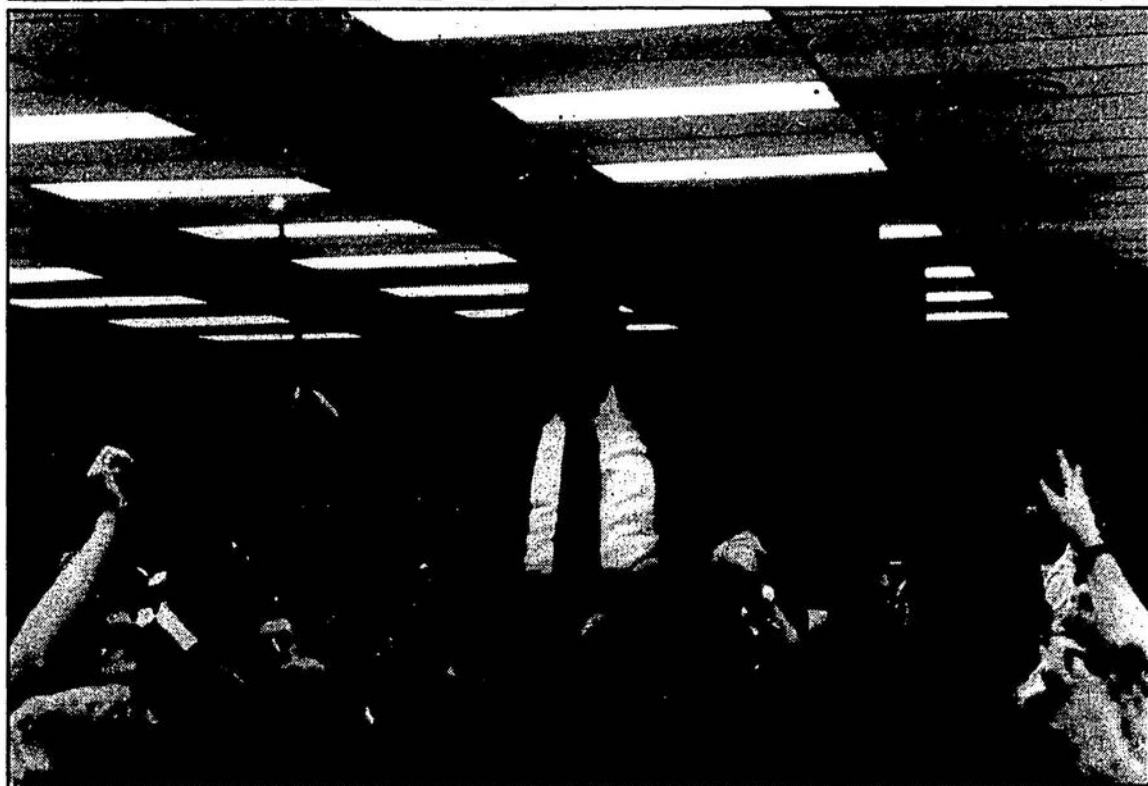




**Rabbi Avi Weiss  
Challenges the  
Orthodox Union  
Story, Page 5**



University President Rabbi Norman Lamm pictured at the annual SOY Purim Chagiga. This Year's Chagiga will take place on Motzei Shabbat, March 22, at 10:00pm.

## **RIETS Adult Education Program Finds Itself Entangled in Controversy**

*Partial Funding From Edah Causes Backlash Amongst Rabbis*

BY MORDECHAI FISHMAN

Filling the void in many Modern Orthodox synagogues, a prototype adult education program taught by students of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary at a New Jersey synagogue has been created. Although the program is officially sponsored by Yeshiva University, it has nonetheless become entangled in controversy, with two students who were slated to teach dropping out and other students shying away from participating.

The program is a project of Congregation Ahavat Torah,

a shul in Englewood, New Jersey, whose rabbi, Shmuel Goldin is a YU faculty member teaching in the James Striar School of Jewish studies. According to Rabbi Goldin, "The program is extremely successful, with over 150 people registered, and 100 attending classes weekly." The program is currently entering its fourth week, but is still causing conflict, "due to issues raised by Roshei Yeshiva within RIETS."

These issues which have emerged, are due to a revelation that Edah, a progressive Modern Orthodox organization seen by certain rabbinic

figures as outside the fold of traditional Torah Judaism, contributed \$7500, half the funding for the project. "Edah had nothing to do with the curriculum or the structure," said Rabbi Goldin, "they merely provided funding for what they perceive as a worthwhile venture." But according to R' Goldin, the fact that Edah was listed as a donor to the program, raised the hackles of members of the rabbinic faculty of RIETS, who saw it as a means for the group to try and legitimize themselves and their doctrines, through the vehicle of Yeshiva University.

*continued on page 6*

## **YU Students Recognized For Tutoring in Local School**

BY J.J. LANDO

Two years ago, Nicholas Muzin, a YC senior and pre-med student, approached Phyllis Carlos Williams, principal of the Eleanor Roosevelt Intermediate High School on 183rd Street and Amsterdam Avenue and offered his help tutoring students. Two years later, Muzin's idea has flourished in the YU Community Literacy Program boasting approximately 40 students who contribute between one and three hours a week tutoring students at the local



Nick Muzin

school in basic reading and math skills.

"Most of the Roosevelt students are in homes where little or no English is spoken," says Muzin, who believes that the

program will help create a "shared community" in Washington Heights. Muzin also described how simply exposing the students to the ideas of high school and college helps give them a more positive attitude towards education.

Principal Williams cited evidence of the program's impact in the increase observed in students' standardized test scores. There has been an increase from 31 to 32 percent in reading and from 49 to 56 percent in math of students performing at or above

*continued on page 6*

## **Rabbis Discuss Halachic Perspective Of Women's Megilah Reading**

*Stern Students Ask Rabbi Lamm  
if OK on Their Campus*

BY ARI GRUEN

Stepping into the recent fray over women's roles in Orthodox Judaism, the Torah Activities Council (TAC) of Stern College for Women sponsored an "educational forum" on issues regarding a women's *Megilah* reading on Tuesday, March 4, at Stern's Koch Auditorium. Rabbis Simcha Krauss and Alfred Cohen participated in the forum, with Rabbi Krauss arguing for the Halachic permissibility of women reading the *Megilah* for other women, and Rabbi Cohen arguing against.

The topic under discussion was particularly relevant for the students of Stern, as a letter with the endorsements of 175 students of the college was sent to University President Rabbi Norman Lamm asking for permission to conduct a women's *Megilah* reading at Stern.

In her introductory remarks at the forum, Nitzan Pelman, vice-president of the Torah Activities Council and coordinator of the event, stated that the intent behind the evening was to educate. She later elaborated that she organized the forum "because it is important for people to realize that there is Halachic weight on both sides of the issue. I think it is integral for people to be educated before they make a decision either way."

Rabbi Alfred Cohen, a *Magid Shiur* for Seniors at MTA and the Editor of *The Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society*, was first to speak at the event. He prefaced his remarks by warning students not to stereotype those Rabbis who rule against women's *Megilah* reading as sexist or anti-woman. Rabbi Cohen exclaimed, "You can be against abortion and not be a sexist; you can think OJ is a murderer and not be a racist."

Rabbi Cohen went through the various *Rishonim* and *Acharonim* which deal with women reading a *Megilah* for other women and concluded that though there are Halachic authorities who allow it, because the *Mishna Berurah* is against women reading for other women, it should not be done.

Rabbi Krauss, the Rabbi of the Young Israel of Hillcrest and a *Magid Shiur* in the Isaac Breuer College of Judaic Studies of Yeshiva University, introduced his Halachic analysis of the issue with a description of the Halachic methodology which he uses to make Halachic decisions. He quoted Rav Lichtenstein's eulogy of Rav Soloveichik, in which Rav Lichtenstein related the Halachic methodology taught to the "Rav" by Rav Moshe Feinstein: "You have to *Pasken* out of the Gemara. You use the *Shulchan Aruch* to control whether your learning of the Gemara is correct."

Rabbi Krauss then examined the relevant Halachic sources, and, relying on past Halachic giants such as the *Aruch Hashulchan* and the *Chazon Ish*, concluded that the Halakha does indeed allow women to read the *Megilah* for other women. Rabbi Krauss emphasized, "I do not think you have to be forced because of ideological reasons to say this way. I'm saying it because that's the way I learned."

After their remarks, Rabbi Krauss and Rabbi Cohen fielded questions from the audience during which the Rabbis took the opportunity to express their opinions on the motivations of those women seeking greater participation in Judaism.

"There are a lot of people out there who are going to use this to go on to the next step, the next step, and the next step," declared Rabbi Cohen. "We want very much to implant in you that our tradition does not change every time somebody outside decides something else."

Rabbi Cohen cited the recent conference on Feminism and Orthodox Judaism during which one Rabbi felt the need to deliver a lecture lambasting "Rabbi bashing" as proof of the lack of Halachic commitment of proponents of a greater role for women in Judaism. "You don't make a *drasha* of that sort unless somebody's doing it."

In contrast, Rabbi Krauss believes, "The people who are asking us are not people who want to destroy Judaism. They are

*continued on page 9*

EDITORIALS..EDITORIALS..

# Silence of the Lamm

The Modern Orthodox world, and by proxy Yeshiva University, is in the midst of a crisis. Forces at both ends of the religious spectrum are fighting to lead the way for orthodoxy into the next century. This institution must eventually choose its own direction and can only do so under the guidance of our President.

It is unfortunate that when the occasion arose for Rabbi Lamm to clarify his and this University's position, he chose to avoid the central issue. When one hundred and seventy-five students signed a letter requesting a women's Megillah reading to be held at Stern College, his response was everything but direct. R' Lamm said "we take no position as an institution on matters of controversy amongst halachic authorities," as if our very motto of Torah U'madda is not a matter of considerable controversy.

However, after not taking a position on this matter, R' Lamm told those who were interested in participating in a women's reading that they would have to go off campus to do so, because, "Many Orthodox Rabbinic authorities and communities, do not allow for this practice."

The message we are receiving is thoroughly confusing. It is time for this institution and R' Lamm to stand up and clearly declare a position.

# The Commentator

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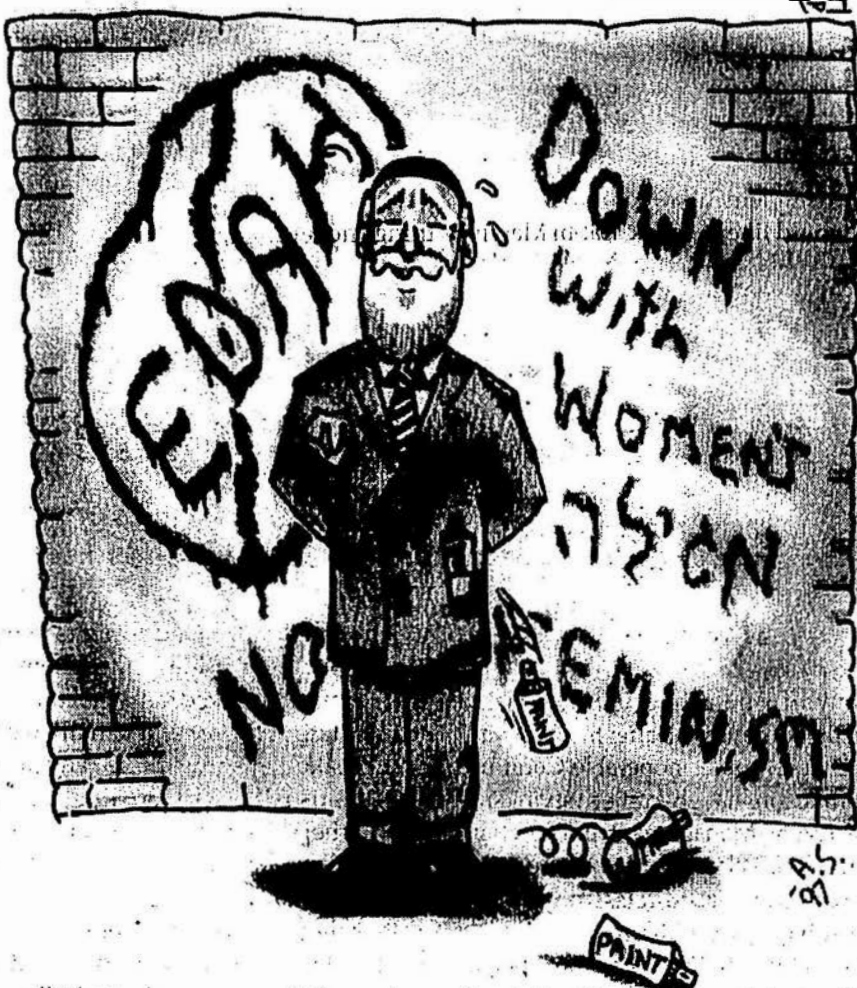
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## Correction

The Commentator Volume LXI, Issue No. 9, inadvertently reported that Dr. Shaul Magid had been retained by Yeshiva College. The Professor should have read Dr. Alan Brill.

## MESSAGE FROM THE YCSC PRESIDENT

**JASON BUSKIN**

Friends,

I rub my eyes hoping the dream will end, but it doesn't. The reality is setting in as I read the signs hanging on the bulletin boards. Elections are upon us, and within three weeks the future leadership of Yeshiva College will be decided. It hardly seems like it has been a year since I made my rounds across this campus, hanging signs, talking to students, in fact much of what I am still doing one year later is no different. I still find myself wandering the campus during the early morning hours hanging signs for events and programs, making sure students stay informed. I also make it a point to try and talk to students who stop me about a problem or an issue, I try to let them know what's going on, why something is happening and why something is not.

With elections on my mind, I couldn't help but dig up some of my own fliers from last year's campaign, while I was home last weekend. I sat down to look at the ideas I had chosen to focus on last year. Now, one year later I began to examine what YCSC has been able to accomplish and what we have not. I cannot say every idea from last year's campaign has been successfully implemented, but I can say we have tried, and we are continuing to work.

Currently, our Registrar Committee is at work with the Office of the Registrar trying to implement student suggestions and I would like to thank Rabbi Melvin Davis for his assistance. YCSC is also pursuing many, much needed changes on campus, including an upgrade for the

MSAC weight room, further lounge improvements and payment with credit card in the Office of Finance. We are also looking at the possibility of a Muss Mart being established. These are just some of the projects we are working on for the remainder of the year and for the future.

It is a busy week on campus, with Purim nearly upon us. Shabbos Zachor is being sponsored by all student councils, so please stay in and share this Shabbos with the entire university and join us in welcoming Rabbi Lamm who will be present. Be here for the SOY sponsored Chagiga and get your tickets now for the Post-Purim Concert next Thursday night in Lamport Auditorium - a five dollar discount is available to all students; act now before the show is sold out. Contact box office manager Howie Mazin for more information.

With roughly two months left in the year, YCSC has much to be proud of and still much more on the way. When my student council and I finish our terms I trust we will all be able to look around and know that we made change on this campus, even for two hours, two weeks or perhaps permanently. We will know our time serving was worth the effort.

Now it is getting late (or early) and when I finish writing this piece I will go hang up some signs, take a walk, maybe talk to the other latenighters who are still up. For me it is the same as always, some things never change.

Jason Buskin  
YCSC President '96-'97

## Malfunctions Stymie Computer Classes

BY AVI ROSMAN

Many a frustrated and irate student has exited the computer lab after finding computer after computer inoperable. Computer malfunctions have become so stymieing that a recent Management Information Systems (MIS) class had to be relocated from a computer lab to a classroom while MIS resolved the problem.

MIS technician Paul Scrudato speculates that the problems that plague the computer labs are the result of students downloading enormous amounts of materials to computers from the Internet. Specifically, certain "network" games have been downloaded onto individual terminals that affect the entire network of student computers.

Some students reported that they have witnessed individuals intentionally misuse the computers as a practical joke. Scrudato emphatically denied knowledge of any intentional misuse or sabotage of the computers by students. "I don't think those using the games have a clue as to what they are doing."

The university MIS staff employs four full-time technicians responsible for managing student computers. The technicians remove student-downloaded corrupt files from the computers once a week. This process is extremely time consuming.

Students have mixed feelings about the computer difficulties. YC sophomore Jay Kierman remarked that "the computers are state of the art and usually work well. Breakdowns are expected and problems are usually fixed in a timely fashion." Other students reacted more negatively believing that the staff of MIS technicians should maintain the computers so that they do not inconvenience students to the extent that they do currently.

Scrudato said that the only way to prevent students from downloading harmful materials to the student computer network would be to block all downloading capabilities from student computers. MIS believes such a measure would inhibit student research efforts.

The use of America-On-Line (AOL) Internet service also poses problems for school computers. For a reason unknown to MIS, many of the breakdowns have resulted from usage of AOL. Scrudato reports that some universities have banned the use of AOL on their computers as a result of the problems it causes.

The MIS department suggests that the best way to prevent future problems is to educate students in proper computer use. Scrudato mentioned that a single one-hour session would give students the foundation they need to use the computers properly.



# Yeshiva College



# Campus News

## "How I Made My First Million" Rav Aharon Kahn on Business Ethics

BY MORDECHAI FISHMAN

"How I Made My First Million" was the title of the first lecture in the Business and Halacha Lecture Series, sponsored by the Sy Syms School of Business. MYP Rosh Yeshiva Rav. Aharon Kahn attracted about seventy-five students to his two-and-a-half hour lecture.

Rav Kahn began his talk by defining what he perceives the mission of YU to be, and its function as both a home of Torah, and a university where vocational skills are taught. "I am not a fan of Torah U'Maddah, because it is disintegration," said Rav Kahn. "Torah is all encompassing," and should apply equally to all aspects of our lives. Elucidating the title of his speech, Rabbi Kahn explained that his "millions" are in the spiritual realms of Torah and Mitzvot.

Rav Kahn then explained his vision of a "Super-Macro Economic System" for businessmen, delineated by the Torah,

and vital for a Torah life. Discussing questions dealt with in the Tractate of Kiddushin, he pointed out that "Judaism does not deny the need or importance of money and wealth." Quoting from sources as diverse as the movie "Wall Street" and the Shulchan Aruch, with references to the Hafetz Hayyim and Horatio Alger, Rav Kahn captivated his audience with his famous rhetorical style. The assistant Dean of SSSB, Prof. Ira Jaskoll, was also in attendance,

and seemed riveted by the eloquence of the Rabbi.

Decrying the state of Jewish business ethics in today's society, Rav Kahn explained that "The ends justifying the means, was never a Torah perspective. Have we forgotten to think as Jews in business?" He concluded his speech, charging the assembled listeners to meld the Torah into their professional lives, saying "that Belfer Hall must be a Beit Midrash of *Torat Hayyim*," a living example of Torah Business ethics.

*"I am not a fan  
of Torah  
U'Maddah,  
because it is  
disintegration"*

## Israel Club and Sophomore Class Hold Shabbaton

BY MORRIS ELBAZ

With over 150 students in attendance, the Israel club, Presidents Daniel Berkowitz and Michelle Zigleman, in corroboration with the Sophomore class, cosponsored a Shabbaton at Stern college.

Professor of Judaic Studies Rabbi Chamudot was on hand to give an eye opening speech about the importance of returning to Israel, in accordance with the teachings of Rav Kook. After Shabbat dinner, students heard a representative from the recycling group SAGA discuss halacha, and how it re-

lates to the environment. The topic was well received, with students praising the emphasis on religious activism as being in the spirit of the entire weekend.

Club President Daniel Berkowitz was very pleased with the turnout, considering the event took place right in the middle of midterms. Concerning the Shabbaton, he commented "The Shabbaton was a big step towards building the future for a more active Israel club."

After an inspirational Shabbat, everyone boarded the buses for a Saturday night taste of America, the "Pink Floyd" laser-light show at the Museum of Natural History.

## YU Library Catalog Soon to be Online Change Will Render Card Catalog Obsolete

BY EFRAIM SHAPIRO

The Yeshiva University Library Information System (YULIS), providing online access to all of the libraries holdings, is expected to be up and running early next semester.

YULIS is an on-line database of the Gottesman, Pollack and Stern Libraries' holdings. Through a "search engine" students will be prompted for various descriptions of the book or journal they wish to locate, for example: the subject, author, title or call number. In seconds the computer will display a menu of copies and volumes, their location and present availability rendering the current cumbersome card catalog system obsolete.

Graphically interfaced, YULIS will allow students to utilize a mouse, unlike the current system which is plain text. Information will be available not only to students inside the library, but to any student possessing a computer with terminal capabilities. When the system is ready, additional computers will be available for YULIS use.

YU is working in conjunction with Virginia Tech Library System, because of their multilingual capabilities. When fully operational, YULIS will be bilingual, allowing students to locate Hebrew

books, journals and periodicals by simply typing the relevant information in Hebrew.

Dean of Libraries Pearl Berger commented that she and her staff are currently working on providing the full text of many journals and periodicals on-line. This will allow instant access to journals and periodicals, eliminating interlibrary loans and the waiting period for material on the Stern campus which can take upwards of a week and a half.

Currently available from several computers in the Pollack Library is the Judaica Classics program - the full texts of Tanach, Talmud, and many other resources. Once YULIS is setup, this program will be available from any computer providing access to YULIS. In addition, Dean Berger hopes to add access to the Encyclopedia Talmudit and the Judaica Encyclopedia, pending their release.

Interfacing with YULIS will be an efficient checkout system employing barcodes which will be placed in each book and on the back of every student's ID. The data will automatically be entered into a database thereby enabling the library to record statistics, keep better track of books and records, and provide automatic overdue notification.

## VP of Academic Affairs Holds Roundtable Discussions

BY SHMUEL RITTER

Vice President of Academic Affairs William Schwartz provided a first of three "open floor" discussions with YU students this past week. Albeit a small turnout, students had an opportunity to voice their complaints to Dr. Schwartz and five other deans.

The first topic broached was that of Professor of Political Science, Dr. Ross Zucker's employment at YU. During the past several weeks there have been rumblings as to whether Prof. Zucker would remain on the YU staff. Schwartz responded that "there was a miscommunication about the issue. He [Zucker] is a distinguished scholar and we are delighted to have him on our staff." Zucker will take a leave of absence for one semester and upon his return will be offered a contract extension. Schwartz also added that a teacher's status "is not appropriate to inquire about because too often, it is

taken out of context and in the wrong way."

Another YC senior voiced a concern that may have far reaching implications. On an interview he was informed that although qualified for the job, he lacked experience "dealing with the opposite gender on a scholastic and business level." The interviewer added that had he attended a coed institution, he would have received the job. The student suggested some sort of coed program to prevent such an occurrence. Dean Hecht, in response to the maltreatment experienced by the student suggested that "there might have been some slight anti-Semitism shown." Dr. Schwartz recommended establishing a mentor program so that students will see "how the Orthodox businessman handles himself in the business world."

Dr. Schwartz will be conducting two more open floor sessions, one on April 3, and the other on April 10. Both will begin at 2:45pm.

## Mazal Tov to:

Yoni Leiber & Elana Bruckheimer  
Steven Perel & Chana Benjimanson  
Avi Tashman & Gila Walfish

*on their recent engagements*



# N J E W S I N W T H E S

## Orthodox Union to Honor Questionable Guest L'Oreal at Annual Dinner

BY GIL BLOOM

In response to French cosmetic giant L'Oreal's recent investment of over \$30 million in Israel, the Orthodox Union is applauding the company's activities and has selected it as one of the honorees at the OU annual dinner.

Normally, initiatives like those undertaken by L'Oreal, whereby money spent in Israel have been used to construct a manufacturing plant, as well as to support worthy causes within the country, would be warmly welcomed by all. However, sectors within the Jewish community are frowning upon the OU and L'Oreal, and no amount of money or makeup looks to be able to paint happy looking faces on the groups.

Disapproval of L'Oreal comes from the Coalition for Jewish Concerns-AMCHA and the Jewish Action Alliance who point to the company's history of extreme nationalism and anti-Semitism. Rabbi Avi Weiss, National President of AMCHA, accused the Orthodox Union of "selling respectability to the same corporation whose top officers sought to liquidate the Jews." Weiss further challenged the Orthodox Union by asking if any OU official would "dream of bestowing a prestigious award to L'Oreal if a large sum weren't proffered?"

A spokesperson for the Orthodox Union attributed much of the anger vented upon the organization to "inaccuracies in his [R' Weiss's] press release." Contrary to what has been published in many reports, emphasized the OU representative, "the Orthodox Union has not

received a penny." Rather, "as of now, we are aware of L'Oreal having invested twenty-four million dollars in the State of Israel, providing many more available jobs."

Initial evidence of L'Oreal's anti-Semitism surfaced in a 1995 French newspaper article. The paper charged Andre Bettencourt, patriarch of L'Oreal and present vice chairman, with engaging in Nazi-collaborative activity during the Second World War as well as penning two anti-Semitic propaganda articles authored during the German occupation of France which described Jews as "hypocritical Pharisees" whose "race has been forever sullied by the blood of the righteous." In an article written to commemorate the Christmas of 1941, Bettencourt wrote that the Jews "succeeded in laying hands on Jesus and crucifying him. Rubbing their hands, they cried out 'Let his blood fall upon us and upon our children.' You know how it fell and is still falling. Prescriptions of the eternal must be fulfilled."

Bettencourt's anti-Semitic exploits did not cease upon the liberation of occupied Europe. Fifty-three years after the publication of the scathing editorials, he joined the Arab League's 1989 economic boycott of the State of Israel. Prior to the boycott, L'Oreal had acquired Helena Rubenstein (an Israel-based cosmetics manufacturer), and with the onset of the Arab sanctions against Israeli companies and their foreign owners, this new acquisition was in jeopardy. In return for the removal of L'Oreal from the Arab League's list of blacklisted corporations, Bettencourt

provided the Arab League with corporate information on Helena Rubenstein, violating American antiboycott legislation.

L'Oreal denied any involvement, but agreed to pay the \$1.4 million settlement as a show of their continuing opposition to the boycott. L'Oreal Chairman Lindsay Owen-Jones nevertheless sent a letter to the Anti-Defamation League admitting correspondence with the Arab officials responsible for the boycott. He apologized, stating that he would "personally... like to say that I am sorry such correspondence was ever sent," and that he had taken measures to ensure that "such action will not happen again."

L'Oreal's history of fascism, though fanned by Mr. Bettencourt, began with his predecessor and father-in-law Eugene Schuller. Schuller was the financier of La Cagoule, which was considered to be one of the most dangerous and racist organizations in France at that time. Later in the corporation's history, it was reported that L'Oreal's director of American operations, Jaques Correze, was a member of the pro-Nazi faction Revolutionary Social Movement during the Second World War.

Mr. Bettencourt, after stepping down from his position as Deputy Chairman following the Arab League affair, was succeeded by his son-in-law, Jean-Pierre Meyers, who is Jewish.

Rabbi Weiss claims that Bettencourt continues to control the company, and though he officially stepped down from his position, he transferred his controlling share in the company to his wife, Schuller's daughter.

L'Oreal CEO and Chairman Lindsay Owen-Jones calls his investment in Israel a company policy to "strive to become involved in society as a member of the community in every country in which it directly operates." The company has set aside part of its donation for a program heightening social awareness of driver safety in Israel. Also a joint Tel Aviv University/L'Oreal business internship program was established, intending to provide business experience opportunities for Israeli graduate students. Another joint program with the Technion is also on the drawing board. Furthermore, L'Oreal has invested heavily in its subsidiary, Helena Rubenstein.

L'Oreal will be honored at the OU Dinner alongside Rabbi Marvin Hier, the Director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and Rabbi Gedaliah Schwartz, Av Beit Din of America. "Neither of these honorees objects to being awarded alongside L'Oreal," noted the OU spokesperson, "and the Board [of Directors] approved our choice one-hundred percent."

In a letter sent to those attending the dinner, the Orthodox Union attests that before making the decision to honor L'Oreal, they consulted with the government of Israel, the Anti-Defamation League, the Conference of Presidents, and other Jewish organizations, and encountered no objections from any of them. The OU also received letters sent by Minister of Trade Natan Scharansky and Prime Minister Netanyahu testifying to their appreciation of L'Oreal's contributions and of the Orthodox Union's recognition of that company.

Student Elections Will be held on  
April 3

The open Positions are:

Student Council Executive Board	Senior Class	Junior Class	Sy Syms Student Council
President Vice-President Secretary Treasurer	President Vice-President Secretary/Treasurer	President Vice-President Secretary/Treasurer	President Vice-President Secretary Treasurer

**Student Organization of Yeshiva**

President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer

\* SOY will run independent elections but will follow the same dates. Speak to Jonathan Nicos for details.

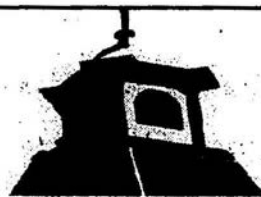
**Names Must Be Submitted by March 20.**

Submit Names To: Yosef Rotstein, Morg 318

Avi Lopchinsky, Morg 507

**There Will Be a Meeting on March 24 for all potential candidates.**

**For Official rules, See Morg or Robin Lobben.**



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## Teachers Withdraw when told of Edah's Affiliation

*Continued from page one*

ty. R' Goldin further pointed out that these Roshei Yeshiva made their sentiments extremely clear, which led to the aforementioned students abandoning the program in mid-session. "The loss of the instructors disrupted the continuity of the studies, and caused further problems in seeking potential recruits."

Currently an eight week session, with the possibility of another five week session between Pesach and Shavuot, the ongoing classes include two sessions each, on ethics, beginning Judaism, practical Halacha, and advanced texts. The classes are taught by a mixed group made up of six to seven RIETS students, three RIETS graduates, and two women. The semicha students were receiving an official stipend for their efforts in this curricular event.

Despite the resignation of the two student-teachers, the program is continuing and Yeshiva University and the synagogue are still co-sponsoring the event. However the future of the next session, according to R' Goldin, is in doubt, with vocal dissent from within the rabbinic ranks of YU,

who perceive it as a ploy for Edah and its backers to bring themselves into the mainstream. "I think that it is unfortunate that this is focused on this event, and it has been very painful. We need to respect the needs of the Roshei Yeshiva. I respect their Halachic authority, but I felt obligated to carry on... I do not dismiss their reservations, they are issues that must be discussed."

The students that left the program were unavailable for comment.

Rav Moshe Tendler, concurring with the view that Roshei Yeshiva should persuade their students not to participate in any Edah based or supported program, said that he was "perturbed by the development [of Edah], because of its commitment to pluralism." He compares the current pluralistic trends of Edah to the "Ethical Culture" movement of the Reform in his day, which led to a "spiritual holocaust," - there were 12 and a half million Jews immediately after the holocaust and due to intermarriage and assimilation there remain only 12 and a half million Jews in the world today.

## 1997 Roth Scholars Announced

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

The next generation of Yeshiva University Roth Institute Scholars - a summer undergraduate research program at Albert Einstein College - announced this past week the program.

ical sciences, cumulative grade point average as required for honors work or demonstrated unusual motivation for research.

The eight winners were Amichai Erdfarb, Sara Friedman, Roseanne Greenberg,

Hezi Jacobi, Jeffrey Kohn, Ofer Melamed, Mark Miller, Ari Steiner. Two alternatives were named as well: Daniel Lowe and Roniel Weinberg. Daniel Lowe will replace Jeffrey Kohn who will be accepting the pres-

idents will have the opportunity to work alongside and interact with peers, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows. In addition the students will each receive a stipend of \$2,000.

## Literacy Club Lauded

*continued from page one*

grade level. Although the increase in reading was only 1 percent, Muzin emphasized the individual impact upon the students by involving them in the educational process rather than the increase in test scores.

The success of the program has captured media attention. Five minute pieces featuring the Community Literacy Program were aired on both Channels 2 and 7 news. This media coverage was prompted by the YU Department of Public Relations which sent a form letter informing approximately 50 or so reporters and journalists of the program.

The media attention arrived on the heels of President Clinton's call for the America Reads Initiative in his State of the Union

Address. The goal of this federal program is to get many college students to participate in programs such as the Community Literacy Program of Washington Heights. Professor Cwilich of the YC Physics Department is working to formally incorporate the program into Clinton's Americorps program. YU has sent a letter to President Clinton informing him of the YU program and inviting him to speak at YU to promote the America Reads Initiative. He is optimistic that either Mr. or Mrs. Clinton will indeed come. Cwilich has also written letters to Governor Pataki and Mayor Giuliani informing them of the success of the YU Community Literacy Program.

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## *A Man Who's Torah Was Disemminated the World Over*

Born in Vysock, a small town in Polish Lithuania, R' Romm was named Shimon Posniack at birth. His father passed away while he was still an infant, and his mother shouldered the burden raising of him, until his adolescence when she too passed away. Rav Romm vividly recalled the simple, yet altruistic Jews of Vysock, like the shoemaker who taught him *mishnayos* that he knew by heart, or the old man who took him for long walks in the forest.

At twelve years old, his mother sent him off to the great Jewish community of Slonim, to learn under Reb Shabsai Yogel. At Slonim, Rav Romm became known as Shimon Vysocker, or Shimon from Vysock. Slonim was a large town, which in the nineteenth and early twentieth century was continually conquered and traded by Russian, Polish, and German governments, as it lay on the borders of all.

Despite the bloody politics, a century or so of vibrant Jewish atmosphere thrived in Slonim. By the advent of the early twentieth century, the Jews in Slonim were representative of the variant viewpoints and cultural conflicts that affected all of Jewry. Religious Zionists clashed with enlightened nationalists, the *misnagdim* argued in Torah with the *chasidim*, and throughout the Jewish presence thrived. It was in Slonim that Rav Romm had his initial and highly influential experiences with the world Torah and its teachers.

In a *misnaged* yeshiva, he learned under Reb Shabsai Yogel, and heard explanations of the Torah from Rav Fain, the greatest *dars-han* in Eastern Poland. The impact of Rav Fain in terms of Rav Romm's own method of *d'rush* was so significant that years later, in 1966, one of the few articles he ever published in "*Ha-darom*" was a *d'var torah* once told to him by R' Fain.

The atmosphere of Slonim affected and helped form R' Romm's innermost convictions. The famous Slonimer *chasidim* kindled a lifelong love for *chasidus*, and his Zionist leanings had their origins in Slonim as well. R' Romm's brilliance quickly spread throughout the city; eventually he was known as the *Vysocker Illui* - prodigy from Vysock.

From Slonim, he traveled to Bialostok, the home of the Navardok *mussar* movement. Rav Yossef Horowitz, founder of the movement, stressed asceticism and self-negation. However R' Romm found the philosophy too harsh and traveled on to Kletzk to study under the renowned Rav Aharon Kotler.

R' Romm developed into one of the best *talmidim* in Kletzk. In addition, he founded a close personal relationship with Rav Aharon Kotler and his family. Rav Kotler admired and esteemed him so greatly that years later, in America, when Rav Kotler and R' Romm were traveling together in a car, R' Kotler turned to him and said, "Shimon, you never should have left me."

Rav Romm *did* eventually leave Rav Kotler to continue his studies in the Mir Yeshiva. Notwithstanding the Mir's better provisions, stipend and prestige (every student in Europe strived to enter the Yeshiva), Rav Romm later told his *talmidim* that he wished he had stayed to learn with Rav Kotler.

At the Mir, like in Slonim and Kletzk, his fame spread as one of the most accomplished and learned *talmidim*. He established a close friendship with the *mashgiach* Rav Yerucham Lebowitz and received *smicha* from Rav Kamai. Rabbi Eliezer Yehuda Finkel, recognizing R' Romm's eloquence to convey his learning to others and to move listeners, sent him to different towns and villages to speak.

Rav Romm's fame and renown continued to grow, and eventually led to a *shiduch*

with Kala Eisenbod. Kala Eisenbod was the daughter of Rav Eliyohu Eisenbod, the renowned rabbi of Vasilishik, a town in Lithuania. Three generations of Eisenbod's had led Vasilishik, and after his marriage to Kala, it seemed as though Rav Romm would be the next in line. He left the Mir to serve as the rabbi in training under Rav Eisenbod, delivering the daily *blatt* of *gemara* and performing other important functions.

Rav Romm never succeeded Rav Eisen-

times. Once he was surrounded by a pack of wild dogs. He stood perfectly still, awaiting a certain gruesome death, but the dogs never attacked. He narrowly avoided death a second time after being thrown in prison by the Russian authorities on the grounds of attempted escape. But through his cunning, he was able to convince the Russians that he was actually returning to promulgate his love for mother country. While many of his contemporaries were sentenced to hard labor in

been the late Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Issac Herzog. On the way to Israel, he stopped in South Africa, and stayed with the brother-in-law of Rav Chaim Ozer. He was befriended by a South African millionaire. The millionaire promised Rav Romm a high post in South Africa if he would stay.

Rav Romm, nonetheless, arrived in Israel in 1943 and stayed until 1948, when Dr. Belkin invited him to join the staff of Yeshiva University. The ties between Dr. Belkin and Rav Romm were very strong, extending back to the days when they learned in Slonim together. In their childhood days, Dr. Belkin and Rav Romm were roommates united in poverty, forced to share a single pair of shoes and the same coat. Amidst great turmoil and uncertainty in Israel, Rav Romm accepted Dr. Belkin's invitation and came to Yeshiva University.

While in Israel, he served as the Rabbi of a shul in Tel Aviv, worked at a Yeshiva in Petach Tikvah. R' Romm's fame as a great orator and a man steeped in Torah spread throughout Israel. He was often called upon to disseminate his words of wisdom and discuss the plight of the Mir. One Torah lecture which he specifically remembered fondly was given in a sukh before the Chazon Ish and Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer.

The decision to leave Israel paired Rav Romm. Today, all his children and grandchildren live in Israel. Rav Katz said, "Rav Romm loved and always worried for Israel; his constant goal in life was to search for a way that Torah and *Medinah* be together." The Gerer Rebbe told Rav Romm before he left, "If you stay in Israel you'll be famous, but if you leave no one will know you."

When he first came to Yeshiva University, in 1948, Rav Romm's job was that of a *meshulach*, or fund-raiser. His reputation of being a great Yiddish and Hebrew orator had preceded him, and he was asked to travel across the country for the university. This year during the week of *Parshat Yitro*, Rav Romm told his *shiur* a d'var torah he had once delivered to a group of wealthy women in Florida, when he first came to America. After the *shiur*, a woman ran up to him and said, "Rebbe, I enjoyed your *shiur*." A broad smile spread across Rav Romm's face as he retold this story, and he said, "It was the first time in my life that anyone told me that they had enjoyed my *shiur*."

Rav Romm taught for forty one years at YU, and for years, his shiur was at the highest level in the Teachers Institute. Rav Romm was still giving an intellectually rigorous shiur in his late eighties and early nineties.

Theshiur was very important to him. Two years ago Rav Romm had a serious stroke and was in the hospital for two weeks. When Rav Romm left the hospital to recover in his own home, his shiur came to visit him. Upon seeing his talmidim, although gravely ill, he began to give a *shiur*.

It is the small stories that talmidim and friends remember that reveal the real story of Rav Romm: a happy man whose character was awesome and dynamic that he was able to make everyone around him happy as well.

Rav Romm was buried in the land he loved and always supported. At this burial in Israel, the entire Mir Yeshiva came to pay respect and honor his greatness. He is survived through family: by his wife, two children, and numerous grandchildren, and by his many talmidim who will carry on his torah and his legacy.

*Zalman Alpert and Shmuel Herzfeld were helpful in providing information for this article.*

# Reflections On Rav Shimon Romm ZT'L

## BY AKIVA HERZFELD

The night before Ray Romm passed away, I tried explaining to him over the phone, that I would be unable to attend shiur the following day. But Ray Romm would not accept my excuses. His last words, before "see you tomorrow," were: "You have to be in shiur; you have to *learn*!"

It is fitting that these were Rav Romm's last words to me, because that was Rav Romm's primary desire of his students: To learn not only Torah, but also to learn the proper way to live life. It was Rav Romm's request of each of his *talmidim*, and each *talmid* knew it. Rav Romm taught through love, and insisted that this was the only way to teach.

Likewise, all the students in his shiur knew that he loved them, and they reciprocated his love equally; the ties between the *talmid* and the *rebbe* extended beyond the normal bounds. *Rebbe* would take *talmid* shopping in Brooklyn, if he thought they were not dressing properly. Once he even saw one of his students wearing a weekday overcoat on Shabbat. For one year he even hesitated about taking a *get* from him until the student came to Ray B. and showed him his dress coat. At that point *Rebbe* brought his *talmidim* to the *get* ceremony. *Rebbe* parted with his young *talmid* unimaginably disapprovingly, but he was not angry. He was sad to his heart because he had become sick.

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To Ravenna, I knew I had to go, and I did. It was a hell of a long drive, but it was worth it. It's only a short drive, a mere semester and a half. But I learned about perseverance about kind of a long time ago.

bod as the Rav in Vasilisik. In 1939, the Russian army marched west and began swallowing much of the Eastern Slavic countries. In the conquered Jewish towns, mass confusion reigned. Many wanted to run from the Russian repression, but did not know where to go. One safe haven, where there was supposed to be greater tolerance for the Jewish religion, was the independent city of Vilna. Although Rav Romm's wife wanted to stay with her family in Vasilisik, he convinced her to flee to Vilna. Rav Eisenbod and his family perished in the holocaust.

Their travels in the period from 1939-1940 were very difficult. It was a cold, harsh winter, and R' Romm questioned his survival many

**Siberia, he was freed.**

Rav Rommand his wife traveled on under many hardships eventually rejoining the relocated Mir Yeshiva in Lithuania. He joined the Mir in its escape to Shanghai, and endured the "adventure" as he liked to call it afterwards. In 1942, Rav Romm, because he was a senior member of the yeshiva, was one of very few selected to leave Shanghai.

Somewhere around late 1942 or early 1943, he arrived in Lorenzo Marcus in Portuguese Africa, modern day Angola. Surprisingly, in Portuguese Africa, just as the Mir in Shanghai, Rav Romm found a shul. His stay would be a short one as he was able to acquire a special visa to Israel. His benefactor may have

Men, Men, Men... They roam the hallways in abundance at the main campus of Yeshiva University and for half a century they were all the University knew. That was then.

Today, the University flourishes in large measure, due to the dedicated women that toil, often in relative obscurity. March is known as Women's History Month, and to honor them *The Commentator* offers this piece on the role of Women in Yeshiva University today.

Meet Dr. Karen Bacon, Dean of Stern College for Women, herself a graduate of the school.

Bacon arrived at Stern College in 1961, following in her brother's footsteps. Shortly thereafter, Dr. Bacon began to carve her own path at YU, returning after graduate studies at UCLA to a position at Yeshiva College as Professor of Biology. In the 1970s she became part of the University administration, when she accepted her appointment as dean of Stern College, which was comprised of an administration of men.

#### A New Era

Today, almost every member of the administration of Stern College is female. The changes were made gradually, and according to Dean Bacon to benefit the women undergraduates. "I think that when I became dean of this college the school was in somewhat of a transition. It had a history and it was really looking towards what kind of future it would have. I think what has been helpful is that being a woman and actually being a graduate of this institution, I felt very keenly the struggling aspirations of both the students and faculty to carve out a kind of a new presence for women both at this university and in the Jewish community. I would not say that someone other than a graduate of this institution could feel those feelings and understand them, but clearly it gave me a leg up."

Bacon feels that she didn't need to be educated about the concerns, the hope, the fears, and the aspirations of the students and the faculty because as a former undergraduate at Stern, she empathized with all of them.

She credits the ability to concentrate on the School's self-actualization, to her understanding of the perspectives of her students and faculty.

Although the appointment of Dr. Bacon was the beginning of a series of administrative and faculty changes that brought women to other posts within the University, what caused the change in attitude towards women is less clear. Dr. Marylene Schneider, Professor of Sociology at Yeshiva College explains that, "In examining the increase of women in the labor force—due to challenges to traditional sex roles in recent decades, to increased educational achievement of women, and to new job opportunities because of technological changes—Sociologists and feminists have been debating for at least three decades the whys and hows of perceived and real inequities: roles, wages, benefits, promotion, conditions, power, and work experiences.

"According to social scholars, the status of women in academic jobs is below that of men. Women disproportionately teach in two-year and four-year institutions



SCW Dean Dr. Karen Bacon

## The Roles of Women in Yeshiva University

By Ari Kahn

where heavy teaching loads thwart research. Men predominate in the social and physical sciences, as compared with the humanities, and in the rank of full professor. In administrative jobs, while American women have become deans and chairpersons of departments, relatively few have gone past the glass ceiling to become president of a college or university."

Dr. Schneider and feel that the changes in YU reflect changes in the whole of society. "In many ways, YU is a reflection of the society at large," said Dr. Schneider. "As the number of women who received advanced formal education increased, so did the pool of female instructors with impressive credentials. In other ways, however, YU has been at the vanguard of change. More than a decade ago, a woman was academic vice-president at YU (Dr. Blanche Blank). Today, the Dean of Libraries and the Director of the YU Museum are women. Today, relatively large percentages of teachers in the physical and social sciences are female, as compared with other schools."

However, Dr. Bacon differs in one respect saying, "I think what happened is that the world has changed, and so the university has changed somewhat with it. There may be people at this university who would dispute this, but I cannot believe we were the leaders and at the forefront of involving women in executive positions at this university. My sense is that it happened elsewhere first and the university took note and decided that maybe it was worth a try. I do believe that when Dr. Lamm appointed me as dean, he had given the search committee a charge that he wanted to have a woman dean. I can't say that he said he wouldn't consider anybody else..."

#### The Importance of Women

Dr. Bacon supports Dr. Lamm's interest in a woman administrator at Stern, and firmly believes that women must remain the administrators of Stern College. "The fact that women are in this administration makes for a certain comfort zone among the students. Students are comfortable going to women administrators, because they also see them as role models; they feel they can express their own concerns about how they are going to juggle their future. It doesn't matter how many years women have been in the work force or occupying prominent positions in professional fields, we still feel the pain and the challenge of putting together a professional life and a family life—this is not simple and the burden falls not exclusively, but heavily on women and not on men."

Not all YU women work at Stern College. Ms. Gladys Cherny is President Lamm's administrative assistant and

right hand woman and can be found at the Uptown Campus. Some have called her "the most influential woman in the University," a charge which she jokingly denies. Cherny has dealt with the entire spectrum of YU: students, faculty, and administration. She also feels that women play a vital role, "Since I've been here there have always been women who are involved in the decision making process. I think they are a super asset for most students."

#### Old Attitudes Die Hard

While Cherny has never experienced any negative reaction to her gender, others indicate this is not yet a gender-blind institution. "I have noticed significant stylistic differences between meetings at which I am the only woman and those at which there is a more even mix," noted Dean Bacon, "Consensus building and focusing on substance are important to me. Grand-standing and jockeying for power are not. At meetings where women are under-represented, the discussion often takes on negative qualities making it difficult to achieve real progress. I have always believed that in an environment where there is self-respect and respect for others, there will be no desire or need to put someone else down. We don't have that environment yet, and thus, regrettably, condescension is still alive and well. And yet, I find that intellectually there is a recognition of the major contributions women, at all levels from the Board to the students, can and do make to the problem solving and decision making of the University. Here is a case where attitudes lag behind reality."

As a sociologist, Dr. Schneider agreed. "Does this [the recent changes] mean YU female faculty members are free of the conflicts which others face in other institutions of higher learning? Probably not. In many ways, YU is a microcosm of the larger world. In addition to issues raised above, YU women faculty members may also have to face—like their peers outside these colleges—personal issues such as child care, potential dissonance between public versus private management styles, and occasional sexist remarks by extremist holdovers from the 'old school.'"

So what does the future hold for the women at Yeshiva University? There are some positions open on the main campus and other positions that might open up in the near future. "Was a woman considered or would a woman be considered for [the deanship of] Yeshiva College? I think there was a lot of openness in the committee to consider effective people," said Bacon. "Do I remember any women being interviewed? I can't say that I do. Would a woman be considered for the assistant deanship? I



YC Professor Dr. Marylene Schneider

have certainly heard no one say it's out of the question.

"On the Vice Presidential level absolutely women should be considered—it's an administrative level. There are women bankers there could be women financial vice presidents, there are women physicians, there are women who could be the dean of the

medical college and therefore be a vice president. So I don't think there is anyone excluded and I don't think the university intends to exclude women from those positions.

"As I say, we at this university, were slow to come upon the value of women administrators and I imagine we'll be slow to come upon the value of women vice presidents, but we had one, and I expect in the future we will have women vice presidents again."

However, that is probably as far as women will go, as Dr. Schneider explains "Can a woman become president of this university? Again probably not. This is not, though evidence of a "good old boy" network at work or a sign of discrimination. In its unique incarnation as a yeshiva and university... The job description requires this principal executive to be the Rosh Ha'Yeshiva, a position not currently open to Orthodox women."

Ms. Cherny also feels there is a limit to what women will accomplish, "I don't think there will ever be a problem with another woman vice-president," she stated, "Though I'll tell you we will not have a woman Rabbi, nor do I think we should," she added.

Many women voice concerns about the uptown student body and how they regard women. "There is no sexist mindset among students. A few have joked about being male chauvinists and even fewer are serious die-hards in their belief that women have no place except in the home," commented Schneider.

"Based on information I've received from recent YC graduates, I think most YC students are not only comfortable with the advances women have made in the work place, but would be willing to emotionally and practically support their wives in their career choices and also be proud of mothers who choose to work the home. But, not surprisingly, there has also been a backlash—fueled by some who believe the troubles in the world are caused by women in the marketplace who should be at the hearth taking care of the young. What number or percentage of YC students feel this way I have no idea. But I do believe these folk are in the minority."

"Yeshiva College students have been a little slow to catch on to the concerns and the aspirations of modern orthodox women," summarized Dean Bacon, "Both in terms of what they have to offer to their communities and careers but also in terms of their Jewish learning. It has taken a while for men to catch on that women are interested in the intellectual challenge of Torah and in the kind of contribution they can make to the Torah world by virtue of their learning. Not all men have been able to understand what that means to a woman in that it's a very personal and important part of her life. If she's chosen a school like Stern College she's investing huge numbers of hours learning Torah. Men don't quite understand what to make of that."



# Women's Megilah Reading Debated

continued from page one

people who want to grow in Judaism, and therefore the answer does not have to be 'no' necessarily; the answer can sometimes be 'yes'."

Rabbi Krauss cited the example of the push for Bat Mitzvah's in 19th century Germany as an example of a recent evolution in Judaism which though at first considered suspect by Rabbinic authorities due to the rebellious nature of its proponents, is now widely accepted by Rabbis concerned for "the sensitivity of a girl to grow and develop spiritually, to make sure that she too is taken into the realm of *Avodas Hashem*."

"I believe that the girls in Stern College who could be in Barnard, Columbia, or Yale, and come to Stern College because Stern College is a place of Torah," said Rabbi Krauss. "I think that those girls don't ask for *Megilah* reading because of rebelliousness..... They ask because somehow they feel their spiritual growth will be heightened by the *Megilah* reading for women."

When asked by an audience member if his Halachic opinion on the issue of women's *Megilah* reading would change in a situation such as the one at Stern College where the women are committed to Halachic Judaism, Rabbi Cohen responded, "The women of Stern College have Rabbi Lamm. Let him decide what you should do."

## Letter Sent To Rabbi Lamm Seeking Permission for Women's *Megilah* Reading

Stern College Juniors Rachel Leiser and Nitzan Pelman decided to follow the advice of Rabbi Cohen and actually sent a letter dated February 24 to Rabbi Lamm, President and Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva University, requesting permission to conduct a women's *Megilah* reading at Stern College. Leiser and Pelman attached the names of 175 students of Stern College who supported their efforts to bring a women's *Megilah* reading to Stern.

Pelman emphasized, "All these women would not necessarily participate in a woman's *Megilah* reading, but they all want it to be presented as a viable option in Stern for those who desire it."

In their letter, Pelman and Leiser present their case for a women's *Megilah* reading at Stern. The letter states, "Many students have previously participated in woman's *Megilah* reading both at home and abroad, and there is a great interest on their part in their continuing this tradition. The firmly established Halachic view that allows for such *kriah* [readings] is supported by *Roshei Yeshiva* in YU as well as other *Yeshivot* throughout the United States and Israel. Additionally, *Rabbanim* at Stern College for Women have taught

and learned these issues with us. Undeniably, there is both support and encouragement to be found within the faculty Yeshiva University for such a reading."

The letter then addresses the motivations of those women at Stern who want a women's *Megilah* reading. "Many women are propelled to take an active part in the *kriah* by their commitment to gaining an ever-increasing connection to the *Megilah* and the holiday of Purim itself.... By providing the option of a women's *Megilah* reading at Stern college, Yeshiva University would reaffirm its positive commitment to supporting its students in their upholding of the integrity of Halakha."

"I believe that a women's Orthodox institution should support an active role for women within the framework of Halachic Judaism," explained Pelman. "Because there are many Halachic sources which undeniably support women's *Megilah* reading, there is no reason such an option should not be offered to the women of Stern."

Rabbi Lamm responded to Pelman and Leiser's request with a letter of his own. In his reply, Rabbi Lamm pointed out that women's *Megilah* reading has far from unanimous approval from Halachic authorities. The President of the University expressed his fear that "Scheduling a women's *Megilah* reading at Stern

College for Women can only lead to the kind of divisiveness that we have heretofore successfully avoided at Stern College."

The letter then described the functions of the undergraduate programs of Yeshiva University. Rabbi Lamm wrote that although Stern College and Yeshiva University attempt to "expose its students to high level Jewish studies and ethics which will enhance and intensify students understanding of and commitment to Judaism," they do not "take any formal role in deciding Halachic issues for its students." Rabbi Lamm therefore concluded, "we take no position as an institution on matters of controversy amongst Halachic authorities."

Though apparently not espousing an institution-wide policy, Rabbi Lamm then suggests, "Those students who want a women's *Megilah* reading may avail themselves of opportunities to do so in a number of Synagogues in the city."

Pelman was not surprised by Rabbi Lamm's reply. "Though I wasn't expecting a positive response," Pelman explained, "I felt it was important that the faculty be made aware that there are students in Stern College who want a women's *Megilah* reading, so that perhaps in future years the school will be more receptive to students' wishes."

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# Editorials OPINION

## Pre-Professionalism at YU: The Pitfalls of Profit

Let us speak with candor, for we only criticize what we care for. Yeshiva University is rapidly evolving into a vocational school, dominated by its pre-med, pre-law, and (most of all) pre-business programs.

According to figures from the Office of the Registrar, in the decade of the Sy Syms School of Business' existence, it has grown from constituting 16% of the Main Campus undergraduate student population in 1987, to making up approximately 40% of the campus this year, with the bulk of the growth occurring over the past four years. The statistics are quite significant and distressing: while the campus, as a whole, experienced fruitful growth during the past decade, Yeshiva College actually shrank in the same period. And, by all accounts, this trend will likely continue at an ever faster rate.

This descent into pre-professionalism (i.e. the tendency to plan one's academic study around one's future employment) is evidenced as well by choice of major; by the primary field of study. Whereas during this academic year there are 107 Accounting majors on the uptown campus, there are but 22 English majors. There are

105 Finance majors, but only 8 Philosophy majors; 52 Marketing majors alongside 3 Classics majors. The crucial pillar of liberal arts here is crumbling, and with it, any unique mission this university still retains.

But how can we speak in a place where the voices of giants echo still? Dr. Samuel Belkin z'l, President of Yeshiva University from 1943 to 1975, articulating precisely this mission, declared in his inaugural address: "Jewish tradition has therefore emphasized that learning is not to be pursued for its material value or a self-regarding motive, but rather for its own sake. Knowledge, above all, must serve as a means for the formation of an improved personality which looks beyond the temporal and transient to the eternal and permanent in life. The end of education should be the cultivation of the intellectual and spiritual values; the bringing to the maximum development of the moral potentialities in man."

Not endemic to YU alone, excessive pre-professionalism subdues eclectic intellec-

tual excitement and exploration; it reduces its young adherents to dispensable cogs in the technocratic societal machinery; and it

helps demote Torah U'Madda from powerfully challenging ideology to substanceless public relations slogan and arcane abstraction.

How impoverished, then, is the student whose entire undergraduate career is devoted not to spiritual edification or broad intellectual enrichment, but only to the narrowly practical exigencies of future employment? How withered and desiccated the education which is never an end unto itself, to be savored and enjoyed, but is always condemned to be a mere means to some other, always receding end?

We cannot express this more cogently than Rabbi Dr. Lamm, who, already in his investiture address of 1976, decried the "unfortunate linkage, both explicit and implicit, between education and material rewards... It is offensive, self-defeating, and dangerous to link career training with the purpose of study; to

confuse culture with professionalism, to identify the beneficial economic consequences of the educational enterprise as its proper motives."

Of course honest labor (*ummanut*) can be intrinsically valuable, and of course *frum* Jews should enter the professional work force. But without belittling *yishuv shel olam* as "bourgeois," let us discriminate between the tedious mundanities of work and the joyous profundities of an authentically lived Judaism. Without abandoning the cautious counsel of prudence, let us for once live for, and in the immediate present. Without disparaging the generosity of *tomchei Torah*, let us vow to bow no more to the idol of Mammon or to the bust of Syms. And without succumbing to elitist arrogance, let us firmly reject the mediocrity of educational utilitarianism in favor of pursuing the noble vision of learning *lishma*.

After all, who is to say that the successful assimilation of our finest youth into corporate America, with its pervasive ideology of materialism and its culture of commercial consumerism, is not the most subtly dangerous assimilation of all?

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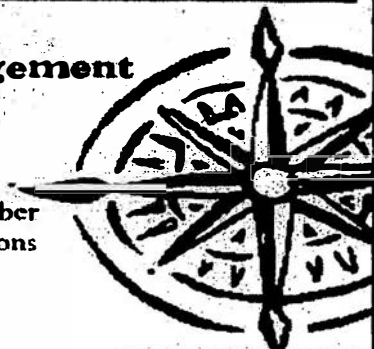
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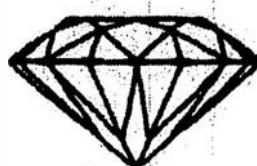
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# LETTERS

To the Editor

To the Editor,

When discussing this letter with some of my friends, I found an almost uniform opinion on the decision to write. They asked: "Why would you start?" "Why earn yourself a bad reputation?" and "Do you realize what you are doing?" I had apparently forgotten that arguing with the monolithic voice of the Yeshiva was completely unacceptable. I had forgotten that personal expression or dissent would hurt my reputation and my *shidduch* opportunities. After all, the concept of "These and these are the words of the Lord" does not apply to students of the Yeshiva arguing with the opinion of the Yeshiva. It is perhaps this point, more than any particular event or issue, which inspired me to write this.

There is a certain religious political correctness in the Yeshiva. Members of both the faculty and the student body often throw up their arms in frustration rather than openly argue with or criticize any statements or ideas emanating from the Yeshiva. This correctness extends so far that it has been and is considered acceptable for faculty members to pressure students to change their opinions and stances on controversial issues that arise. It is this very notion that bothers me most; when *hashkafah* becomes confused with halacha, opinions will be confused for *fatwas*.

There have been several issues in the last few months that have gained particular attention in YU. The conference on Feminism and Orthodoxy, involvement with Edah, participation in the Meorot scholars program, and the Beit Midrash in Englewood have been particularly controversial. One of the objections that have been raised (which I do not take lightly) is that we must not allow illegitimate ideas or movements to permeate Orthodox Jewry. Nonetheless, this is not the only issue at hand. These programs have indirectly criticized YU. By addressing the needs of the modern orthodox community, as YU once did, the organizations have inadvertently criticized YU. If members of the faculty in the Yeshiva are disturbed by these movements, perhaps they should take these movements' message as a warning. YU is not fulfilling its purpose; it is not making a live and vibrant modern orthodox community. In YU, Torah U'Maddah is a journal, a lecture series, and a slogan, but not a live

and vibrant movement. It is not these organizations that criticize this inaction but our Sages who said, "Say little and do much."

Many of the recent controversies have been over programs associated with Edah. My own opinion, if I were to formulate one, on this organization is irrelevant to this letter. What is important is to discuss the issues at hand. This organization receives significant funding from Michael Steinhardt, who is closely affiliated with Irving Greenberg. Many have said that the involvement of Irving Greenberg is dangerous; he might have a strong influence on the organization's policies. This is a legitimate concern, but it is important to note that this money was given in an unconditional manner. Still some would claim that it legitimizes fringe elements. This is a legitimate concern, but I think that there are three things to keep in mind. First, At what price will we object to the spread of Torah? Is politics more important than religion? Second, before the University begins examining another organization's policy on accepting donations, perhaps YU should check if its own policies are faultless? Does YU carefully examine all of its donations? Third, would those who have raised the objections not take salary if YU were funded by Mr. Steinhardt?

If members of the faculty feel the need to express their disapproval for Edah or any other organization, they should do just that. Instead of pressuring students in private or making fun of these organizations they should state their objections to the public. Similarly, if members of the faculty disagree with this monolithic voice creeping out of the Yeshiva, then let them say so. Why must our institution be embarrassed in the *Jewish Week* because no one is willing to speak up. The Jewish community has a right to know that many of the students and teachers do not agree with these recent statements.

My *mussar* is equally inwardly and outwardly directed. Perhaps it is time for our community, on the eve of this Purim, a day often compared to Yom Kippur, to do some introspection. We should emulate the ways of Mordechai, of "seeking the good of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed." (Esther 10:3)

Raphael Shorr  
YC '99

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## Intramural Basketball

BY COMMENTATOR SPORTS STAFF

During last semester's season the top teams clearly established their dominance. This semester, the acquisition of new players and blockbuster trades has resulted in greater parity in the league. We at *The Commentator* assure you that this ranking system will ease concern and satisfy the curiosity of our avid fans and readers.

### Power Poll Rankings

**Timberwolves-** This is the team to beat with their powerful front line and great outside shooting.

**Knicks-** A buff front line and a 1-2-3 punch of Goldberg, Parver, and Hecht could allow this team to return to the championships.

**Celtics-** Rosenbaum, Rockoff, and Cutler remind Celtichaters of Bird, Michael, and Johnson.

**Lakers-** The Lakers improved their status by routing the Cavaliers 60-40.

**76ers-** Chaim Zakheim who is the leading scorer in the league makes this team a force to be reckoned with.

**Cavaliers-** Their internal strife causes this team problems, yet they have the talent to go all the way.

**Raptors-** On any given night this team can pull out a victory.

**Grizzlies-** The suspension of Ami Rosen has greatly hurt this team's chances.

**Clippers-** This team should consider joining the WBL unless Daniel Lowe decides to make a comeback.

**Player of the Week:** Avi Dzik of the Celtics contributed 16 points, eight rebounds, and seven assists in a three point loss to the Cavaliers.

**Game to Watch:** Knicks vs. Celtics. Expect a close and exciting game in this match-up between the #2 and #3 ranked teams. Knicks will be running new plays implemented by Coach Ron Markovitz during the countless hours of practice.

## Wrestling Team Suffers from Glut of Injuries, Ends Season on High Note

BY ELLIOT GANCHROW

It has certainly been a rough year for the YU wrestling Macs. From the beginning of their season, the "Ellmen", as they are colloquially referred to, have had to deal with the frustrations of inexperience and a plague of injuries. While this year's lineup consisted of a number of veteran wrestlers, many of them sustained various injuries earlier in the season, while the beginner wrestlers balanced both the unexpected time pressures of personal development and public performance.

The wrestling team, which begins its intensive training regimen in the beginning of September, unexpectedly suffered from a series of shoulder injuries to both veteran and novice wrestlers alike. As a result, the lineup altered and where the team was originally strong, suddenly found itself with empty weight classes.

Yehuda Wolf and Amichai Erdfarb both spent the majority of this past season on the sidelines. Team captain Avi Ellman, sustained a near crippling rotator cuff injury back in September, and had to miss the entire season. In a last ditch effort to avoid surgery, Ellman currently undergoes intense physical therapy every day. It is expected that Ellman will step back on the mat by the summer months, perhaps in time for the Empire State Games.

Coaches Ostrow, Ellman, and Shwitzer dealt with the potentially disastrous situation of injured veterans by focusing on the new wrestlers in order that they become "wrestle-ready" for the matches. They also developed a special program for the team, which will hopefully avert such a glut of injuries in the future.

Despite a lack of experience among the beginner competitors, through much hard training, and strong coaching by Ellman and Ostrow, the beginners developed at astonishing speed. And while it may have taken nearly an entire season,

the team has finally developed into a strong cohesive squad. They showed that growth at their latest post season competition, the Eastern Collegiate Wrestling Invitational at Lafayette College. Teams from Maryland to Vermont competed, in the tournament. First year and veteran wrestlers alike placed in their respective weight classes, impressing both spectators and competitors.

Among those impressed was none other than Coach Ostrow, who feels that each wrestler competed better in the tournament than any other match during the season. "Every match they wrestled, they became that much better. Despite some crushing losses, they held their focus, and continued to concentrate on their skills. Their efforts are finally showing strong results. They are different wrestlers when they compete now."

Some of the outstanding performances of the team at the tournament included, Captain Donny Thurm, who won 3rd place, Avi Goldin and Daniel Lowey who each one won 3rd place as well, and Avery Jutkowitz and Michael Zeidel who each won 4th place. Each one wrestled close matches throughout the tournament. Some of this year's highlight wrestlers:

**145 lbs-** Aron Robin, who throughout the season consistently wrestled close matches, stunned the crowd at SUNY Maritime by pinning his opponent, a senior champion, during the first period. **125 lbs** Avi Goldin and Avery Jutkowitz, - Goldin a first year wrestler and Jutkowitz an ex MTA wrestler both proved to be strong competitors throughout the season. **171 lbs** Ariel Shiloh - ex wrestler from Frisch high school, came down from 200 lbs to 171 by the post season tournaments. Shiloh devoted much of his time helping his old high school team train. **Ellie Kopstick** - from Canada, first year wrestler, quickly developed his skills on the mat, as he started competing against opponents who had nearly ten more years experience.

# YESHIVA SPORTS

## A Hoopster's Dream: March Madness

BY STEVEN ZOMBEK

It's that time of year again otherwise known as March Madness, and no it has nothing to do with midterms or the fact that we have been in school for the past seven months- It's college basketball's version of the playoffs.

Three weeks of nonstop action culminating with the NCAA Final Four and National Championship in Indianapolis on March 31 have gotten underway featuring NBA prospects like All-Americans Tim Duncan, Keith Van Horn, Ron Mercer, Jacques Vaughn, and many others.

This tradition rich tournament continues to be the focus of the sporting world for two entire weeks. Pools have been set up on campuses and offices

worldwide. Just a little warning to the faculty: Attendance will be slightly below normal during March Madness so just let it slide and say Go MACS!!! (Oh well, say it anyway!) The tournament climaxes on March 31, with a "Championship Party" at Weissberg Commons sponsored by the YCSC. As usual, the game will be shown on big screen TV with free Dougie's wings and hoagies.

### Steve's Picks-

**Pretenders:** Cincinnati, Minnesota, Clemson, Wake Forest

**Sleepers:** College of Charleston, Providence

**Final Four:** Kentucky, Kansas, North Carolina, UCLA

**Champs:** Kansas

## Softball Intramurals Underway

BY RON MARKOVITZ

After numerous attempts by students in recent years to start a softball intramural league, Benjamin Neikrug, with help from the Athletic Department's Stan Watson and Steve Young, finally took the idea and made it a reality. The four teams - Buskin's Spare Parts, Neikrug's Tzionim Dativim, Levine's Zrizus, Finberg's Aztecs - have begun to play Friday mornings and afternoons in Central Park. Neikrug, afraid that it would be hard to get a field in the park, applied for a permit in early November of last year. YU was awarded use of Field North Meadow 1 right off 100th Street. Only four teams were established due to the uncertainty that there would be interest in playing on Fridays.

Two weeks ago, on a perfect day for skiing, YU students were out in their skivvies pounding softballs and shag-

gingflies. Levine's Zrizus beat Finberg's Aztecs 5-4 in a game of "can you top this?" Matt Diamond tied up the ball game at four a piece in the fifth with a three-run homer to right field. The game had everything from trash-talking to puddle-swimming. One player got beamed in the head when the catcher unsuccessfully tried to throw the ball back to the pitcher and missed badly. Fortunately no one was seriously hurt. In the other match-up, Neikrug's Tzionim Dativim clobbered Pres. Buskin's Spare Parts 27-5. With no mercy rule in effect, this game was over very early.

The league is looking for students who would like to umpire for credit. If interested, contact Benjamin Neikrug or the athletic office in Rubin Hall. All students are welcome at the games to watch and cheer on their Bronx Bomber wannabe friends play.

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