as Jews, and as humans. In the increasingly shortcut-filled world we live in, we are in constant danger of losing our voices. The best way to reclaim this crucial aspect of our identity, though, will be the same as it has been for thousands of years: to develop our thoughts into words, our words into writing, our writing into tradition. The lifelong battle for our voices begins in our schools. For almost all students, TLS is the only real place to practice writing. Currently at TLS, our English classes dedicate roughly half of the class's time to analytical writing, alongside the reading of classic dramas, novels, and poems. In history, we learn how to construct thesis statements and do document-based analysis, in order to enrich our understanding. But these perfunctory interactions with writing are not nearly enough. We need to be writing for its own sake, and above all we need to be writing more.



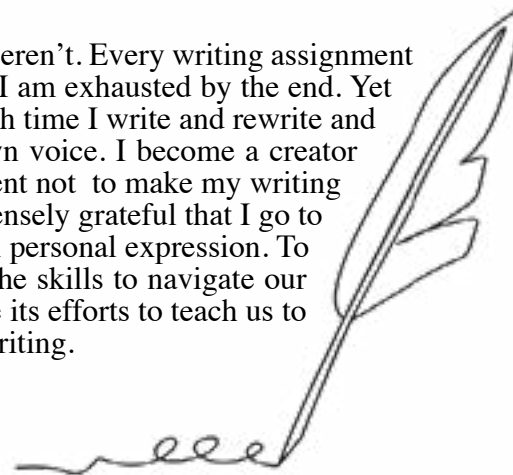
Practically, the benefits of writing are as manifold as the components that go into good writing. Communicating ideas effectively forces a writer to crystallize their own knowledge, making their thought processes more orderly. Elegant phrasing is easier to understand, more enjoyable to read, and quicker to grade. And firsthand experience attempting to achieve clarity, concision, and flair is essential for understanding the writing of others. Learning to write deepens students' appreciation for the classics as they note the ingenious ways authors accomplish the same tasks they themselves are struggling with.

In order to take advantage of the benefits, students should be honing their

writing in every class and in as many contexts as possible. Analytical writing should continue, but we should see more persuasive writing in English and technical writing in Science. Writing about Jewish liturgy and literature is a unique skill that should be cultivated in our Tanakh and Talmud classes. Like every challenge of education, writing must be attacked from all angles.

It is impossible to address this topic without dwelling on the recent developments in language assistants that will unquestionably change the way we communicate. These tools make it much more difficult to cultivate our own voices. In response, students must work all the harder to find their own unique voices, and teachers must create a learning environment that supports that process. Any teacher who assigns writing to their class needs to recognize the ease with which students can use digital aids to avoid the painful process of writing. We (administrators, teachers, and even students) need to stare large language models in the face and view them as allies, which they are intended to be, instead of adversaries. Teachers should make clear how easy it is to spot a ChatGPT-constructed essay, and they should show students how similar tools can improve critical thinking instead of removing the need for it altogether. Hopefully, assignments built to exploit the incredible opportunities available online will be more resilient to change than those that refuse to acknowledge their usefulness at all.

Why is writing so difficult? I wish it weren't. Every writing assignment seems daunting at the beginning, and I am exhausted by the end. Yet each time I type out a final period, each time I write and rewrite and rewrite some more, I discover my own voice. I become a creator of my own. I complete each assignment not to make my writing easier but to make it better. I am immensely grateful that I go to a school that places great emphasis on personal expression. To best prepare us as literate Jews with the skills to navigate our complex identities, TLS must increase its efforts to teach us to argue, analyze, and explain through writing.



Picking Back Up the Book

by Isaiah Yolcut (8th grade contributor)

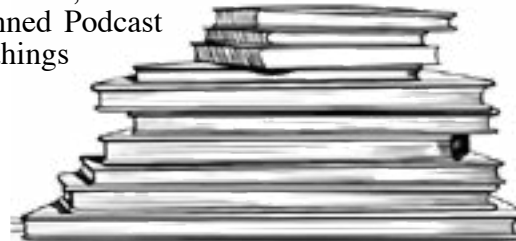
You turn the page, and your imagination springs to life. Doesn't that sound wonderful? In books, you can find a land of endless stories from beyond this world. You can prance through fields of golden wheat, attack a cruel dragon, and save a princess. Then, you hear your phone ding. You close the book.. The story is over, even if the book is not. The screen draws the eyes of the formerly engrossed reader to social media. The book lies on the ground, abandoned, an adventure left unfinished. Unfortunately, teens across America have rejected books, and with that, they've lost out on possibilities to enrich themselves that cannot be replicated simply by using smartphones.

Since the late 1990s, when the supposed technological wonder was invented, teens have left their books on the shelves to gather dust. Teens have abandoned a friend, they have closed a door, and they have silenced a helpful voice. Young people have felt bored by the crisp pages and instead have turned to videos and games on their devices, despite the fact that reading benefits adolescents in many ways. One of these ways is that it develops empathy in the reader. Many studies show that by reading, students have analyzed what they read and connected it to their personal lives. One study, done by two professors at Harvard Business School in 2021, challenged students to read fiction and, afterward, reflect on how it made them feel. A student noted, "The story is designed to make us feel 'guilt and discomfort' because, even though we've never abandoned a man in a well, we have all looked the other way." They admit that 'it's not right.' Immersion in fiction is very beneficial to readers, as it gives examples that the reader can connect to, leading all readers, like the student, to recognize the significance of moral obligations in society. Another student in this class remarked, "We do this all the time. 'We,' as in humanity (and myself) 'do this'—we ignore people who are clearly suffering." This

statement demonstrates that this student not only thought about how it connected to herself but the world as a whole. It is so important for students to have the skill of empathy. Especially at this point, a period in which terrorism, humanitarian crises, and cruel wars plague the human race, empathy in young people is in high demand because of these tragedies. Often the tendency is for individuals to adopt a closed mind towards those who hold different ideas and perspectives from them, leading to a lack of tolerance that can escalate into violent conflict and a lack of empathy. This is unacceptable. There are so many other issues that need to be dealt with and through empathy, teens, the leaders of tomorrow, can end these disasters. But, teens have instead gone to their phones over books, leading to a significant drop in their empathy and other emotions that could and should have been cultivated by reading.

Now, phones are among the most innovative inventions of our time. Every year, they get more and more advanced, and in turn, more helpful. I adore my iPhone 14. I have had it for half a year now and it has entertained me and improved my productivity. I have my calendar on my phone and use it to communicate with friends and family, read new articles such as the New York Times and the Washington Post, and listen to podcasts, such as The Unplanned Podcast and the Broadway Podcast. These things bring me so much joy.

Scan here to read more:



What to Put On Your Foot: TLS's students' shoes of choice

by Abby Kass

From the hard stomp of a Nike shoe to the soft fluffiness of a pair of Uggs, there is a variety of shoes that are seen roaming the hallways every day at TLS. There are certain factors, such as comfort or trend that lead to more shoes than others being worn by students. Is there one pair of shoes that have it all and reign supreme? But, most importantly, do TLS students have cool shoes or do they need to raise the bar for footwear?

Freshman Edin Masry owns a pair of Air Jordan Ones and especially loves them because of the level of customization available.

"The reason I like Air Jordan Ones is even though they're basic shoes, they come in so many different colors and styles," Masry said. "For me, I have purple and black, and I can buy them in platform like I have and with the zipper."

Senior Mathew Hirsch wears a pair of On-Cloud shoes, and he wears them because of their specific structure and versatility.

"These shoes don't have the tongue, it's like a sock," Hirsch said. "When the shoes have the tongue, no matter how tight I tie the laces, it cuts off the circulation in my foot. They're comfortable, efficient, and a shoe for all uses."

Students have to choose between shoes that are comfortable or trendy.

"I lean more towards what other people are wearing and what's trendy," Masry said. "For me personally, I think it's style over comfort. Like, my feet are killing me but the shoes are cute."

Freshman Dylan Hecht chooses to wear a pair of New Balance 574s due to their reliability, instead of their trend. "It's kind of like an everywhere shoe," Hecht said. "New Balances are big right now, they're definitely trendy, but I needed an everyday shoe."

Sophomore Bailey Levin believes that it is essential to keep in mind school when purchasing shoes: and that's why she bought her easy-to-slip-on and fur-lined Ugg Minis.

"I've had Uggs in the past and they're very comfortable and durable," Levin said. "They're easy to slip on and [are] versatile. Ballet flats are a trend right now, but I wouldn't buy those because I go to school five days a week and I'm not going to wear ballet flats to school."

Trend versus comfort may not be the right juxtaposition when discussing the characteristics of shoes. Perhaps, a critical component is missing from the equation.

"Comfort is more important," Hirsch said. "I wouldn't say that comfort is the right comparison though. I think trend and comfort don't clash enough. I think trend versus functionality is better."

Hecht believes that it is essential for a shoe to have a mix of trend and comfort, which certain shoes do obtain.

"The best pair of shoes to wear to school is a pair of Jordans," Hecht said. "I think you should get a good mixture of both trendy and comfortable for a school shoe, specifically, Jordan 3s are a good mixture of both."

Whether it is due to the fit, trend, or look, there are some shoes that students especially dislike.

"I just don't feel like it's good to be wearing slippers in a school environment," Masry said. "For shoes that are not in style, I feel like Air Max 97s and FILAs are kind of out of style."

"Does TLS need to up their shoe game? Some seem to think so, notably when it comes to overwearing certain brands."

"A hundred percent we need to up our game," Levin said. "Everyone wears the same thing and I feel like we need to work on developing our own styles. For example, we definitely over-wear Nike shoes."



A True Renaissance Man: A conversation with Ira Huttner

by Sophie Zuckerman

A student, a teacher, a fabricator, and a chef. All of these careers can describe Ira Huttner, Maker Space Associate/Design Consultant and Head of the Food Preservation Program. Huttner has been working at Leffell for five years and has become a vital part of the TLS Community. This year, Huttner has enrolled in various Judaic classes at TLS, and has become a part-time student in addition to being a faculty member. Huttner’s relationship with TLS, through working and learning, embodies many Jewish values that TLS represents.

Before Huttner became a student at Leffell, he got involved in the Engineering & Entrepreneurship Department, known as E2. It was truly by chance that Huttner found his way to TLS.

“My wife was the director of the Dorot office in Westchester when I started volunteering here at Schechter,” Huttner said. “And one of the activities that she initiated was an intergenerational chess program with Solomon Schetcher students and Dorot’s senior adults. My wife came into school early that fall semester and Dr. Aviv noticed her and said, ‘Are you Pattie Harte?’ and Dr. Aviv said ‘I used to work as your summer intern in NYANA (New York Association of New Immigrants) back in ‘91’. At that point, Dr. Aviv showed my wife the INC and the Fab Lab and explained the program he developed. My wife heard that he had workshops, and asked him if they take volunteers, and Dr. Aviv said ‘No, but we are going to have a Tikun HaOlam event’ and offered that I could volunteer there.”

Huttner has experience in fabrication, woodworking, and topics that relate to the E2 department. For this reason, he fit right in at TLS.

“I reached Dr. Aviv, and he offered for me to come and help at that event, which I did,” Huttner said. “At the end of the day I said to Danny, ‘This was a great experience, thank you so much for allowing me to participate in it’, and Dr Aviv told me I was welcome to come back any time, and I never left.”

Huttner has become a vital part of the E2 Department, and he is an important person in many ways in the building. Before his time at TLS, Huttner had a career in technology. Now he does what he can in our school.

“I am here to be helpful,” Huttner said. “I try to help with the STEM Program. Also, a couple years ago I read that the school was looking for ideas for Wednesday’s Activities Workshops and thought that students might like to learn some old school techniques on how to pickle vegetables, cure meat, and how to smoke foods. I now teach a class on how to do all of that.”

For Huttner, the community that TLS has offered him in his time here has been more than he can imagine. Huttner came here to volunteer and put his skills to good use, but he has been given back so much more.

“I recently had spinal surgery last summer,” Huttner said. “It was a major operation and members from the Leffell community, and members of my synagogue came out to be helpful with my recovery. That experience opened my heart to be more involved in both these Jewish communities. In August, I let Dr. Kay know that I had a major spinal surgery, and that it was unclear if I would be able to return back to school in September and teach. Dr. Kay asked what he could do to help, and he asked if we needed meals. I said we really don’t need food delivered, and it would be very helpful if people could come and walk with me, as walking would be the key to my recovery. Dr. Kay released an email to the staff, and all of the sudden, I was getting invitations from all these people I had never met before to walk.”

After his surgery, Huttner wanted to become more involved in his Jewish heritage. Though Huttner had a background in Judaism from his youth, having had a Bar Mitzvah, he wanted a deeper connection. Huttner’s desire to learn more led him down a surprising, yet moving path.

“I have always wanted to learn how to read Torah, but did not remember how

to pronounce all of the Hebrew characters I learned 60 years ago when I was Bar Mitzvah age.” Huttner said. “So I asked Rabbi Pell if I could take classes at the school. This is an incredible institution, with a wealth of knowledge and so many learning opportunities. I decided to ask whether or not I could take some classes, like Talmud, Tanakh, and Hebrew. I went to a public school and afterward I would go to Hebrew school, but never learned the in-depth knowledge of our culture and religion. My curiosity got the better of me!”

At TLS, students are taught to have joy in Jewish learning and to be lifelong students of the Torah. Mr. Simon, a Jewish Studies teacher in the high school, explains how Huttner’s eagerness to learn truly embodies the values that TLS works to give to their students.

“Ira Huttner embodies our Kehilah’s core values,” Simon said. “Ira is demonstrating that there is always more to learn. In my Akiva class, Ira is a real Rabbi Akiva, coming to learn later in life, and giving it his all.”

Huttner is currently a member of the faculty, while also being fully enrolled in Judaic classes. Huttner is now another student at our school who is learning and keeping our Jewish heritage alive.

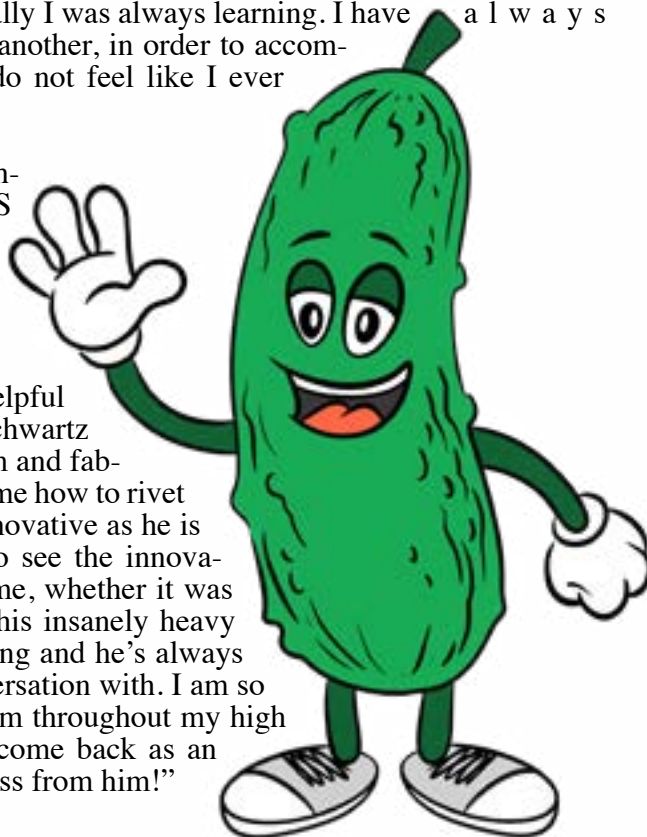
“I am currently enrolled in the Akiva Program, and auditing classes in Akiva Hebrew 1, Tanakh and Talmud,” Huttner said. “I very much enjoy learning and learning aspects of our religion that I was never really aware of. I knew the word Talmud, but I had absolutely no idea what it meant. Coming here has given me a much greater appreciation of our bible, the history of the Jewish people, and how we got to where we are now. To me this is all fascinating, because I never learned this background material in such depth before. Of course, the workload is a little challenging because my memory is not that good. I have to study so I can succeed.”

Huttner’s love for learning is not new. Learning and being a student is something that Huttner has found joy in his whole life and career.

“When asked how it was to be a high school student again, I responded that I had never stopped being a student,” Huttner said. “I have always worked on prototype projects’ - projects that were done for the first time and where the instructions to build things had never been established. My entire professional career was spent developing computer applications that have never been thought of before. Professionally I was always learning. I have always been studying in one way or another, in order to accomplish and build things, so I do not feel like I ever stopped being a student.”

While being a student, a teacher, and a friend in the TLS building, Huttner has left an impact on many students. Senior Eden Schwartz explains her relationship with Huttner.

“Ira Huttner is always so helpful and is full of information,” Schwartz said. “He helped to brainstorm and fabricate my projects and taught me how to rivet and use different tools! As innovative as he is at school, I was privileged to see the innovations he has made for his home, whether it was his work with the garden or his insanely heavy welding table. Ira is very caring and he’s always a great person to have a conversation with. I am so thankful that I got to know him throughout my high school career and I hope to come back as an alumni and take a welding class from him!”



Teachers are **indeed** **LinkedIn**

by Rafi Josselson

According to a recent [Fortune report](#), two in five Americans have more than one job. Many TLS Faculty follow this pattern. Some tutor students outside of their regular classes. Others work at camps during the summer. A few even teach for an online rabbinical seminary.

Talmud Teacher Eric Wasser is a pulpit rabbi at his synagogue, Congregation Beth Israel of the Palisades (CBIOTP). Every week he delivers sermons, facilitates adult education content over Zoom, leads shabbat services, tutors younger congregants, and generally helps to run the congregation. Wasser mentions that being a pulpit rabbi requires unique skills.

“I think, as it is in other professions these days, that you’re expected to have a myriad of skills,” Wasser said. “I’m expected to as a Rabbi of a synagogue to be an expert in Halacha [Jewish law], to be able to speak in a compelling way, you [also] have to be a little bit of what’s called the politician [and] manage personalities.”

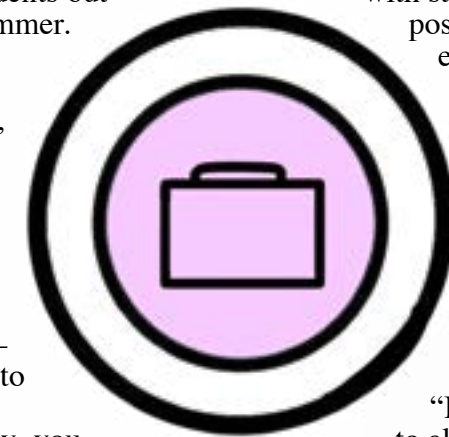
During the summer, CAS Teacher Scott Kornberg is the boy-side director of Camp Ramaquois, a day camp in Rockland County. Throughout the school year, he works on planning for the summer and recruiting counselors. During the summer, he oversees hundreds of campers and the day-to-day operations of the boys’ side. Kornberg notes the importance of communication and listening skills needed for this job.

“I think you need to be a really good listener,” Kornberg said. “You need to be a good communicator, meaning everyone needs to understand your expectations of what you want from those who are working for you. But also being a communicator with the kids so they understand that you’re not there to hurt them. You are there as their ally.”

CAS Teacher Rabbi Sandy Zisser has been running an online Rabbinical seminary, called the Pluralistic Rabbinical Seminary for five years. As the head of the seminary, he is required to interview students and work with teachers on curriculum. He also works on behind-the-scenes operations such as IT and marketing. Zisser emphasizes the leadership skills he has developed while working at the seminary.

“I’ve gotten better at, let’s say, the idea of actually being the person that’s ultimately in charge of everything,” Zisser said. “If there’s an issue, I’m the final say and I think that it took me a little bit of time to realize that ‘oh that’s me, that’s my role.’ I’m not looking for someone else, they’re looking to me. There is also being mutually respected as opposed to being feared - that was hard.”

Working at a second job gives teachers unique opportunities and experiences that enhance their teaching at TLS. Wasser connects discussions in the classroom to what he does as a pulpit rabbi.



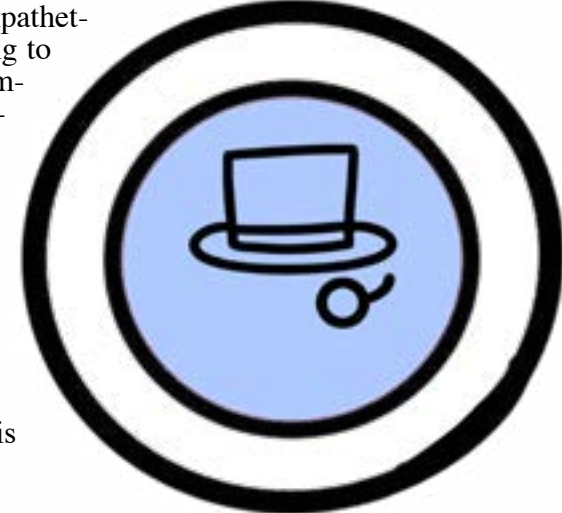
“I’m able to use some of the materials that I get even from discussions with students in some of the sermon material that I do and the opposite is true also,” Wasser said. “I like to think of the specific example when we were studying a section of the Gemara in one of my ninth-grade classes, which is that the Jewish people pass before God as sheep pass before a shepherd, I was able specifically to use that material in a sermon that I gave on the high holidays which I thought was fascinating.”

Meanwhile, Kornberg explained that working at a day camp helped him develop more skills that have helped him become a better teacher.

“I feel like the skills that I’ve learned at camp have been able to allow me to become a better teacher because I’m more patient,” Kornberg said. “I have become more empathetic. I’m willing to listen. I’m willing to provide counsel. I’m willing to communicate with families on a deeper level. I’m able to have difficult conversations with colleagues. And all of those skills I learned from working in my camp setting.”



Zisser has learned more about the unique diversity of Judaism from working at the seminary; he hopes to incorporate that into his programming.



“There is so much more that we have in common than we have that is [different],” Zisser said. “[We should] celebrate what we do together as opposed to [and not] ‘oh I don’t do it your way so my way’s right’ [The seminary] celebrates the similarities that we have as opposed to highlighting the differences between the movements and in that way, we can all sit together, study, disagree, argue, and then go for coffee afterward and still be okay.”

In a few years, TLS students, like their teachers, will be in the workforce. Wasser hopes students will be mindful of the changing expectations in the workplace.



“With the accessibility that people have to you through the internet, people are working around the clock,” Wasser said. “People ask things from you all the time. I think it’s important to be able to prioritize what needs to be taken care of and when. The most important thing to know about work is that you should be dedicated. Everybody should be dedicated to doing their best work while expressing one’s genuine self.”

The fine line between 8 and 9; A chaotic jump from middle to high school

by Dahlia Deener

How does an average freshman feel about the first month of high school? Is it the amount of work? Is it the level of difficulty? Is it the constant feeling of roaming around halls filled with strangers? Since the first day of 9th grade, various freshmen have struggled with the leap from hand holding 8th grade to daunting high school.

Freshman Maayan Yolkut, who attended middle school at TLS, expresses the difference between middle and high school support.

“The middle school did the best they could, but it’s not the same,” Yolkut said. “Academically, there’s a lot more work and some teachers are not as much there. At times, they can send you off like they would with upperclassmen who are more experienced with high school.”

From a different perspective, Freshman Taya Schwartzbard came to TLS from Schechter Bergen, and explained the leap in academic and general structure of high school compared to middle school.

“I think my middle school was a lot easier than this,” Schwartzbard said. “We didn’t have nearly as much work.” Transitioning to 9th grade is a challenging task, whether it’s coming from a hallway across the building or a school 45 minutes away.

Middle school science teacher, Lynanne Toor, and high school biology teacher, Aaron Kogut, both explain the differences they’ve seen in their student’s level of preparedness for school.

“I have been hearing back from the high school teachers so far,” Toor said. “They’re solid coming in.”

Although not perfectly, Toor feels she has tried her best to prepare her middle school students for the upcoming years. While the majority of the teachers agree, freshman teacher Kogut provides a slightly different perspective.

“Certain things that I expected high school students to know – they didn’t have those abilities just yet,” Kogut said. “There is a big jump in the expectation and the degree of difficulty for 9th graders.”

It is obvious that leaping from middle school to independent high school is not easy for most. Senior Alex Katzen communicates how she adjusted to the transition over the years.

“In the beginning [freshman year] was [hard], just adjusting to all the work, jumping from 8th grade to freshman year. But I think as time went on I was able to adjust to it,” Katzen said. “I’ve become more comfortable asking my teachers for help if I need something. That’s the biggest lesson I’ve learned.”

Compassionate Community Service; Taking a look at students who are embracing *Tikkun Olam* through volunteering

by Ari Mayblum

High school students at TLS are responsible for meeting a community service requirement in order to graduate. Freshmen, sophomores, and juniors must complete at least 40 hours of community service per year, while seniors are required to complete at least 20 hours during their first semester. While 40 hours may sound like a daunting task to some students, it amounts to just over an hour a week, which ensures that students are consistently spending time volunteering. Some students go above and beyond the Chesed requirement, committing more hours of their time to service.

Junior Donny Warkol frequently volunteers with J-Teen Leadership, a group of Jewish teenagers associated with the UJA Federation of New York. Warkol serves on J-Teen’s Executive Board and as co-chair of its philanthropy group. Warkol dedicates a large portion of his personal time to volunteering for J-Teen.

“They do a meeting once a month on Sunday and then an event another Sunday. Events are full, hands-on community service. The meetings, though, are also partially community service and are part of organizing the program. And then one Wednesday a month, there’s a one hour executive board meeting. And those are the three main types of service, but I’ve been involved in helping run events for J-Teen, which is more hours outside of the events itself.”

Warkol volunteered for 120 hours last year and hopes to reach 150 hours this year. During November 2023, Warkol organized a chesed trip on his own.

“My most memorable experience would have to be when I ran a service trip with J-Teen members to go to Harlem, learn about Harlem, and do some community service. I worked a lot outside of J-Teen and did a lot of research about Harlem to teach my peers, and then we made a nice impact with helping with some younger Jewish kids in Harlem. I thought that experience was amazing.”

Other TLS students commit their time to different causes. For example, freshman Shiloh Ben-Yehoshua volunteers for Sunday Funday, a community service organization based at the JCC in Scarsdale where volunteers play with children who have special needs. She aims to volunteer for 80 hours this year. Ben-Yehoshua is one of multiple students at TLS who volunteers at Sunday Funday and she is grateful for her opportunity to be a bright spot in others’ days.

“It’s important to me because I get to help kids with autism and developmental delays and better their day,” Ben-Yehoshua said. “And it’s also an opportunity for me to help and learn from them.”

Ben-Yehoshua has formed deep connections and true friendships with those who she has been paired up with.

“I usually am paired up with the same girl, Shiori, and she is my absolute favorite,” Ben-Yehoshua said. “We love to draw together and she loves to sing to me which I think is really cute.”

Others like to volunteer at organizations which relate to their hobbies and interests. Senior Henry Mukamal volunteers at the Adaptive Sports Foundation at Windermountain. The organization provides affordable ski lessons to those who are physically and cognitively disabled. Mukamal grew up skiing at the mountain where this community service takes place so he is passionate about volunteering there.

“Skiing is something that I’ve been doing for my whole life and that program has always been around,” Mukamal said. So I don’t want to say I watched it growing up, but I used to see them on the mountain all the time. And it was something that I was interested in. So I did it.”

Mukamal especially takes pride in this opportunity because of his love for skiing.

“Skiing is such a love for me, so I just really love that not only do I get to ski [with the foundation], but I get to really transfer that love into other people that normally wouldn’t be able to experience anything like that,” Mukamal said.

Mukamal, who volunteered for 160 hours last year, is grateful that TLS’ community service requirement pushed him to volunteer at this organization. He hopes to continue to volunteer as a ski instructor even after he graduates TLS.

“I’m going to continue to do [this]even after this requirement. I think it [the requirement] really makes a difference in the community and in some people’s volunteer acts probably for the rest of their life.”

The Pen vs. The Pixel; Handwritten or typed?

by Pdraig Harris

Between homework assignments, tests, essays, and resource handouts, approximately 32 billion sheets of paper are used across America’s schools annually. While it may be more environmentally friendly to strictly use computers for our courses, some teachers find it beneficial to use paper. In contrast, others find the computer’s functionality far more useful for today’s classroom setting. High School History teacher Ilana Moskowitz, High School English teacher Siobhan Reagan, and High School Tanakh teacher Lori Abecassis all see the benefits of having students both use paper and computers to advance their learning.

When work is typed, rather than handwritten, it becomes more legible, making it easier for our teachers to read the work, oftentimes producing faster-graded assessments.

“I prefer to read typed work,” Reagan said, “So for essays, they’re all required to be typed in a certain format that helps visual effects. It’s easier to read a page that’s double-spaced and a font that has serifs.”

Instead of dealing with a student’s messy handwriting, typed work is consistently legible. This allows teachers to easily read the writing of students.

“It [typed work] makes grading a lot faster,” Moskowitz said. “It also makes it easier to read so I don’t have to interpret any student hieroglyphics.”

When students use their computers to store thousands of documents in an organized way, it becomes easier to manage your documents and assignments. When using paper, organization is limited, and the chance of losing documents or forgetting assignments increases for both teachers and students.

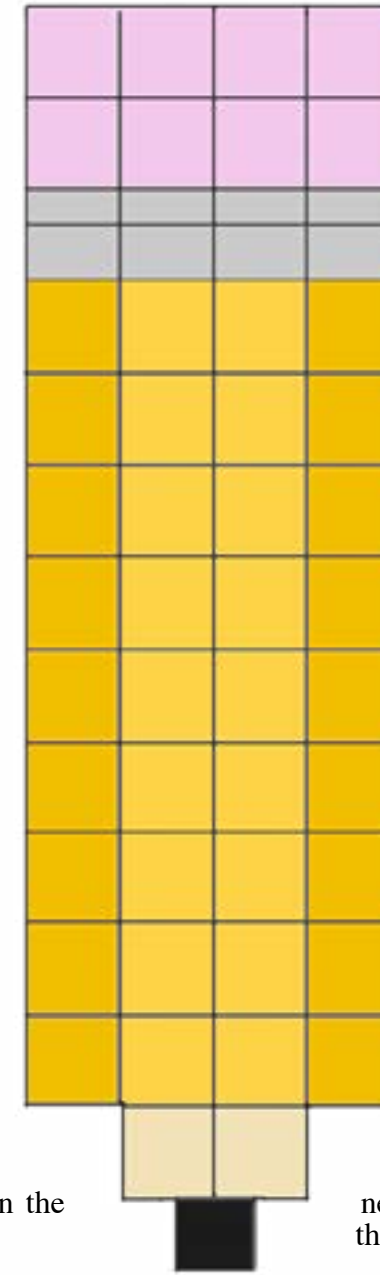
“I prefer to have work submitted via a document where I can put comments in either on the side or directly throughout the document. With paper I am afraid I can lose something, not that I lose anything, but it’s easy to misplace items,” Moskowitz said. “But if it’s digital, there’s a digital record of it and it’s also a lot faster to type responses than writing them by hand.”

Teachers also commented on the practical uses of keeping digital documents. “Using computers is great at keeping track of documents,” Regan said. “When you start writing a lot for your academic career, college career, and professional career, it is great to have secure documents kept safe like in the cloud.”

As education shifts towards an era where computers mainly contribute to learning, it is important that students build a strong foundation of handwriting notes. As an example, in the history department of TLS, high school students are gradually led to prioritize computer use.

“Early on, we discourage typing notes in ninth and tenth grades and possibly transition into using computers more in eleventh and twelfth,” Moskowitz said. “That way you at least have the attention span and ability to take notes by then.”

Adapting students to the future of learning means preparing them for college life. “As students are getting ready to go on to higher education, schools now have exams typed for the reason of professors finding it difficult to understand student penmanship,” Moskowitz said. “So if that is where students are being geared towards, if anything, students need better keyboard skills than they need handwriting skills.”



Of course, with work assigned predominantly on computers, there also comes the concern of students compromising their academic integrity.

“There is some concern about academic integrity on tests,” Moskowitz said. “But so far, it’s been okay and we have certain test software to use that will help prevent any examples of not using integrity.”

As TLS continues to make test-taking convenient for both the students and the teachers, software has been introduced to some of its students who have experienced using sites like Exam.net that avoid conflicts between teachers and a student’s academic integrity.

“My goal is to not put a stumbling block in front of a student,” Abecassis said. “I feel like if I have them use a computer during a test, I’m placing a stumbling block because they could look and want to look at other sites.”

Many teachers have expressed that when computers are used for assignments, naturally, they question if students’ work is authentically theirs since access to other sites is so easily attainable. In addition, the access to other sites may distract you from learning in class.

“You learn better when you’re not distracted by a computer or a device,” Moskowitz said. “I also think that while you’re not encouraged to ‘copy and paste’ all the time, assignments on paper encourage you to authentically write and really think about what you’re saying.”

Not only does putting the computer away support one’s attention to the lecture of a class, but it also encourages students to authentically learn and think for themselves to come up with an answer, even though it may be just one google search away. Handwriting also improves your learning by helping you contain content and reinforce memory.

“When handwriting, there have been studies that show connections made in the brain that help you remember things,” Moskowitz said. “Writing, not typing, helps with learning. The physical act of writing shouldn’t be taken away from students,” Abecassis added.

Teachers have also commented on their own connections when handwriting. “I like to handwrite because it feels connected to my thoughts; they come out of my brain, down my arm, through my hand, and to the piece of paper,” Reagan said.

With the use of paper, there also comes the debate of being environmentally friendly. Despite this concern, teachers feel that the effects of learning with pen and paper are too beneficial for paper to be left in trees.

“While using paper is not that environmentally safe, you’re also not behind a screen all day,” Moskowitz said, seeing the benefits in keeping students away from too much connection with computers and the mental fatigue from too much contact with the digital world. In the sense of prioritizing work on paper, Morah Abecassis agreed, “To me, using paper, not conserving paper, doesn’t outweigh the benefits.”

Midnights

TAYLOR SWIFT:

Her impact on Leffell students

T.S.
1989

by Bailey Goldstein

You've probably heard of Taylor Swift, the 34 year old widely beloved and respected singer-songwriter. You've certainly heard her songs, if not unwillingly (they're playing all over the internet, in a majority of stores, and even in your doctor's waiting room). But why is this? How did this artist manage to amass a net worth of over \$1 billion over the course of her career, become the winner of 12 Grammys and countless other awards and secure the title of the most Billboard Music Award wins for a female artist?

This is because her music has a certain charm. An element that causes her fans to listen to her music without end. For one, she has mastered her unique lyrical skills— she has the impressive ability to tell a story fans can relate to, but also has the capacity to make it beautiful, upbeat, and catchy. Another contributing factor in her success regarding her music style is her wide range of themes across her discography. Each and every one of her albums has a different tone, while still retaining that iconic Taylor Swift spark.

This means that there is always something for everyone. Feeling melancholic? Her album "Folklore" has some slow, rhythmic songs just for you. Feeling romantic? "Lover" will help capture that enchanting feeling with a combination of carefully chosen words and heavenly sound.

Swift's skill in capturing the core themes of life that almost every teenager can relate to makes her extremely popular amongst this age group in particular and even individuals throughout all walks of life. Because of the abundance of students here at TLS who greatly admire and often listen to Taylor Swift, the Taylor Swift club was created to cultivate a space for these individuals to meet with others who have similar interests.

Freshman Bina Sapiro Polishook is a member of the Taylor Swift club and admires the range of repertoire that she produces, which is what draws her to Swift's music in particular.

"Taylor Swift has a wide variety of music which allows me to listen to her all of the time, in any mood," Sapiro Polishook said.

"The club helps me find people with a similar music taste as mine," member freshman Ruth Katz said. "It provides me with opportunities to connect with them."

However, some people have a particular dislike for Taylor Swift. It is widely believed that her father purchased a 3%-5% stake in Big Machine Records while she was recording her first album. She also grew up in a well off family, which makes some critical of her success really being all her own doing. This aside, the fact that she created such a successful name for herself, with or without the help of others, is wildly impressive. If she was given financial help from her family, she used it in such a way to further her success and cultivate the identity she is now widely known for- a talented singer/songwriter and businesswoman.

With the many responsibilities of being a high school student – homework and extracurricular and social activities – it is important for them to have an outlet to simply let it all out.

"Taylor Swift has helped me deal with all of my stresses as a student," senior club member Matthew Hirsch said. "Listening to her empowers me to do anything my heart desires."



Taylor Swift

Advice Column

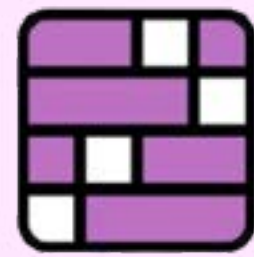
How to get away with chewing gum in class:
First, purposely show the teacher you have gum in your mouth by dramatically chewing the gum while maintaining direct eye contact with them. Once they have noticed, begin the second step. When asked to throw out the gum, as all teachers do, you walk to the trash can and pretend to do so, while secretly rolling the gum back on your tongue. Then, you can walk back to your seat and act normal again, until they catch you at least...

How to get a prom date:
Take a rock and whoever it hits is your date. Or make a list of everyone in the grade and pick someone random. Or ask your cousin. Or make a survey and have people apply to be your date. Or post on a facebook group for moms asking if anyone has a nice Jewish kid who will go with you.

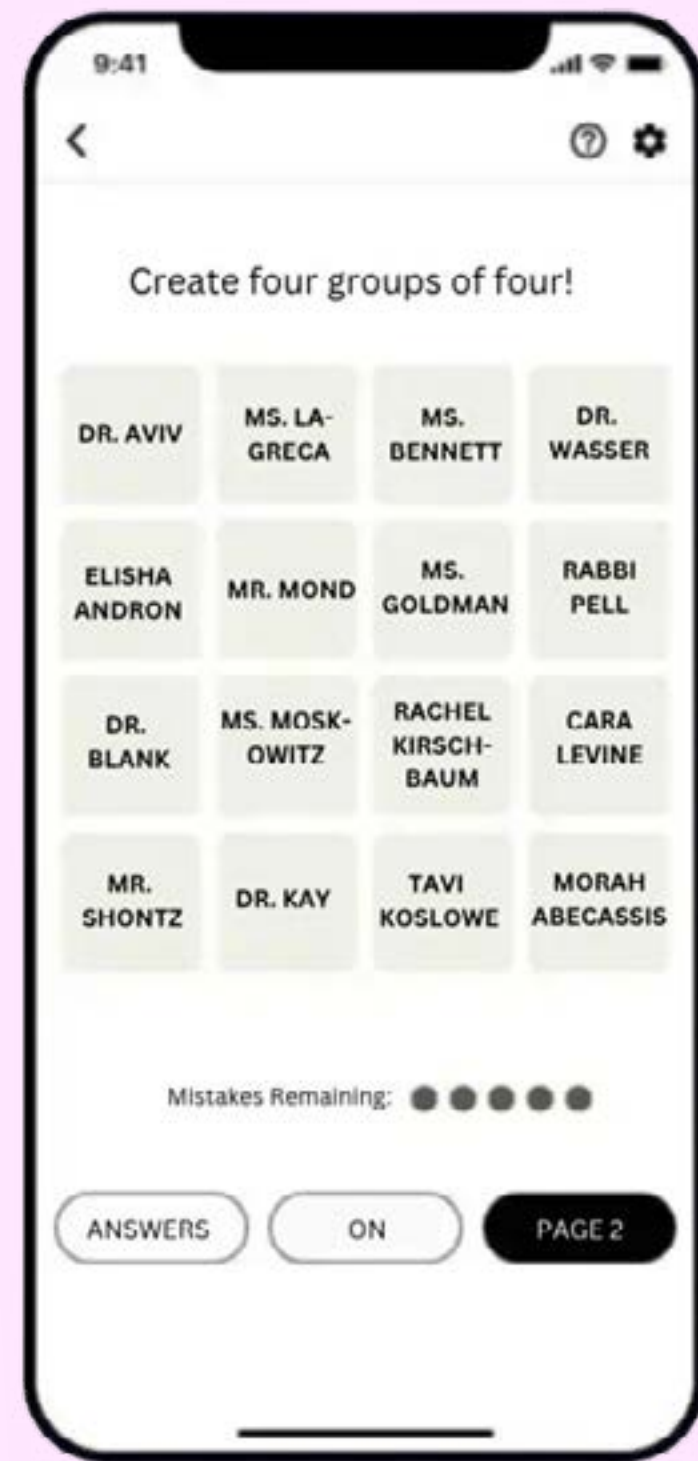
How to take a nap in class:
Make sure you grab your airplane neck pillow on the way out of the house so that you can take a nice nap in class. If you're really determined to get some work done, bring your entire bed with you so that you can get in bed and feel like you're at home. Productive no matter what. Either you're sleeping or getting work done in bed!



The Lions Roar Games

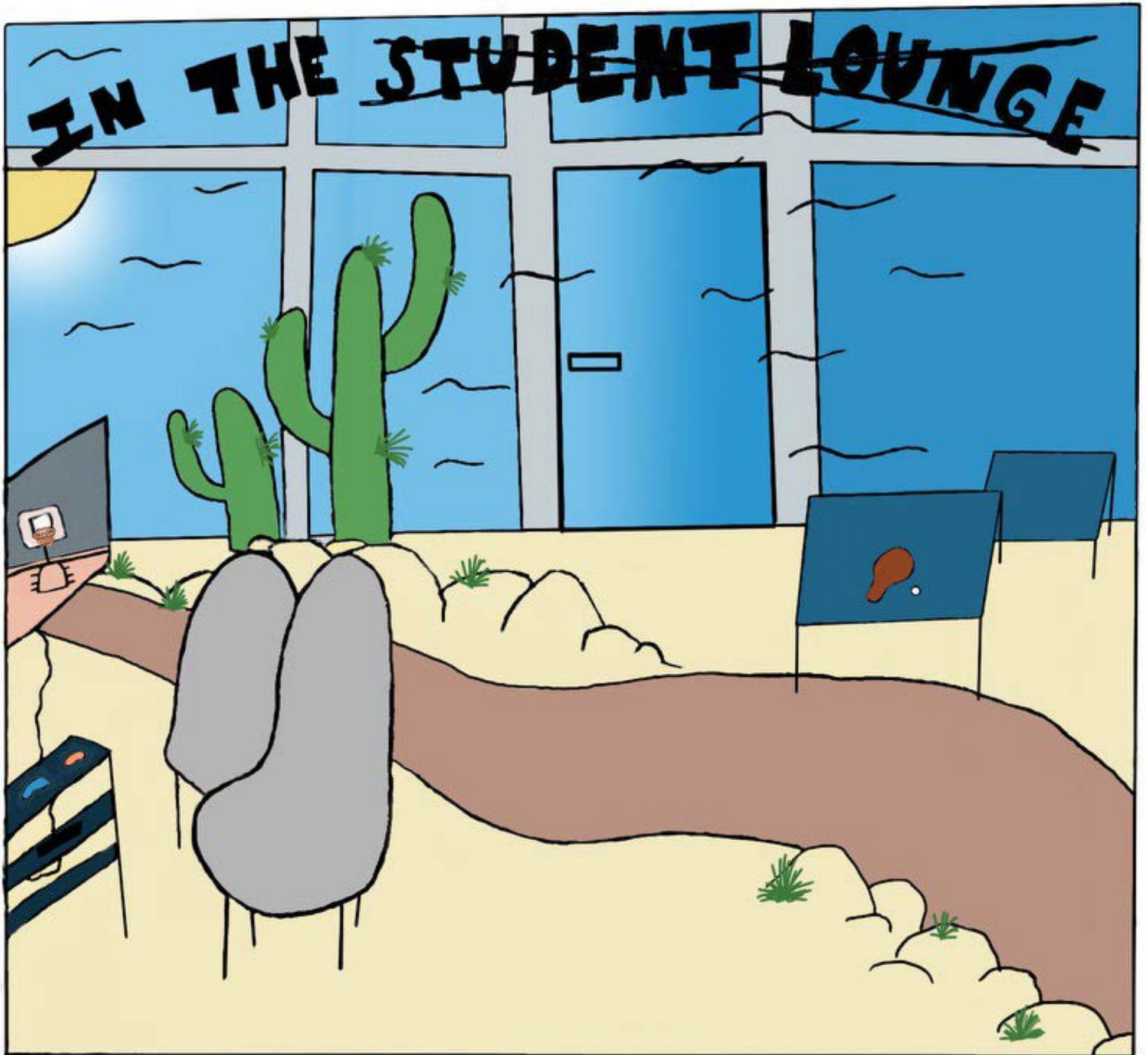


Connections



POLITICAL CARTOON

DESERT



BY RAYA CREDITOR