



## MTA DOESN'T GIVE UP!

By: Meir Ness ('22)

When it comes to making sure that all the talmidim have a great time, MTA does not allow obstacles to get in their way. Whether it is amazing trips or making a new student lounge with all kinds of arcade games, MTA has got it all. MTA doesn't even need the kids to leave the building to have fun; The Freshman Night2Unite and the Chanukah schedule are both great examples of MTA making sure the talmidim have an amazing time no matter the day.

Over the past few weeks, MTA faculty has taken the 9th-11th graders to Top Golf. It was amazing there. As a junior, I can personally say that I had so much fun going to Top Golf and

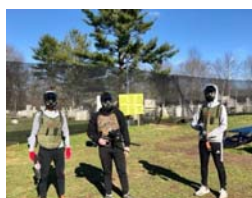
can provide fun activities in school and not have to take a trip anywhere. The Freshman night in is the perfect example and one of the greatest bonding



experiences in MTA. It allows the students a chance to meet each other and learn more about other classmates. This year, however, because of Corona, the Freshman wouldn't be able to have

this experience; Rabbi Konigsberg wanted to make sure that they at least had some enjoyable activity, so he came up with the Freshman-Night2Unite. This amazing activity consisted of glow in the dark dodgeball, minute to win it, and amazing dinner from Senders Smokehouse. This allowed the Freshmen to meet each other and learn more about each other while safe and having fun!

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The 12th graders went paintballing as their trip, and from what I heard, they too had so much fun!

One of the best things about MTA is that they

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## THE CORONAVIRUS VACCINE IN BIOETHICS AND HALACHA

By: Binyamin Fox ('21)

We are undoubtedly living through unprecedented, yet remarkable times. After experiencing so much pain and disruption since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic back in March, glimmers of hope have begun to appear. An eventual return to normalcy- an end to the pandemic- is finally in sight (albeit, distantly). In mid-December, the United States Government's Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the emergency use of mRNA- based Coronavirus vaccines developed by Pfizer and Moderna, with more vaccines likely on the way in the coming months. These vaccines have been proven to be ~ 95% effective and mass vaccination of the US and world population is the key to finally bring an end to this dark period. *Continues on page 3*

## AMERICA UNDER ATTACK: A MASSIVE SECURITY BREACH

By: Noam Schechter

On December 13, 2020, the U.S. Government announced that it had experienced the most damaging hack in its history. The culprit was a Russian agency named APT29 or Cozy Bear, a branch of the SVR (Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service). The espionage mission took place worldwide, throughout Europe, Asia, North America and the Middle East.

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## MTA DOESN'T GIVE UP

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Another fun night at school was when MTA had late night activities for the Sophomores and Juniors. They played glow in the dark dodgeball and had other amazing late-night activities too!



Chanukah is a time of fun, and in MTA they sure know how to make that known. Every single day of Chanukah MTA had a different event planned. We started the first few days of Chanukah with a long weekend off and then came back on Tuesday to a full day of fun activities. They gave out Broad Street Donuts, which tasted so good and then had shiur vs shiur challenges. The best thing about that day was the shiur lunch from either Carlos and Gabbys, Chikies, Dougies or Senders Smokehouse. The food was amazing and the greatest part was the lunch with your shiur. Wednesday

day started off with a socially distanced Chagiga with music and socially distanced dancing. After all that dancing, Rabbi Konigsberg knew everyone would be craving some delicious food so he got Rita's for every kid to enjoy! The 10th grade takeover was amazing; the 10th grade dressed up like it was Purim and played Let's Make A Deal! The Juniors and Seniors had an intense dreidel contest! There were planned events for the last day of Chanukah, but sadly, it snowed and they had to cancel school that day.

Finally, the newest installment into the MTA building was our new student lounge! They put in a mini basketball game, air hockey, ping pong, an Xbox and a Playstation and the greatest new game is the arcade version of NBA Jam! The talmidim can use all of these amazing new games during their free time!

Thanks to Rabbi Konigsberg and the amazing kids on the student council. MTA had fun activities and everyone had a great time on Chanukah.



## FRESHMAN NIGHT TO UNITE

**By: Tani Feldman ('21)**

As COVID-19 continues to limit all the fun activities we can do, MTA hasn't once let this affect the safe and fun events that happen at school. On Thursday night, December 3rd, MTA held their 6th annual Freshman Night In, this year dubbed A Night2Unite. While normally this event includes swimming, trampoline jumping, and sleeping in Yeshiva, the activities needed to be changed to fit COVID-19 safety guidelines. Although they weren't the normal activities, MTA managed to make this night amazing and full of fun.

The night kicked off with the regular Mishmar program in each shiur. There's nothing like learning with your Rabbi as you anticipate all of the exciting activities planned for the night. Following Mishmar was Maariv, because you can't have fun until you make sure you've said all the prayers for the day. Then the Freshmen were split up into two groups. The first group would go down to the Lion's Den for a very special glow-in-the-dark game of dodgeball, while the second group would enjoy a very delicious dinner provided by one of the best restaurants in New Jersey, Sender's Smoke Joint. The groups were split into teams for the big dodgeball game, and just as the game started, the lights went out, spotlights went on, and the music was turned up all the way, the ultimate

game of dodgeball began. As the game progressed, the freshmen decided that the best way to finish the game was to team up and play against the seniors who stayed late to help. While the seniors did win, the freshmen were now closer together and had had a lot of fun, socially distanced, of course.

While the first group was playing dodgeball, the other group was enjoying their meat dinner from Sender's Smoke Joint. Once the first dodgeball game ended, the two groups switched, sending the first group to eat dinner and the second group to play dodgeball. The sandwich that I chose was called a "Ziggy" and was a very delicious sandwich consisting of a hamburger bun, a piece of schnitzel, some pastrami, and some vegetables. This was, by far, one of the best sandwiches I've eaten in my life. While the first group ate dinner as they waited for the second group to finish playing dodgeball, they were granted the opportunity to get to spend time with each other while eating a very scrumptious meal.

Once the second group's dodgeball came to an end, both groups got together for a grade-wide egg drop competition. This is an activity in which everyone splits into small groups, and they are given an egg and a manila envelope containing some materials. Each group is to work together to come up with a contraption, only using what they have in the envelope in which they will place the egg. Then, one by one, the egg contraptions are

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## FRESHMAN NIGHT TO UNITE Continued From Page 2

dropped from a certain height, and whichever contraption successfully protected the egg from cracking would win. Boy, was this an intense part of the night. However, the night had not ended yet.

The last fun activity of the evening was arguably one of the best parts of the night. A couple of weeks prior to the Freshmen Night In, a google form

was sent out to all of the freshmen talmidim asking them which activity they'd rather do. The options included a ping pong tournament, a Madden 21 tournament, and a Nok Hockey tournament. However, I didn't choose any of them and instead went to the new hangout room, which was then opened to the

public the next day. This new room includes an NBA arcade, an arcade basketball game, and a foosball table! And if that's not enough, there are very comfortable bean bag chairs all over the room for you to sit and chill!

At the end of the night, this



event had brought the students closer to each other and closer to their Rabbeim. Although it had been

changed to fit COVID-19 protocols, it was definitely one of the best nights of my life, and I'm sure the other freshmen feel the same way.

## THE CORONAVIRUS VACCINE IN BIOETHICS AND HALACHA Continued From Page 1

When thinking about these vaccines, and the questions and decisions they have engendered (e.g. which groups should be vaccinated first, when, can the government mandate vaccination... etc.) it is important to not only consider what is ethical and proper, but to consider what Halacha [Jewish law] has to say (and even dictates) about vaccines as well. According to Halacha, how should society determine the triage prioritization order for dispensing the vaccine? Which groups of people should be vaccinated first? *Moreover, is there a Halachic or ethical imperative or obligation for one to be vaccinated? May one refuse vaccination? These are all important bioethics and Ha-*

*lachic questions that must (and surely will) be asked in the coming weeks.*

While there are many legal and ethical questions involved, the question of vaccine mandates will undoubtedly arise in the coming months. Legal questions aside, what would bioethics and Halacha say about vaccine mandates? This is the classic conflict between Halacha and modern medical ethics: the issue of au-

tonomy. One of the four main principles of bioethics is autonomy: the control of an individual over his or her own body, the resulting right to privacy and the right for one to make his or her own medical determinations, free from the interference of others (including physicians). Bioethics recognizes this right of human autonomy to an utmost degree, and when conflicts arise between patients and physicians over what type of care to

provide/receive (or the lack thereof), contemporary medical ethics generally sides with the patient's autonomy.

Hence, according to contemporary medical ethics, if

a patient exercising his or her right to autonomy refuses a vaccination, despite a physician's assertion or medical guidance that the vaccine is safe and beneficial, the patient may prevail and his or her vaccination refusal would prevail.

However, as previously mentioned, autonomy is the primary

area of conflict between Halacha and contemporary medical ethics. The most central value stressed in Judaism and Halacha is *life*. The Torah tells us "U'vacharta B'Chayim"- "to choose life" and "Vinishmartem Meod LiNafshoteichim"- "to carefully watch over and protect our lives," and the Gemara in Masechet Sanhedrin stresses the importance of *Pikuach Nefesh*- of saving a life. When it comes to matters of life and death, of providing medical care or withholding medical care, generally speaking, Halacha does not recognize the right to autonomy, nor the right for one to refuse readily available, safe medical treatment. When presented with an opportunity to save a life- to perform *Pikuach Nefesh*- this Halachic imperative trumps and supercedes autonomy. Hence, according to Halacha, if a



*vaccine (or other form of medical treatment) is developed and proven to be safe and effective, one should be inoculated (when possible) with that vaccination.* Hence, in the case

of the Covid-19 vaccines, since the FDA and CDC have approved these vaccines after the successful completion of extensive trials meant to ensure vaccine efficacy and safety, there is a Halachic imperative to

receive the Covid-19 vaccine (barring other health concerns) when it becomes available to the general population. In fact, recently, the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) and Orthodox Union (OU), two leading umbrella organizations released the following guidance in consultation with Rav Hershel Schachter, Rav Mordechai Willig and Rav Dovid Cohen: "the conclusion of our poskim is that, pursuant to the advice of your personal health care provider, the Torah obligation to preserve our lives and the lives of others requires us to vaccinate for COVID-19 as soon as a vaccine becomes available."

Ultimately, since Covid-19 vaccines have been deemed safe and effective, there is a Halachic and societal imperative that each individual who can is vaccinated in order to take the necessary steps to ensure the health and safety of broader society.





# CORONA/SPORTS

## COVID-19 VACCINE: EXPLANATIONS & UPDATES

**By: Yitzy Shaykevich ('21)**

Covid-19 has been an unprecedented experience; society as we know it has had to adapt and innovate in remarkable ways. The epitome of our society's exemplary work ethic throughout Covid-19 is the rapid development of many different vaccines. Many companies have created different versions of the vaccine, and two companies, Pfizer and Moderna, have already been FDA approved. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, the first to have the emergency approval of the FDA, has already begun mass distribution in the US. On December 14th, Sara Lindsay, an ICU nurse at the Long Island Jewish Medical Center and one of the first to receive the vaccine, publicly recorded herself receiving her first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. As of December 18th, more than 128,000 Americans have received a Covid-19 vaccine. Vaccines will continue to be distributed, and those on the front lines in hospitals are scheduled to be the first to receive these vaccinations.

While the vaccine is miraculous, it is not effective if only some Americans were to take it. Data estimates at least 60 percent of Americans must vaccinate before the virus



begins to die out and herd immunity is reached. This is difficult to achieve because of the stigmas surrounding vaccination. Many claim the speedy FDA approval process has left possible blind-spots and that it is impossible to know the long term effects of the vaccine. While these fears may appear reasonable, the 300,000 person death toll from COVID-19 should be enough to

persuade some of the dissenters to take the vaccine.

Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine, scientifically, is not like previous vaccines. The Covid-19 vaccine utilizes mRNA, a type of RNA that holds the schematics to create proteins, to cause cells to develop part of the "spike protein," the protrusions found on the surface of the virus. When our immune system encounters this protein, it learns to fight it, thereby forming an immunity to it. Since the mRNA is similar to that of the COVID-19's, our immune system learns how to fight COVID-19 without actually running the risk of contracting the virus. Most other vaccines make use of inactive/dead parts of the disease that is injected into the body; this new vaccine has little to no trace of Covid-19.

### WAS THE BUBBLE A SUCCESS?

**By: Avi Landsman ('22)**

After LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers won the franchise's 17th title, the bubble was officially over. Both the Lakers and the Miami Heat spent 82 days in the bubble and were all ready to go home. Some have called the bubble a success as NBA commissioner Adam Silver completed his goal of finishing the regular season and a playoff tournament. Silver even implemented a play-in tournament to decide between the 9 and 8 seeded teams, determining which team should go on to the playoffs. The NBA bubble provided many entertaining games and playoff matchups throughout the summer. Unfortunately, to maintain the proper schedule, the next season had to start almost immediately.



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## ISRAEL'S VACCINATION CAMPAIGN

**By: Tzvi Bromberg('22)**

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to the Israeli public that



once the coronavirus vaccine was proven to be safe and effective, he would be the first person in Israel to get vaccinated. On December 19, 2020, on live TV, he followed through with that promise. Netanyahu and many other Knesset members and public figures got vaccinated on live television with the goal of convincing members of the public to get vaccinated themselves.

After receiving the vaccine, Netanyahu told reporters that "[He] believe[s] in this vaccine." Other prominent figures, including Interior Minister Aryeh Deri, as well as the Mayor of Bnei Brak, Rabbi Avraham Rubinstein, shortly fol-

lowed Netanyahu in receiving the vaccine live on the air. However, their efforts to convince the general public have yet to bear fruit [editor's note: at time of writing]. A recent poll conducted by Ynet news found that only 24% of Israelis plan on getting vaccinated immediately. Another poll conducted by the *Israel Hayom* newspaper found that 37% of Israelis refuse to be vaccinated. *Only time will tell whether these efforts will be successful, as Israel plans to begin rolling out vaccine distribution to health care workers and nursing home residents on December 20th.*







## WAS THE BUBBLE A SUCCESS?

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Following the bubble was the NBA draft, starring future talents such as Lamelo Ball, James Wiseman, and Anthony Edwards. The NBA Draft took place on November 18th, a month after the champions were crowned. Free Agency followed, where more talent joined LeBron and the Lakers and many other exciting signings were made. Russell Westbrook and James Harden split up after their short stint this past season. Following free agency, the NBA scheduled the first game of the 2020-21 season to be December 22nd, 72 days after LeBron James and Anthony Davis gave it their all in the bubble. For some, this would be the shortest offseason of all time. For those 8 teams not in the bubble, this would be an incredibly long break. Many NBA players felt sympathetic for those in the bubble and did not feel the necessity to restart basketball so shortly after. Most players pushed for the start date to be on Martin Luther King Jr. day in the middle of January. Adam Silver and other members of the league did not want to miss Christmas basketball after an awkward stop and restart during the season prior. Silver did everything he could for the fans since the NBA finals in the bubble only received 7.5 million viewers. This was a 50% decrease than the 15 million viewers in the NBA finals prior.



lating why the viewers were disinterested. Ted Cruz tweeted how the league “has decided to insult half of its fans” with its social justice stance. Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban, however, replied to the tweet explaining how this reason was factually not true and it wasn’t the reason why the NBA ratings went down. Additionally, Adam Silver explained how there is “absolutely no data to support” that theory.

A bigger reason why the NBA has lost its fan interest is due to the lack of Steph Curry and the Golden State Warriors. Steph Curry is one of the most popular players in the history of basketball. His unmatched shooting ability has been the biggest source of revenue for the past 5 years. Playing alongside Klay Thompson, Draymond Green, and Andre Iguadala, the Warriors managed to win 73 games in 2016. LeBron James, however, took their championship hopes away by coming back from a 3-1 deficit in the NBA finals for the first time. This historic battle only got better when Kevin Durant decided to join Steph Curry and the Warriors to form a superteam even LeBron James couldn’t beat. This storyline attracted the most fans since Kobe Bryant and Shaquille O’Neal won three championships in a row. After Kevin Durant tore his achilles tendon

in the 2019 NBA finals, he decided to join the Brooklyn Nets where he would be sidelined for the first season of his contract. With Durant gone, severe injuries to Klay Thompson, and Steph Curry injured for the majority of the season, the Golden State Warriors went from being a dynasty to having the worst record in basketball. The end of the Warriors dynasty did more damage than the 50% decrease in viewership in the bubble. When the season was going on, before being stopped short due on March 11th, viewers were still uninterested then as the ratings were down almost 30% in comparison to the season prior.

So to answer the question; was the NBA bubble a success? The answer is complicated. On the one hand, basketball fans got to see intense games from the 8 regular-season games to the playoff matchups in the bubble. The fact that the bubble was created and worked so flawlessly was a huge success for Adam Silver and the NBA. On the other hand, millions of dollars were lost in revenue due to the loss of viewership, the cost of the constant COVID testing, and the bubble as a whole. This loss of money will affect the salary cap for all NBA teams for years to come. Many casual basketball fans have become less interested in watching games. However, this may turn around with the returns of Steph Curry, Kevin Durant, and Kyrie Irving back in the league. Get ready for an amazing NBA season.

## IS NOW THE TIME FOR COLLEGE ATHLETES TO START GETTING PAID?

**By: Ezra Schechter('22)**

There has been an ongoing debate amongst college basketball fans, players, and staff about whether or not college basketball players should make money for playing basketball for their college. The NCAA is nearing a rule change that would allow college players to be compensated for their name, image, and likeness, But is this enough? With plenty of new paths and options for these

prospects to take to get to the league, now is the time for these athletes to make money for playing their sport.

The traditional argument for college athletes being paid is because they work hard to win for the schools and bring national publicity, attention, and sometimes championships to their colleges. For example, in 2019-2020 the University of Dayton became a household name among college basketball

fans all because arguably the best player in College Basketball, Obi Toppin, played basketball there. If not for Toppin playing in Dayton, teenagers across the country would not be talking about this college in Ohio. In 2019, 4.3 Million people tuned in to ESPN to watch Duke vs UNC making that game the most-watched college basketball game of all time all thanks to the hype and excitement of Duke players Zion Williamson and RJ Barrett.

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## IS NOW THE TIME FOR COLLEGE ATHLETES TO START GETTING PAID?

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There is no better publicity for colleges than these students playing sports wearing the name of a school across their chest. Therefore, these students should be paid for bringing this attention and love towards their schools. The counterargument for this argument is that they get scholarships and free college education, therefore they do not need additional compensation. The rebuttal for this counter-argument is that these players have to train and practice tirelessly to be on these teams that most of them do not have the time for. Most Division 1 NCAA players dedicate at least 40 hours a week to the team, including travel time, practices, games, and training. Since these players are spending so much time trying to help the colleges win games and grow in popularity, they do not have enough time to focus on their free education. Zion Williamson was interviewed by SLAM magazine a couple of years ago and he said one of the many many reasons he committed to Duke University was because of the great education and interesting course selection. Looking back at his reason for attending Duke, even Zion admits he overlooked how much time he would commit to the ball team and he did not have enough time to take advantage of all the educational opportunities he had in front of him.

With new changes to rules and new programs, now is a better time than ever to allow college athletes to be paid as an incentive to go to college. Firstly, starting in 2006 the NBA changed the rule that allowed players to go straight to the NBA from high school and made it that a prospect had to be at least one year removed from high school. Before this rule, players were allowed to declare for the NBA Draft the year following graduating high school. USA Today's Jeff Zillgitt first reported that the league has proposed to the NBPA that this eligibility rule be changed for the 2023 NBA Draft and restore the right for prospects to declare for the NBA Draft following the graduation of high school. When this change gets passed by the NBPA then college athletics is in trouble because prospects will forgo their collegiate careers to go straight to the NBA and the NCAA will see a dip in star power in their league. Players will not want to go to college as a step to get to the NBA. Instead, they can just go to the NBA right away and get paid millions of dollars! Proof that this will happen is because before this rule was enacted in 2006, stars went straight to the league instead of going to college. Kobe Bryant has confirmed that he would have played for Coach Mike Krzyzewski at Duke if he did not forgo his college years, there is speculation that LeBron James would have played at Ohio State if he had to be one year removed from High School. Talents like these will be lost from



the NCAA again if these athletes can go straight to the NBA. If college players can be paid then there will be an incentive and reason for these players to go to college, get paid, and continue to develop and increase their draft stocks. Instead of going straight to the league. Another alternative to college is going pro to different overseas leagues. The current rule is that players have to be one year removed from high school to enter the league, this includes going overseas and being paid. In the past, top prospects coming out of high school have opted to take their talents overseas for one year and make money while preparing for



the NBA. Prospects like Emmanuel Mudiay, the #2 ranked prospect just behind #1 Jahlil Okafor in 2015, was projected to commit to playing at SMU but decided to accept a 1.2 Million dollar deal to go overseas to play in China. This past year RJ Hampton was ranked as the #5 best prospect in the country and he also decided to play in New Zealand instead of college. If college athletes were paid then there should be a regression in the number of players that go overseas. Players can just go to college, making money, while staying in the country. The newest path to get to the NBA is the G-League. The G-League, the NBA's minor league, started a new program this year called the G-League Ignite, which is a team in the G league designated for players coming out of college. The purpose of this team is for the players to grow and develop as basketball players, then take the next step into the NBA. The pros of playing on

this G League ignite team is players get paid a G league salary, players get coached by NBA level coaches and compete against NBA level players. Additionally, a player can go to G League Ignite straight out of high school. The year on the G League Ignite counts as a year removed so you can declare for the NBA Draft the following year. The problem is that the G League Ignite games are not televised and stats are not counted so scouts of NBA teams might have trouble scouting these players and putting them on draft boards to see when they should be drafted. This causes their draft stock to be lower than it should be. Nonetheless, five of the top #30 ranked prospects chose to accept deals and join this G league team. It started with Jalen Green (#3 ranked prospect in 2020) who was widely considered a lock to commit to the University of Memphis. Green shocked the college world when he accepted a \$500K deal to play for the G League Ignite, and then he recruited 4 other top prospects to join him instead of going to college. If the NCAA allowed college players to make a salary then prospects will not want to go to a G League team. They can get paid for playing in college while getting NBA scout's and fan's attention from nationally televised games and stats. Colleges Athletes need to be paid so that they have an incentive to go to college. Instead of choosing other playing options, players will work hard to bring attention and banners to their colleges.



## THE NEW YORK METS!

By: Aaron Sisser ('23)

Fred Wilpon bought the New York Mets in the year 1980. The Mets are one of the two New York-based teams in Major League Baseball (MLB) - the other being the New York Yankees - and Wilpon started with a minority stake in the franchise. Through the exploitation of certain contract clauses, Wilpon was able to buy almost complete equity in the franchise. However, he was not liked by Mets fans. As an owner, he did not make the smartest financial decisions. Also, fans and players alike felt that he did not care about their wants and needs as much as he should have. Enter Steve Cohen, a native New Yorker, hedge fund billionaire, long-time Mets fan, and a potential great owner. This year, on October 30th, Steve Cohen bought the Mets from the Wilpons, and the MLB approved the deal, solidifying the acquisition. Mets fans are elated about the new ownership because Cohen looks to bring great success to the team. Steve Cohen, through his purchase of the Mets, became the richest owner in the MLB. He has also repeatedly said that he wants to invest a lot of time, money, and effort into the team. This means that Mets fans can look forward to luxurious spending in the next few off-seasons. With this added spending, the Mets can attain the biggest free-agents on the market. Mets fans hope that this will lead to great results come the regular season. As a fun aside, Steve Cohen is also a Jew growing up in Great Neck, New York! This is relatively close to the homes of many

MTA students! Furthermore, Cohen can help the Mets get out of an economic downfall that has plagued the Mets since 2008. In 2008, the famous Bernard Madoff Ponzi scheme left the New York Mets franchise, among many other people and businesses, in great financial loss. Ever since then, the Wilpons have been trying to make up lost ground, despite being in the most lucrative market of any



franchise in the MLB. The change in ownership of the Mets to Steve Cohen will greatly affect the ability of the team to recoup and grow. Cohen's net worth is estimated to be over fourteen billion dollars, and he, as an avid Mets fan, said that he is willing to invest a lot into the team. He really wants the Mets to be a strong contender in the MLB. In addition to all of the great things that Cohen will bring to the franchise as the new owner, the New York Mets have also recently hired a new general manager! The new general manager, Jared Por-

ter, was hired on December 12th, and he seems to be the practically perfect person to possess the particular position of being the Mets general manager. This is true for many reasons. Firstly, he has great experience in MLB and helping to run a team. For the past four years, Porter has been working with another MLB team, the Arizona Diamondbacks. He was their assistant general manager until he signed a four-year contract with the New York Mets just last week! He has also worked with the amazing Theo Epstein under both the Red Sox and Cubs, where he was part of three teams that won the World Series (the MLB championship)! Moreover, Jared Porter is a great addition to the Mets front office because of his attitude towards his job. He is very aggressive as a general manager and very agreeable as a person. Former New York Mets assistant general manager Allard Baird says that Porter "checks all the boxes." The Mets administration is confident that Porter will be a successful addition to the team, and that he will contribute

greatly to the Mets in many aspects. Porter is said to be looking into advancements for both the Mets scouting and analytics teams, in addition to the growth and development of the players themselves. One last addition to the team under the ownership of Steve Cohen is the Mets' new president, Sandy Alderson. He has been part of the New York Mets franchise for a long time, having been the general manager of the Mets from 2010 until 2018. He, like Cohen and Porter, seems to be willing to make big moves to make the Mets a strong team this year, and for many years in the future. In conclusion, under the wings of the new owner, Steve Cohen, the new general manager, Jared Porter, and the new president Sandy Alderson, the "new" New York Mets aim to turn into a strong contender this year for the playoffs, and beyond that, the World Series!

## DON'T PROCRASTINATE; BE PRODUCTIVE AND READ THIS

By: Raffi Weil ('22)

Procrastination, What is it? To be technical, procrastination is the act of delaying or postponing something. For more relatable terms, imagine the following scenario. You have an assignment or test that you are told about two weeks

in advance. You decide in class that you are going to work or study a little bit each night so that the work won't pile up on the night before the test. The first week you are pretty good about doing some work each

night. In the following few nights, instead of sticking to your schedule, you go onto Youtube and get distracted for a good amount of time. It comes the night before the assignment is

due, and you realize you haven't started it at all.

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## DON'T PROCRASTINATE; BE PRODUCTIVE AND READ THIS

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You spend all night working on completing the assignment, and you get the grade you get. This is procrastination.

The question, of course, is, why do we procrastinate? Wouldn't we prefer to have things done as soon as possible, and then have the remaining time free to do whatever we want? According to a New York Times article titled "Why You Procrastinate and How to Break the Habit," the reason one procrastinate is not due to poor management skills; rather, it is a coping mechanism. You will procrastinate to avoid a certain mood or emotion associated with the task given to you. You will find the task to be undesirable, and by procrastinating, you will repair your mood. The task can be physically difficult, require a lot of thinking, or you might even have emotional reasons for not wanting to do it, so you procrastinate. The dangerous part about procrastinating is the result. When you sit down to do the task,

after a period of delaying, you gain anxiety that you need to finish in a certain time. You feel bad that you wasted time pushing off your work. One might think that this post procrastination feeling would cause you to be more productive the next time, but frequently the opposite is true. You feel a good sensation when you procrastinate. After all, you are removing a bad mood or a stressful situation from your shoulders. As humans, we are prone to behave in ways that make us feel good. So when a similar situation comes around, we will just procrastinate again. This creates a dangerous cycle of procrastination.

So how do we break the cycle? Well, since we just established that one of the core reasons for procrastination is psychological, a way to beat it is to give psychological aid to yourself. Have compassion for yourself. Researchers found in a 21st century study that people were more likely not to

procrastinate the second or third time around if they had forgiven themselves for procrastinating the first time. Studies have shown that self-compassion leads to stress relief and self-motivation, two keys to being productive. Other methods to avoid procrastination include "cultivating curiosity" and "considering the next action." When instant gratification becomes something you want to do, ask yourself why it is that you are feeling that way. Ponder as to what about the task is causing you to push it off. If you can find the root of the problem, you can fix it and not procrastinate. Last but not least, you can pretend to accomplish the task. This means, instead of telling yourself that "I will get this done now," just look at what you would do if you were doing the actual task. For example, if you have a research paper to do, you can pull up the criteria list on google classroom as a first step. Taking small steps like this end up promoting productive activity.

## AMERICA UNDER ATTACK: A MASSIVE SECURITY BREACH

The United States was affected by the plot the most, with many government offices and security agencies getting attacked. Many other countries fell prey to the hacking, including the UK, Canada, Mexico, Belgium, Spain, the UAE and Israel. It is believed that many other countries were affected by this global act of espionage and have yet to ascertain the exact extent to which the hack impacted them.

This enormous hacking job was done through attaching malware (malicious software) to the updated software of the popular software company SolarWinds' Orion Platform. SolarWinds, an American IT company based in Austin, Texas that helps manage and create companies' software for networks, systems, and information technology, is extremely popular among government offices in the US and worldwide, as well as among numerous large corporations. Government offices such as the US Treasury Department,

the US Department of Homeland Security, as well as many international government agencies, including NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization), and Forbes 500 companies, such as Microsoft, also use the software.

In 2014 and 2015, under the Obama administration, there had been several prior attempts to hack United States security agencies. In 2015 there was even a breach into the email servers of the White House and the Democratic National Convention. The culprit of this act was the same Russian hacking group involved in the most recent attack- the SVR. During this 2015 hack, information was stolen, but none of it was leaked or shared with American enemies. The hacking of the White House and the DNC by the SVR was widely ignored since it was believed that this was a common espionage mission, an act which all countries perpetrate in order to obtain

intelligence about allies and enemies alike. However, during the current Russian hacking plot, which may have started as early as March 2020, the SVR has been hacking and stealing information from governments and big businesses globally, a hacking job too large to be ignored.

The US is still attempting to determine just how much information has been stolen and what Russia plans to do with the information. As a result of a hack of this magnitude, the US needs to decide what to do next, and must tread with care. The consequences of this attack can prove to be detrimental to the US. Thomas Bossart, one of outgoing President Trump's former homeland security advisers, believes that it may take years to mend the damage inflicted by the hacking, and "[the US] must act as if the Russian government has control of all the networks it has penetrated."

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# POLITICS

## AMERICA UNDER ATTACK: A MASSIVE SECURITY BREACH

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The US is now required to reset its security networks and develop new networks that are not connected to any compromised softwares. Additionally, a decision about punishing Russia must be made. Some believe that the US should impose sanctions on Russia in response, others suggest that the US should retaliate through a hacking

and leaking operation against Russia of its own, and some believe that the US shouldn't rush to accuse Russia. Rather, they contend, the US should first investigate and work to establish more proof that Russia is indeed responsible for this plot. As a result of this attack, the US, along with many other countries and big corporations, are being

forced to change and improve their networks' security. SolarWinds is likely to face legal action for its role in the hack, and the company's stock is very likely to plunge. As of now, the SVR is seemingly not interested in leaking the information it obtained, but the US needs to stay alert

since Russia now holds an exorbitant amount of high end, classified information that can prove detrimental to many countries and businesses, including the US, if released.

## ISRAEL AND MOROCCO NORMALIZE RELATIONS

**By: Mordechai Fox ('22)**

On Thursday, December 10, 2020, Israel and Morocco agreed to normalize relations in a deal brokered by the U.S. This deal was built upon the historic "Abraham Accords" signed in September, which saw the normalization of relations between Israel and the Arab countries of the UAE and Bahrain. Following the deal, Sudan announced it would normalize relations with Israel in October.

In his last few months in office, President Trump has focused much of his efforts on working toward peace in the Middle-East. This deal makes Morocco the fourth Arab country in the past four months to officially normalize relations with Israel in deals facilitated by the U.S. The president's son-in-law and senior advisor, Jared Kushner, and chief international negotiator, Avi Berkowitz, were the main negotiators of the deal.

The agreement ensured that Morocco and Israel would institute signifi-

cant diplomatic relations, including the opening of liaison offices in Tel Aviv and Rabat, and the future opening of embassies. They also agreed to expand economic relations between the two countries. In a phone call with President Trump, King Mohammed VI of Morocco said that he would facilitate the establishment of direct flights between the two countries. El-Al operated the first direct flight to Rabat on December 22nd, which carried US and Israeli delegations sent to finalize the deal.

President Trump agreed to recognize Morocco's claim over the Western Sahara region as part of the deal. The sovereignty of the territory has been subject to a lengthy dispute between Morocco and the Polisario Front Organization, based in Algeria, since 1975.



Originally a Spanish colony, the Western Sahara has been listed as a non-self-governing territory by the UN since 1975. Since then, the two parties began a war over the con-

trol of the region, concluding with a cease-fire in 1991. Recent border conflicts between the Polisario and Moroccan soldiers saw the end of the cease-fire agreement and the rehashing of the decades-long conflict. President Trump's decision to officially recognize



Morocco's control over the territory is unprecedented and played a large part in influencing Morocco to agree to the normalization deal.

Prior to the deal, Morocco had been friendly with Israel for many years. This is due in large part to the rich history of Jews in Morocco. Before the establishment of Israel in 1948, Morocco was home to a large population of two-hundred-fifty to three-hundred thousand Jews, most of whom migrated south to Africa in wake of the Spanish

Inquisition. Many Jews today trace their lineage to Morocco, and the Moroccan Jewish community in Israel is one of the country's largest. Although most Jews have left Morocco, several thousand still remain today.

Morocco had been rumored to have informal ties with Israel following the Oslo accords in the 1990s. However, these diplomatic relations came to a halt in 2000 following the Second Intifada. Since then, Israel and Morocco have maintained some informal ties and have had a relatively stable relationship.

This deal makes Morocco the sixth Arab country to officially recognize the State of Israel, bringing us one step closer to peace in the Middle East. President Trump's unprecedented actions have led to a safer and calmer Middle-East, making the vision of peace possible.



## NEW ANTITRUST LAWSUITS THREATEN TO “BREAK UP” FACEBOOK

**By: Eli Canter ('22)**

On December 9, 2020, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) as well as a coalition of 48 states' attorney generals, filed parallel antitrust lawsuits against Facebook. These lawsuits allege that Facebook has maliciously used its extensive assets to absorb or destroy companies that pose threats to their dominance in the marketplace. In the words of the lawsuit: “Facebook illegally maintains [its] monopoly power by deploying a buy-or-bury strategy that thwarts competition and harms both users and advertisers.” The lawsuits primarily focus on Facebook's mammoth acquisitions of Instagram and Whatsapp, which they claim are key examples of the company's harmful undertakings.



Aside from the allegations regarding Facebook's methods of preventing competition in the social media sector, the lawsuits also focus on issues of averting innovation and user privacy. They claim that a great deal of the data which informed Facebook's decisions to acquire other tech companies came from user activity, acquired without consent. Furthermore, the lawsuits argue that the anti-competitive activities of Facebook have deprived consumers of potential innovation. They assert that if Facebook had not absorbed their rival companies, the competition between them could have led to new features and benefits for consumers (including increased privacy).

The central goal of these lawsuits is to force Facebook to divest its assets through a permanent injunction from a federal court. In an official statement, the director of the FTC's Bureau of Competition stated that “[their] aim

is to roll back Facebook's anticompetitive conduct and restore competition so that innovation and free competition can thrive.” If they were to achieve this, Facebook would likely be compelled to part with holdings such as Instagram and Whatsapp, leaving the company with a significantly smaller share of the social media market.

Lawsuits such as these have been anticipated for quite some time. About fourteen months ago, New York Attorney General Letitia James publicized her office's investigation effort into possible anticompetitive operations at Facebook. Additionally, the FTC began a similar investigation into the same matter in June 2019. Facebook has known something of the sort was coming well in advance, and the company began gathering a legal team with antitrust experience to start crafting a strategic response to these lawsuits.

Facebook's defense consists of four key elements:

First, the company insists that it is inequitable that the FTC can contest the acquisitions of Instagram and Whatsapp after previously con-



firming them eight and six years ago respectively. In an official statement, Jeniffer Newstead, VP and General Counsel at Facebook, protested that “the most important fact in this case, which the commission does not mention in its 53 page complaint, is that it cleared these acquisitions years ago.” Still, the FTC is prepared to argue that “there's nothing in US merger law that says an agency's decision not to challenge a proposed deal immunizes that deal from future review.”

Second, Facebook argues that their social media market share does not constitute a monopoly. In the aforementioned statement, New-

stead further claimed that “people and small businesses don't choose to use Facebook's free services and advertising because they have to, they use them because they deliver the most value.”

Third, Facebook maintains that although they support regulation, harsh litigation and court rulings against the company could allow rival companies in other countries to usurp the United States' technological dominance. Facebook is prepared to compel the court to side with them, as they wouldn't want countries like China to “steal” the United States' market share in the global technology sector.

Lastly, Facebook has been preparing for this “battle” by making it increasingly difficult for its services to be separated on a technical level. The engineers at Facebook have been working on integrating distinct services such as Instagram, Whatsapp, and Facebook itself, so it becomes virtually impossible to divide them. If Facebook succeeds in doing so, the company may be able to persuade the courts that breaking it up is simply not feasible.

Whatever the outcome of the lawsuit will be, we aren't likely to find out for quite a while. Similar antitrust lawsuits in the past have taken several years to be resolved. Still, the results of this lawsuit could be exceptionally impactful. If Facebook is forced to give up some of its assets or lose some of its power, the social media and technology landscape could change radically.





# BUSINESS

## SUCCESS OF THE STOCK MARKET DESPITE COVID-19

By : Yonatan Burns ('22)

While millions of Americans are struggling financially due to COVID-19 lockdowns and unemployment, a seemingly strange economic phenomenon is occurring: stocks and market indices are hitting record high valuations. To provide some context, stock markets have been generally seen as an indicator of economic activity. Therefore it is surely unexpected that stock prices are rising quickly while the world is going through one of the largest global recessions in history. The S&P 500 Index, one of the most commonly followed equity indexes, is currently trading at a record high of over 3,700 points (editorial note: at time of writing). With our economy so fragile, how can prices continue to rise?

One consideration stands out above the rest concerning the lockdown's economic impact. As politicians were quick to temporarily close businesses, an inequality was immediately created: The lockdowns mainly affected small businesses, an important aspect of the American economy, but not a large player when it comes to equity markets. Furthermore, with small local businesses closed, consumers turned to large companies to supply everyday essentials including grocery items, toiletries, and electronics. Not only did such companies underrepresented in the stock market take the hit when the pandemic struck, but large corporations quickly capitalized and met the needs of the consumer by offering new services such as free shipping or curbside delivery op-



tions, boosting their revenue and ultimately their share prices. Additionally, the S&P 500 and similar indices are weighted to favor larger companies. When it comes to their rising market prices, not only are the largest companies in America not feeling the economic impact that small businesses have felt, but they are overrepresented in any capitalization-weighted index.

Another factor considered is the overall nature of the market. Stock market prices tend to look towards the future, reflecting optimism and future growth rather than only the current state of the country's economy. While economic activity has slowed, traders are hopeful regarding the availability of an FDA approved COVID-19 vaccine. As of now, drug manufacturers Pfizer and Moderna have successfully introduced their own vaccinations. US Secretary of Health and Human Services, Alex Azar, predicts that by early March 2021, vaccinations will be available at pharmacies across the country. As the vaccine serves as an indicator towards the end of the pandemic, markets are currently reflecting an optimism for economic growth. Unlike previous depres-

sions and recessions, the current economic downturn is directly related to the pandemic, a factor which will easily be mitigated in the coming months. Investors are hopeful that with the vaccine, economic activity will resume to pre-pandemic levels.

While many monetarist-minded economists and libertarians decreed the economic response by the US government as detrimental to the future of the US economy, two key actions taken by the government surely had an impact on the current economic state of the country, including our financial markets. First, as part of government efforts to mitigate the recession, the Federal Reserve slashed interest rates to near zero. With anticipation that current rates will remain, the low financing costs allow for increased borrowing and investing, driving up real estate prices and commodities. The Reserve also practiced *quantitative easing*, a form of *injecting money into the economy by buying long term government bonds*. Second, *the federal government instituted several policies to pump trillions of dollars into the Ameri-*

*can economy, into the hands of citizens and businesses. The CARES Act, passed by Congress and signed by President Trump, included the "Paycheck Protection Program" to supply relief loans to businesses who keep their staff on payroll, sent direct cash checks to certain eligible citizens, and increased welfare checks for individuals receiving unemployment benefits. These relief programs kept businesses and individuals afloat, preventing layoffs and replacing income.*

With unprecedented government spending, the federal deficit for fiscal year 2019-2020 reached a record 3.1 trillion dollars. (For context, the 2018-2019 year deficit was kept under a trillion dollars.) With the 2020-2021 fiscal year's deficit already reaching 400 billion dollars, economists predict mass inflation in the coming years. This may be an additional incentive to place money into financial markets in order to mitigate inflationary effects and the devaluation of capital.

While the success of current markets are understood, one question stands: what long term effects will the pandemic and the US government's economic response have on the stock market? It is certainly feasible that markets will enter a bear market quite soon. Not only may a stock bubble be forming, but government debt can expand to unmanageable levels, prompting the Fed to print money and inflate the US dollar in response.





# BUSINESS

## THE PRECIOUS METAL MARKET REVIEW

By: Isaac Cohen ('23)

One of the limited options for a teenager interested in investment is acquiring precious metals, which has been a popular form of investment for many decades. To create the greatest chance of investment success, it is necessary to develop a basic background in the precious metals market.

Gold and silver, most notably, have been a big part of the history of money, even having served as monetary tender since ancient Greece and Rome. Interestingly, the values of gold and silver are relative, meaning that the valuation of an ounce of gold has remained relatively constant since Ancient Greek times. For example, let's say you are a spartan warrior during the times of Ancient Greece. You are paid in two ounces of gold for your monthly service, which can buy items worth two ounces of gold. The value for that two ounces today is the same as it was in the past in terms of buying power. Therefore, gold is relative, the money of the world, and will always have the same buying power. However, in 1965, coinage of the U.S.



has shifted away from a 90% silver composition to a clad of copper and nickel. This was due to inflation and the heavy demand for silver.

### The Pandemic and its effect:

In this past year, silver and gold have been through a rollercoaster of events due to the Covid-19 crisis. Hand in hand with the stock market crash in March, silver, and gold have plummeted in value from the months of March to May. Gold has devalued from \$1674/oz in January to \$1484/oz in March and silver from \$18.00/oz in January to \$11.90/oz in March. You may be wondering why such a drastic change has occurred in the lowering of prices. This is due to fear. In times of fear, the demand for precious metals plummets as it is not seen as a necessity in times of crisis. It is only in the time of reaction that we see spikes in the silver and gold market. After the relative control of the virus in the summer months, more

people see silver and gold as lifelines when times are tough for their relative increase in value. Therefore a higher demand causes the market to spiral upwards from gold: \$1739/oz in June to \$2,064/oz in August



and silver: 17.43/oz in June to 29.25/oz in August. I mention the past market trends due to their importance in understanding future or present market predictions depending on how you see them.

With the news of the effectiveness of Covid-19 vaccines in trials by companies, mostly Pfizer and Moderna, in mid-September 2020, gold sank sharply towards mid to low \$1800 in the past weeks. Right now, December or January of 2021, depending on when this edition comes out, there is a big potential for the investing of precious metals. With low prices at the moment this is a great moment to buy.

### Debunking the myth of a Herd Immunity Economic Jumpstart:

The theory of herd immunity is certainly not new. Many medical officials have proposed it to end the pandemic and restore the economy as people will be able to go back to work. To be effective, it requires that more than most people in a community have already gotten the virus and are immune. Therefore, the virus cannot live on the immune and has no way of affecting the immune. This theory works in principle; however, hindsight is 2020, and this theory is wrong.

In situations where a vaccine is necessary for a deadly virus, there will always be

those who oppose such treatments and rely on the failure known as herd immunity. The truth hurts and believe it or not herd immunity isn't effective for Covid-19. It may be argued that because of antibodies, you could potentially create herd immunity. There is a simple flaw in this theory, however, that the virus mutates, and therefore antibodies are only for short periods of immunity. In addition, in order to create herd immunity you would have to infect the majority of a population sending many people to the hospital. If this were ever to happen, the market would rumble downwards as the sight of sick people pouring out of overrunning hospitals because of a theory that would not work in reality. To prove this, as this may seem like an unpopular opinion to the critical readers out there, a study from *John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health*: "With some other diseases, such as chickenpox before the varicella vaccine was developed, people sometimes exposed themselves intentionally as a way of achieving immunity. For less severe diseases, this approach might be reasonable. But the situation for SARS-CoV-2 is very different: COVID-19 carries a much higher risk of severe disease and even death."

The death rate for COVID-19 is unknown, but current data suggest it is 10 times higher than for the flu. It's higher still among vulnerable groups like the elderly and people with weakened immune systems. Even if the same number of people ultimately get infected with SARS-CoV-2, it's best to space those infections over time to avoid overwhelming our doctors and hospitals. Quicker is not always better, as we have seen in previous epidemics with high mortality rates, such as the 1918 Flu pandemic.

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# BUSINESS

## THE PRECIOUS METAL MARKET REVIEW

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We understand now the virus's effects on the economy however this only branches towards other topics of discussion, mainly inflation. This phenomenon is when the purchasing power of money increases and goods and services cost increases.

In times of crisis, money is hoarded, causing deflation where the purchasing power decreases and goods and services cost less. This leads to investors taking out their money as it is pointless to invest in a company that is lowering in value (a.k.a. a recession). In order to combat this phenomenon the U.S approved stimulus checks in order to jumpstart the economy, however this only leads to inflation. As stated by the New York Post concerning this issue: "If we remain in an environment of record-breaking deficit spending alongside

zero interest rates, **it is certainly one possible outcome here that we would see a world of rising inflation and high unemployment,"** Bloom, a vice president at Altamont Capital



Partners, told CNBC. The likelihood of an

other large-scale spending bill to follow up the \$2.2 trillion CARES Act combined with **the Fed's whatever-it-takes approach to monetary policy is likely to speed up inflation going forward**, Morgan Stanley economists reportedly contend. [for clarification the 2.2 trillion CARES Act is the bill passed by the Trump Ad-

ministration to jumpstart the economy] The stimulus check to jumpstart the economy works in the short term; however, in the long term, it causes inflation, which drives up prices for everything, including the price of gold and silver. **Final Conclusion:** Gold and silver are a hedge against inflation, and no matter the situation, they will always be valuable. However, there are vital times where it is optimal to buy/sell. I predict there will be a rise in precious metals due to the fear of the vaccine and ongoing virus. However, in March, when the vaccine should be administered in full scale, the market will level out, and the price will drop drastically as the pandemic will hopefully be under control.

## SCALPERS: THE GRINCH OF THE MODERN ERA

By: Aryeh Savetsky ('22)

On December 14, 2016, President Barack Obama signed the Better Online Ticket Sales Act, more commonly known as the BOTS Act, into federal law. The act was created to protect American online commerce by barring unscrupulous individuals, known as scalpers, from buying hundreds or even thousands of event tickets to resell at higher prices. In order to pull this off, scalpers use computer programs that can complete thousands of online order forms in the blink of an eye, usually before a human can even add a single item to his or her cart. A 2016 investigation by the New York Attorney General revealed that, as a result of this practice, only 46% of online ticket sales reached the general public, leading to tickets being sold online for prices ranging from 49% to 1,000% above markup. The BOTS Act, enforced by the Federal Trade Commission, outlawed the sale of tickets purchased by bots and levies a fine of \$16,000 per ticket.

While many countries, including the UK, Australia, Israel, and Canada, have laws criminalizing the use of scalper bots to resell tickets to productions or sports games, none have

extended these laws to safeguard other forms of online commerce.

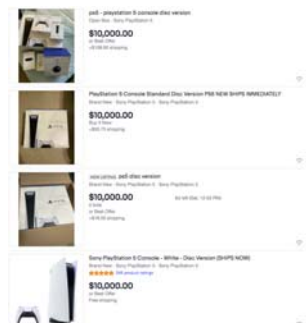
On Black Friday in 2019, New York Representative Paul Tonko, a member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, introduced the Stopping Grinch Bots Act. This Act intended to improve upon the BOTS Act of 2016, which failed to acknowledge the growing online economy and the great magnitude of online shopping in the modern age. It would have built upon the BOTS Act by broadening the scope of activities it deems illegal, as well as expanding the range of products it applies to. [Editor's note: The bill ultimately failed to be signed into law in the past Congress, which ended on January 3, but perhaps will be introduced and passed into law in the coming years].

In the last ten years, scalping seems to have taken over every aspect of online shopping. From tickets to see productions such as *Hamilton* and *Harry Potter*, to luxury clothing items



from *Supreme* and *Gucci*, scalping has reached every corner of online commerce. As of 2020, new technologies and innovations on the market, such as the *Playstation 5*, *Xbox Series X*, and computer graphics cards, have been sold (or scalped) for a 50% to a 250% markup on eBay, with some *Playstation 5s* even selling for a 2,000% markup. Similar to the maxim of the Grinch attempting to ruin Christmas, scalpers buying up products for resale often ruin the standard consumer's holiday season, making it impossible for them to afford gifts. Hence, the *Stopping Grinch Bots Act* was chosen as the name for this new piece of proposed legislation, which aimed to save the holidays from the scandalous scalpers.

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# BUSINESS

## SCALPERS: THE GRINCH OF THE MODERN ERA *Continued From Page 13*

Combined with the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent production-line issues, expansive, luxury products such as these have been nearly impossible for the average American consumer to get their hands on.

Scalpers ruin the consumer's experience by forcing them to pay heavily marked-up prices to receive products of high demand each holiday season.

Hopefully, the Stopping Grinch Bots Act will one day become the law

in order to ensure that products reach the hand of the American public and not those of the Scalpers who seek to profit at the cost of the consumers.



## IMAGINING A POST-COVID AMERICAN ECONOMY

**By: Yonatan Buns('22)**

Beginning in February 2020, the United States is experiencing its worst macroeconomic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s. COVID-19 has claimed 300,000 plus lives and U.S. government measures to combat the spread of the disease have had serious economic side effects. With high unemployment rates, increased government spending, and business shutdowns, many are left wondering what the future U.S. economy will look like. While the Coronavirus pandemic is sure to alter American society, it will mainly accelerate already existing trends. It is probable that the global catastrophe that we are experiencing now will shape our future world as much as the World Wars and Great Depression did.

### Deglobalization

For decades, the United States and the developed world has moved in a globalist direction, pursuing free trade deals and allowing the offshoring of jobs. It is possible that this pandemic will strike a lethal blow to globalization and U.S. reliance on China. COVID-19 has proven that the United States cannot rely on others for necessary medical equipment and supplies. The country needs to be prepared for another catastrophic situation. During the 2016 election cycle, Donald Trump rose in popularity over his calls to bring back American manufacturing jobs to secure the

economic security of our nation and to not become over-reliant on China. This sentiment has gained in popularity over the last decade and the Coronavirus pandemic has only reinforced the idea that America must once again become self-reliant and gain more control over global supply chains. With nationalism and populism on the rise in Europe and the United States, it is likely that an interest in American manufacturing will rise to the forefront of our political debate.

### The At-Home Workforce

While many businesses were mandated by local governments to physically close, many white-collar workers were able to shift to working online. While before the pandemic, working from home may have been seen as less effective, employers are likely to take advantage of the work-from-home-equipped workforce. For large businesses headquartered in a city such as New York, a reliance on remote employees is a major financial advantage considering the high cost of prime real estate. With advancements in technology and online platforms, this shift had already been seen before the pandemic although experimentation of the work-from-home model will further popu-

larize the idea. As reported in May 2020 by NBC News, a spokesperson for Twitter had announced that the company will allow select employees to work from home forever. "Opening offices will be our decision, when and if our employees come back, will be theirs," the spokesperson said.

### Education

In terms of education, the pandemic has brought to light many issues with the current education system in America. For one thing, as trends of rising anxiety among children has been noticed, the economic toll and loss of family members will likely have school administrators rethinking forms of in-school support for students' mental health and wellbeing. According to a study done by the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire, only 17.8% of school districts meet the American School Counselor Association's student-to-school counselor ratio of 250:1 and that rural districts are the most likely to lack any school counselors. Additionally, a report by the Federal Communications Commission found that in rural areas, 1 in 4 students lacked access to broadband internet access at threshold

speeds. With online education prevailing throughout the pandemic, many of these students have little to no access to their school work. These two issues related to children's education in America are likely to receive greater attention in the near future.

Another area of concern among young Americans is the affordability of higher education. As the pandemic continues to wreak economic havoc on families across the country, the prospects of many high schoolers to go to college are diminishing. According to the College Board, The average annual tuition for public, four-year colleges for the 2019-2020 school year was \$10,486 for in-state residents, and \$15,873 for out-of-state residents, excluding room, board, and other costs. Also according to the College Board, average state school college tuition has risen 8% in the last five years and the 58% of bachelor degree recipients who take out student loans accumulate an average \$29,000 in debt by the time they finish their college education. With this in mind, it is likely that the economic crisis will cause a reckoning among public officials and university administrators in which to address our education crisis.

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# BUSINESS

## IMAGINING A POST-COVID AMERICAN ECONOMY *Continued From Page 12*

### A Change in Consumer Spending

Of the many visible effects of the pandemic, the habits of the American consumer have changed greatly. With many weary of leaving their homes to go shopping, online retailers and delivery services have seen a spike in popularity. This change may be here to stay with more and more Americans having experimented with online shopping during these last few months. The pandemic will also decimate the busi-

nesses and industries that have been weakening in the years prior. "It's only when the tide goes out," Warren Buffet has said, "that you learn who's been swimming naked." He means to say that when the economy was good, even the struggling businesses managed to get along. Now that the COVID-19 has disrupted the economy, failing businesses and business models will not be fit to survive. A noteworthy example is the movie theatre industry. From 2015 to 2020, the industry shrank by 16.6%

(Source: IBISWorld), presumably due to the rise of online streaming platforms.

All in all, the Coronavirus pandemic has upended American society in many ways. Only time can tell how its lasting effects will shape our future world and economics.



### By: Noam Ben Simon ('22)

It is estimated that on any given day, over 50% of people are in jeans (SAL Public Lecture/Global Denim Project). When looking at it from an objective perspective, denim is one of the most consistent items of clothing that we can see used in almost every culture and race for the better part of the last hundred years or so. To understand how denim has stayed at the forefront of the fashion realm for so long, we must first understand its history as well as how things go in and out of style.

As time progresses and society develops, so too does our taste and sense of fashion evolve and change. A common item of clothing will go through what is called the "Fashion Cycle," a 5 step process that follows the life of a trend. It begins with an item being introduced into the market. The item then starts rising in popularity through media attention and sales, reaching a peak, after which it begins to decline and go out of fashion entirely. This leaves the item rarely worn and selling for cheap. While most items have been known to go in and out of style often and have very short lives, sometimes lasting less than a month, Levi's have been able to not only survive but completely dominate the market for over one hundred fifty years.

Through genius advertising using both American history and the western movie boom of the 1930s, Levi's were able to go

## THE IMMORTALITY OF LEVI'S

from the work pants that they started as when they were first patented and aimed at miners to comfort pants and a fashion symbol worn on ranches and in the comfort of one's day-to-day life. By being created with indigo-dyed cotton, not only were the jeans extremely resilient, but they also aged with style, leaving wear marks where the stained indigo would wash away, revealing the undyed inner threads of the cotton material. Today, these marks are often pre-added to jeans and used as a fashion statement in and of themselves. The versatility of denim fabric, as well as the variability of fashion styles made available through using them, have made jeans and other denim garbs (jackets, shorts, shirts, etc.) successful, with Levi's 501s at the forefront. Levi's 501s have been considered the best selling item of clothing in all of history (SAL Public Lecture).

Looking at Levi's today, we see the same attractive features that made them so popular every decade for the last century and a half, such as the affordability, the style, the sturdy material, and the brand name that everyone recognizes. Levi's 501s have successfully dodged the fashion cycle, which so many companies strive to overcome. Even now, through Covid-19 and the fashion advances that society has made, by bringing back old looks, Levi's has been able to stay one step ahead of everything, with their historical precedent and their never-ending expanse into fashion advance-

ments. It's hard to say whether or not Levi's will continue to be an icon in common street-wear, but if their history and advanced marketing strategies have anything to say about it, then we should likely expect to see Levi's in circulation far into the future.

Pictured here is an ancient pair of Levi's, estimated to be from around 1885 (SAL Lecture).



Some notable details to point out include the wear pattern that indicates multiple wearers, the leather tag above the back pocket that

remains a constant in Levi's today, and the extremely good condition of these pants that are over a century old.

Pictured is a Levi's advertisement from the



mid-1900s. Here you can clearly see the western look that Levi's was trying to portray, as was popular during the "cowboy era" in American pop culture history.

Pictured here is a modern Levi's pair of Jeans, along with a jean jacket. The sense of style that Levi's have upheld stays consistent even today where they're considered a name brand of fashion.





# BUSINESS

## SO ALIENS IS WHERE 2020 HAS GOTTEN UP TO? *(Meant to be a Comedy)*

**By: Aryeh Klein('22)**

On December 8, 2020, the world received some very intriguing news from the former Israeli space security chief, Haim Eshed. On this notorious day, articles were released with many quotes from Eshed stating that aliens really exist and that Trump knows about them.



The obvious and proper response to this is: What do we know about these aliens? How advanced is their technology? Will these aliens be our friend or foe? How can we believe this if Trump did not tweet it? And lastly, is this the shocking end to 2020 we all need? To get the answers to these questions, I needed to do a great deal

of research.

In NBC's article on this topic, they discuss Eshed's claim that Trump was forced not to disclose any information on said extraterrestrials to avoid mass hysteria. In this article, Eshed made sure to mention an agreement between the US government and the aliens, allowing the aliens to do experiments here. In the same agreement, there was mention of American astronauts in the undergrounds of Mars. Eshed also claims that the galactic federation "[has] been waiting until today for humanity to develop and reach a stage where we will understand, in general, what space and spaceships are." It's obvious that this source is fully credible, which leads us to even further questioning: What should we do about this? Well, I'm very glad you asked. In the Jerusalem Post, Eshed was quoted saying that the aliens have been in contact with America and

Israel for some time now and that they had yet to make an appearance because "humanity isn't ready." It seems that because of their extra patience and their compassionate way of thinking, the aliens have come in peace. To strengthen this idea, Eshed also stated that the aliens had prevented nuclear apocalypses. NASA has reported that they continue to have no evidence of said aliens, but they



are clearly involved in a wide scheme cover-up.

In a much more surprising development, the end of the global news article reads as follows: "Global News also reached out to the Galactic Federation about the issue. The aliens did not respond by press time."

This line may have just solved all of our questions. One can clearly see from their ignorance of the invitation from Global News that the aliens do not want to interact with humans. This crazy development leads me and others to suggest that perhaps aliens and humans were not meant to live together. Maybe just knowing that aliens exist and that they stopped nuclear war is a crazy enough end for 2020.



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