

# The Yeshiva University Observer

The Official Newspaper of Stern College for Women

Thursday, February 27, 1997

Volume XI, NUMBER 7

20 Adar I 5757

## Dramatics Society Brings *Kindertransport* to the Stage

By Julie Stampnitzky

*Kindertransport* is a haunting drama of one German-Jewish child who escapes the Holocaust because her parents send her to safety in England, but who, as an adult, is still bound by her memories of that time. The play by Diane Samuels was presented by the Stern College Dramatics Society during the week of February 2-6 and is SCW's only staged production of the '96-'97 year. *Kindertransport* was originally intended to be staged during the fall semester, but the planned dates conflicted with the Chanukah festivities.

The play, with a cast of six, takes place in England, in the attic of a house belonging to Evelyn (Sabina Krich, SCW '97), a middle-aged woman whose daughter Faith (Chani Krich, SCW 2000) is preparing to move into her own apartment. Evelyn's mother Lil (Dina

Bogner, SCW '97) is visiting them to help out. Meanwhile, characters from the past appear in the set: A young girl named Eva (Ilana Adler, SCW '97), and her mother Helga (Joelle Bollag, SCW '98). On the brink of World War II, Eva is put on a train that will take her to safety in England, where she is met by Lil, who will be her foster mother. The sixth

ing Evelyn to face what she has hidden for decades: her identity as the daughter of Helga and as a Jew.

*Kindertransport* was directed by Professor Mark McGovern, who teaches speech and drama at SCW and has directed three past productions for SCDS. "Mr. McGovern is an incredible director; he encouraged us when there were problems," said SCDS President Ilana Adler.

Knowing that McGovern is always searching for suitable plays for a female cast, Professor Peninnah Schramm suggested *Kindertransport* to him. When he read the script, said McGovern, "I immediately said, 'this is the play I want to do.' The structure of the play is very theatrical."

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The cast of *Kindertransport* (l to r): Rachel Sadres, Joelle Bollag, Ilana Adler, Chani Krich, Sabina Krich and Dina Bogner

character is The Ratcatcher, a figure from Eva's storybook about the Pied Piper of Hamelin. As the Ratcatcher, Rachel Sadres, SCW '98, appears to Eva in the guise of various authority figures. As the play progresses, Faith learns about her mother's past, forc-

ing Evelyn to face what she has hidden for decades: her identity as the daughter of Helga and as a Jew.

## SCW Sends Delegation to Model Israeli Knesset

By Stephanie Sherman

The Israeli Knesset has never been thought of as a simple meeting of governmental factions. There are always complications and deviations from the original agenda. The fourth annual Yale Model Israeli Knesset (YMJK), held from February 20-23, did not differ in that respect from the actual Knesset. Fourteen SCW students and 12 YC students participated in the conference, as did 45 students from other universities, including Columbia, Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania.

The Model Knesset opening ceremonies began with a YMJK video featuring words of welcome from former Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin. The highlight of the evening was a discourse by the Israeli Ambassador to the United States, Elisha Ben-Elissar, who spoke of the changing needs of Israel in the 21st century. Ben-Elissar gave a history of Israel's economic progress through the past 50 years and provided to the delegates a structure with which to

work over the conference.

The speech was phenomenal. The Ambassador gave true insights into Israel's needs and set the tone for the weekend, said Corinne Levy, SCW '99. The delegates were then briefly instructed on rudimentary parliamentary procedure and taken to the rooms of their student hosts.

Each member of the Model Knesset was assigned to one of the Israeli parliamentary parties, as well as to a specific committee. In addition, three SCW students and four YC students were Knesset Ministers. The



Members of the SCW delegation to YMJK with Ambassador Ben-Elissar (l to r): Hannah Pelta, Holley Abrams, Ben-Elissar, Shelly Lati, Rebecca Licht, Stephanie Dienstag and Stephanie Sherman

YMJK members spent most of Friday meeting with their committees to decide which proposed bills would be sent to the plenary session. The committees, which included foreign affairs, internal affairs, the environment, religion, and education and culture, worked diligently from 9 a.m.

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## Students Participate in YUNMUN VII

By Leslie Ginsparg

Over 50 SCW students were held at the Seasons Resort and Conference Center in Vernon Valley, New Jersey on Sunday, February 9 through Tuesday, February 11. The Secretary-General (student head of the conference) was Joelle Tollinsky, SCW '97. She was assisted by Under-Secretary-Generals Josh Fine, YC '97, Elana Milstein, SCW '97, and Sarra Zackai, SCW '97.

SCW students as well as approximately 50 YC students worked in many different capacities including Committee Chairpersons, Assistant Chairpersons, Rapporteurs and Justices. Students also staffed the conference Resource Center, and others worked as waiters and waitresses. "The outside world took excellent reflection of the Stern College student body, academically and religiously," said Lisa Slansky, Associate Director of the Office of Admissions and YUNMUN Conference Coordinator.

Over 500 students from 29 Yeshiva high school across the country and Canada, representing 55 countries, attended the conference. Each high school delegate was assigned to a different United Nations committee. The committees, which included the Security

Council, the International Court of Justice and the Commission on Human Rights, were run by SCW and YC students.

This was the first year the conference was held at the Seasons Resort. The University decided to move from the Meadowlands Hilton, which had housed YUNMUN for the past five years because the conference outgrew the facilities. The Seasons resort had greater conference capabilities, plus separate areas for dining and eating.

"This has been the largest and most productive YUNMUN to date. It was a tremendous experience for both the delegates and the staff," said Tollinsky. Fine agreed, "YUNMUN VII had been a tremendous success because it fulfilled its major goals: providing its participants with an intellectual challenge, an opportunity to meet other students from across the country, and just plain fun."

The YUNMUN conference is sponsored by the Office of Admissions as a recruitment exercise. While no active recruitment took place at the conference, what Slansky termed as "passive recruitment" took place. "If this is a conference that's run well, it'll have a great impact on the recruitment process," said Slansky. Memphis Montag, assistant director of the Office of Admissions,

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## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Thanks to the generosity of the President's Circle, the Beit Midrash Fund, SSSB, YUSC, SCWSC and IAC, we have recently purchased many new and exciting *seforim* for the dorm and school Beit Midrash. Although we were thrilled to be able to make these purchases, we did so with some hesitation and frustration. We have faced a tremendous problem in the past few years. *Seforim*, typically the most essential ones, have disappeared from the Beit Midrash. *Tanachim*, dictionaries, *Mifsharim* and various other volumes constantly need to be replaced. Taking *seforim* from the Beit Midrash is *Geneiva!* These *seforim* have been bought for public benefit not private use. No *sefer* should ever

leave the Beit Midrash for any reason. "Just borrowing" for a class, xeroxing, or even a *chavrutta* is not a justification. When others see *seforim* leave the Beit Midrash, they think it is a "lending library" which it is not. If you wish to learn, please do so within the Beit Midrash. Please help us to continue to create a positive and productive environment in our Beit Midrash. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Judith Rappaport  
Aliza Schwartz  
Micol Rubin  
Rachel Nader  
TAC Beit Midrash Committee

Dear Editor:

I would like to react to Ms. Mallin's article in the last issue's Opinion column. The issues that she dealt with had in fact transcended the recent Hebron agreement. I congratulate the Editorial Editor for her concern in doing so.

First of all, a few words about the Hebron agreement itself. While the redeployment from this Holy City obviously pained all concerned Jews, not only in America but the rest of the world as well, the absolute majority of the Orthodox community in the United States wasn't "shocked, outraged or truly devastated." It was no secret that the Netanyahu government would have carried out the redeployment (note the difference from withdrawal) in any scenario. Wasn't it obvious that in face of the growing international pressure to implement the American sponsored Oslo Accords, Bibi could offer little resistance? Moreover, while it is true that 80% of Hebron had been evacuated, hundreds of Israeli settlers are still remaining in another fifth of the city under the constant guard of 1,200 Israeli troops and police. That is a formidable security force in the area containing about 20,000 Arabs.

The argument doesn't require Israel to withdraw from "much of the West Bank." It does, however, stipulate that Israel alone will determine the size and geographical location of the territories to be ceased in the next three stages. The Jewish State has the right to proceed with redeployment according to its security needs. Also, the Likud government hasn't rejected the land-for-peace formula. After all, it was the party's own Begin who gave up Sinai for a peace accord with Egypt's Sadat.

The difficult times in Israel shouldn't

lead the American Orthodoxy to despair. After all, as committed and learned Jews, we believe that the other party's gains are only temporary. I agree wholeheartedly with Ms. Mallin's call for unity among the Jewish people (and not only during these tough times, may I add).

At the same time, I argue against the observation that protests by American Jews to American elected officials constitute the greatest *Chillul Hashem*. There are many aspects of *Chillul Hashem* which are rampant in the midst of American Jewry, and somehow, they have come to be accepted or don't really concern us religious Jews as much as the realities of the Oslo Accords.

We are suffering from at least a 52%(!) intermarriage rate, missionaries mount their well financed battles for souls of our less learned brethren, homosexuality and other disgusting sexual practices are branded "alternative lifestyles" and most of the American Jewish kids end their Jewish education by the time they become *bar* or *bat mitzva*.

Over 90% of this country's Jews aren't observant Orthodox - and this is despite the fact that many aren't ignorant of what *Yiddishkeit* (especially in the bigger cities) is all about, and have the material means to live as religious Jews. These realities, as well as the trend on the part of large segments of the Orthodoxy to isolate themselves from the rest of the Jewish world, constitute *Chillul Hashem* par excellence in our days. May we be privileged to eliminate this desecration of G-d's Name, the underlying source of our continuing *galut*, speedily, in our days.

Alan A. Epstein

**The Torah Activities Council  
would like to thank the Beit  
Midrash Fund and  
The Presidents Circle for their  
generous contributions  
to the Beit Midrash.**

## The Observer

245 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016 340-7794. Fax (212) 340-7788. Published tri-weekly during the academic year by Stern College Student Council. The views expressed in signed columns are those of the writers only and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Observer, the student body, the faculty or the administration of Yeshiva University. We do not endorse any products or services advertised on these pages.

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## Editorials

### Get Us Our Grades

Nearly every SCW student feels some level of anxiety about midterms and finals. This is a normal and even healthy experience. Such feelings usually subside when a student receives her grades. No matter the outcome of exams, there is relief in finally knowing since there is a great deal more fear associated with the unknown. The longer it takes until that point, however, the more stress a student experiences. At SCW anxiety levels are very high as the result of the fact that most professors take an unnecessarily long time to grade tests and papers. Last semester, far too many students did not receive their midterm exam grades until they took their finals. It was not until two weeks into

the Spring semester that students received their Fall final grades.

This is a travesty. Students are expected to take their exams and hand in their papers by a certain date and exceptions are rare. The administration should require professors to do the same. Professors are understandably busy, but so are students. If SCW students can accomplish the feat of finishing papers and taking exams for 6 or 7 classes, professors should be able to grade the materials in a timely fashion. Not requiring professors to do so is a violation of the rights of students. Such a violation should not be tolerated.

## YUNMUN VII: Bringing Torah to the Secular World

Despite its problems, there are certain instances which warrant SCW students to feel especially proud to be a part of the Torah U'Madda institution known as Yeshiva University. The YU National Model United Nations (YUNMUN VII) which took place from Sunday, February 9 to Tuesday, February 11 is such an event. Over 500 Yeshiva high school students throughout the U.S. and Canada attended the conference. They spent their time delving into some of the world's most urgent problems. In pursuit of solutions, delegates used the weapons of debate, discussion, and compromise. Nearly every as-

pect of the conference was run by YU students, whom conducted themselves in a manner befitting this fine institution.

Critics of YUNMUN view the program as a waste of university funds. It is further argued that YUNMUN, which is sponsored by YU admissions, is a blatant recruitment attempt which is not beneficial for current YU students. It must be noted, however, that YUNMUN is extremely beneficial since it exemplifies Torah U'Madda, YU's proud motto.

Torah U'Madda consists of more than  
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# Opinion

## Reflections on a Tragedy

Rena Schiffmiller

The morning after is always heavy with a shattered sense of reality. The dull aching pain is felt even before remembering the occurrence from which it stems. And then the memory comes flooding back, accompanied by the agony of loss which sits on your heart, coloring everything around you.

Seventy three soldiers killed in a freak accident that was unforeseeable and incomprehensible. Seventy three families in mourning, raising up their voices in a cry echoed by the whole country. Everyone has a friend, a brother, a cousin. All differences and petty bickering fall away when encountered with the starkness of death.

We are a people that has always been confronted with tragedies in this world. So many times we have stood open-mouthed, gaping at the sorrow, trying to understand the pain. If we don't feel it directly, know that there is a weakness in the links that bond us together. If we can't cry for another Jew, if we can't cry with a mother whose child was ripped away from her, it signifies that something is not right in our connection to Am Yisrael.

In my apartment, girls ran to call home, praying not to hear about the boy who lives next door. People sat entranced by the voice on the radio repeating the same story over and over. But we couldn't move. We

couldn't abandon the voice connecting us to the situation, telling us numbers to call, and the names of those who were killed.

G-d is banging out a message for us to hear-it does not matter that we are not able to decipher the exact words-the general statement is clear. As with Nachshon Wachsmann, Rabin's murder, the bus bombings, the turning over of military control in Hebron, we must all take responsibility. Priorities must be reevaluated, values reexamined, changes made.

A cab driver once told me that we have entangled ourselves into a process in which we can not cooperate. We are slowly giving away pieces in a desperate attempt at peace. If only Jews around the world would realize that there is no other place in the world where we belong. If only they would let out a *tzaakah mara gidola* from the pain, then maybe things would be different. Maybe we wouldn't have to hear words like "relinquish," "blow up," "Maybe we wouldn't have to hold our breaths in apprehension before turning on the radio. Maybe we wouldn't have to sit and cry for 73 twenty year olds lost forever in an instantaneous crash.

*Editor's Note: Rena Schiffmiller is currently studying at Michlalah in Jerusalem.*

Yehudit Robinson

Yig'al-a tenth grade unrequited crush about whom I had forgotten until I heard about Israel's air disaster. I wondered, was he still alive? While I assumed that someone would have informed me had he been a victim, I was not satisfied until I had perused the death list with its corresponding pictures until I had proof of his safety. I was relieved, happy to know he and my other Israeli relatives, friends, and acquaintances whose lives I normally do not intimately follow were alive, spared the same fate as their countrymen.

Soon my elation became bitter. While my personal friends were safe, doubtless at least one of them attended at least one funeral over that week of national *shiva*. Was I not being self-serving in refusing to be more miserable than I could be; for, are not the authentic Israelis those who continually yet boldly confront death?

I remembered one of the most distressing events of my life, attending the funeral of a stranger named Sharon Chanukah, a bus bombing victim. An armed 19 year old

*chayellet* unable to defend herself. Her grave covered not with Chanukah candles but with memorial candles. For nights afterward the remembered sounds of the final rifle salute, prevented me from sleeping as I contemplated my own mortality and wondered why G-d was letting me pursue dreams Sharon would never be able to actualize. Though I was devastated by the experience, was I not merely an observer? The tragedy and trauma were not fully mine, as much as I wanted to share the pain of the Israeli people in whose country I was presently living.

I question my ability to maintain friendships with people whose lives are constantly endangered and whether I am willing to endanger myself by moving to the land I like to think is holy. I question the supposed safety I feel I have here compared to the spiritual apex I know I have experienced there. Finally, I question G-d's role in this tragedy. These conflicting feelings and thoughts comprise a dialectic I discuss with both my American and Israeli friends.

## From the Editor's Desk

By Rachel Felsman

Religious tension is a concept that although frightening and at times quite real, never needed definition in my mind. I always viewed religious tension as existing among members of *different* religions who, due to the incongruity of their beliefs, felt hostility toward one another. Although we often hear of intolerance among Jews toward other Jews because of their religious status, at SCWI I interact with students of various religious backgrounds, and do not often encounter any tension between them resulting from the differences in their practices and beliefs. This past weekend I witnessed religious tension in a form which shocked me and my fellow YU students into reality.

I spend last Shabbat at the Model Israeli Knesset at Yale University. Acting as the Knesset Minister of Religion, I anticipated a conference filled with heated debates over various issues dealing with religion, especially considering the unique makeup of the Knesset which the conference was simulating. However, what I did not expect was the real religious tension which I encountered on Friday night.

After a spirit-filled Shabbat dinner, a special speaker addressed YMIK delegates and other members of the Yale community. The speaker, a professor of Hebrew Language at Yale, opened the lecture with the statement "I am an Israeli and a Jew," and continued to discuss what he defined as "Israeli culture." In the course of the discussion, the professor repeatedly emphasized the importance of separating the culture of Israel from the culture of the Jews, and the closed-mindedness of Orthodox Jewry in trying



to ignore popular "Israeli" literature by focusing solely on religious practices.

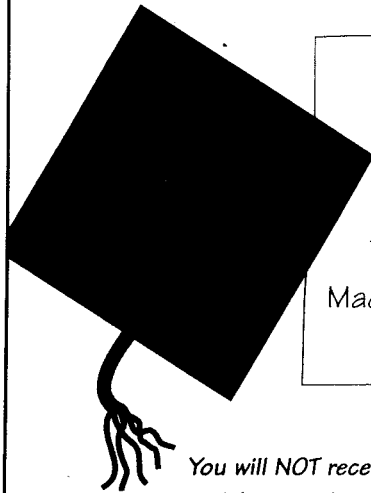
In addition to the Orthodox *minyán* at Yale, Conservative, Reform and Egalitarian prayer services took place in the Hillel. Members of the various groups joined YMIK delegates to hear the speaker, and the discussion became increasingly intense as the differences of opinion between the crowd members were expressed. The lecture deteriorated into a disorderly shouting match in which the intolerance of the audience members toward those with differing religious beliefs was more than evident. The uproar caused by issues such as whether Israel should be a theocracy and exemptions given to Yeshiva students from service in the army made it quite clear that religious intolerance is deeply embedded within the Jewish community.

As I left YMIK, I was bothered by one very disturbing question: How can we as Jews combat intolerance that people of other faiths have toward us if we have so much religious tension within Judaism itself? I have been unable to find a suitable answer.

## COMMENCEMENT

Thursday  
May 22  
11:00 a.m.

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I want to extend my very sincere thanks to my friends in the faculty, staff and administration for their kind words of consolation and for their touching tribute made in memory of my late husband

**Livia Turkel and Family**

## Mothers and Daughters Inspired by Enlightening Message of Prayer

By Ayelet Grun

Sunday morning, February 9, began on a different note for 60-70 mothers and daughters of SCW. Combining both Torah and family values, TAC coordinators established the first annual Mother-Daughter Breakfast. Following a relaxing breakfast and a 25 minute session of joint learning between mothers and daughters, attendees were treated to a lecture given by Professor Smadar Rosenweig of Louisa College.

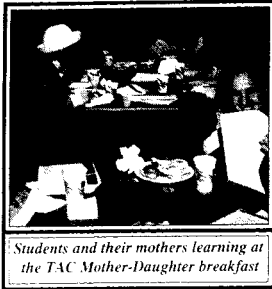
The mothers and daughters who attended the event savored the opportunity to learn together. Shoshana Shinar noted that she and her daughter, Ora Shinar, SCW '98, "don't get a chance to spend some time together since [Ora] doesn't come home that often." Margaret Roth, mother of Deborah Roth, SCW '98, added, "I wanted to share in my daughter's experience and enjoy with her a little bit, at least, of school life."

Citing the aroused interest of women in the Orthodox community in recent years towards learning Torah, TAC president Emily J. Shapiro, SCW '97, commented that the breakfast provided a unique opportunity for the "mothers of the students to take part in some part of their daughter's college experience."

While the idea of mother-daughter events is new to SCW, some mothers at the breakfast had past experience in such activities. Pearl Ricklis, mother of Aliza Ricklis, SCW '98, noted that she has a "long history of attending mother-daughter events from high school and Bruriah," and thinks such events are both important and enjoyable. Cynthia Levin, mother of Esther Levin, SCW '99, noted that she was "happy to see SCW do more extra-curricular learning activities," since "it's nice for a mother and a daughter to learn together and go out for the morning."

All the women who participated in the event live locally, although, according to Shapiro, many mothers from out of the Tri-State area expressed their interest in coming to New York for the event. Several SCW students who live outside the New York area attended the event alone, or found substitute mothers to join them. Shira Markowitz, SCW '98, a resident of Baltimore, came with her sister-in-law and niece of two months to "take advantage of some quality time with her new family."

Professor Rosenweig's reputation attracted several women from outside SCW



who came exclusively to hear her speak. Hana Eisenberg, a student at Barnard, came because she "heard that Rebbeztzin Rosenweig is a phenomenal speaker" and that "the content and her delivery is something to learn from."

Speaking about the importance of prayer, Rosenweig concentrated on the four Matriarchs and their regard towards bearing children. Emphasizing that the Matriarch's prayers were answered only once they felt true anguish, Rosenweig applied the concept of sincerity in prayer to times of personal turmoil. She mentioned, "tefilah [must come from] the depths of an individual soul—it is a quest, a yearning".

Rosenweig noted the dependence man has on G-d, as well as the independent effort man must perform to overcome hard times. The Torah, she said, writes "hard, true lessons about life" to teach people how to cope with difficult situations.

"I just think *tefilah* is such an important element of our lives and our relationship with Hashem," said Rosenweig. "While our entire destiny is reliant on Hashem...the power of *tefilah* is so strong, we can have an effect on *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*."

Rosenweig told the women that, "their abilities in this world are multifaceted." "Everyone has their different personality, self worth, and their way of making their mark in the world through Avodat Hashem, marriage, and the community," she said.

Commenting on Rosenweig's lecture, Margaret Roth said, "I felt the professor lectured with her soul. It was a wonderful presentation and it shows the universality of the wisdom of the Torah. In effect, family life education in modern times as very relevant to ancient concepts and observations."

## SCW Students Help Make the Seforim Sale a Success

By Yedidah Goldman

Over 1,600 people poured in to shop and browse in Belfer Hall on Sunday, February 9, the opening day of the annual SOY Seforim sale. The purpose of the sale is to make a wide range of seforim and Judaica available at affordable prices. With this goal in mind, and very little overhead, SOY is able to provide a tremendous variety of basically the cheapest prices in the country. Consequently, the sale is extremely popular and attracts people from across the spectrum of Judaism.

Over a hundred students from both YC and SCW helped out with the tremendous task of unpacking, organizing and setting up the Seforim Sale. This is the second year that SCW students have been allowed to help set up the sale, and according to former SOY Vice President and Chairman of the Seforim Sale Mitch Taragin, "The girls helped out a lot. We had 42 different girls travel come up here to volunteer, many who came numerous times, and we really appreciate it."

SCW students are big customers to the sale as well, and the uptown vans on Tuesday, February 11, were completely booked by three o'clock in the afternoon. Security ordered an extra van and planned to provide more transportation on the rest of the days, if possible.

According to Taragin, the first few days of the sale have been a huge success, and "sales are even better than last year." This is probably due, in part, to the use of credit cards, which are being allowed this

year for the first time. The credit card company that SOY is using was shocked at the hundreds of transactions that have transpired daily since the sale's opening. Taragin was also surprised at how many people took advantage of the credit cards, but was extremely happy because it eliminated a lot of time-consuming paperwork and problems with money. Despite the time saved by the credit cards, the line at the cash register on Sunday was still over an hour long. The opening day was so crowded that security closed the building after only an hour had passed and over 300 people had entered Belfer Hall.

Many popular items were expected to sell out quickly, such as the Bar-Ilan CD-Rom, (\$575), which is usually sold at \$900, and all the Rishonim on the Tractate *Suach*, the *Gemarah* YC is studying next year. However, some of the items that sold out, such as the NCSY *Bencher* and The Complete Guide to Yarmulka Design, came as a surprise. Orders were submitted to replace what was finished, and some companies, like Artscroll, were able to deliver the new shipments within a day.

The Seforim Sale is a huge undertaking, and plans for it began at the end of last year. Taragin was chosen as vice president of SOY, a position that includes running the Seforim Sale, which he was qualified to do since he had assisted in last year's sale. Upon his planned January '97 graduation he was going to enroll in the *smicha* program at RIETS so he could maintain his position on SOY. Although he eventually decided not to enroll in

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### The Graduate School of Business Administration at Bar-Ilan University of Israel

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Dvora Schipper, Mira Hochberg and Mira Goldis were among the many club and committee heads which participated in the Spring Semester Club Fair, which took place on February 2.

## Update: \$22 Million

By Atara Graubard

When YU announced the unprecedented 22 million dollar bequest left to the University by Anne Scheiber to benefit women at SCW and AECOM, SCW students expressed joy at the unexpected windfall and gratitude at Scheiber's generosity. Over 12 months later, the student body has yet to benefit from the gift. Not a single cent has been distributed.

Litigation is the cause of the delay. The money is tied up in courts for two reasons, both of which could not be confirmed by the University's legal counsel, Martin Bockstein. Due to legal confidentiality, the lawyer could not specify the issues being debated. However, sources do indicate that the University is trying to change the three thousand dollar per student annual limit which Scheiber stipulated in her will. Since tuition and board have risen so dramatically since the benefactress drew up her will, the limit stipulation prevents the establishment of major awards. Secondly, not unexpected in a donation of the size and the unusual circum-

stances of Scheiber's bequest, legal action has been taken to contest the will. University officials are positive about the resolution of the case.

The only information Bockstein could disclose on the matter is that the student body could assume that the donation is not lying stagnant. An estate of the gift's magnitude is always invested. The funds that YU is to use for scholarships will be generated by the proceeds from managing the capital.

Dean Karen Bacon expressed dismay at the problems preventing the distribution of scholarship funds. She remarked that the situation is doubly unfortunate. Not only are the women of YU deprived of financial help, but Scheiber's wishes are not being fulfilled. The Dean pointed out that the woman who donated to YU lived a hard life and delay in carrying out her instructions compounds the tragedy.

## Recreational Swim Offered on a Trial Basis

By Lisa Meyers

The complaint is one that has resonated through the halls of SCW for years. Why are all the facilities located on the YU campus and why are SCW students banned from using them? Nowhere has this been more of a sensitive issue than in discussion of the university's swimming policy. Being a popular sport and a good source of exercise, especially during the cold winter months, the lack of access of members of the SCW student body to the indoor Olympic-size pool at the Main Campus has finally found a resolution in a new recreational swim program.

As of Monday, February 10, a recreational swim program for SCW students commenced at Columbia Grammar & Prep School on the Upper West Side. Every Monday there will be vans leaving Brookdale Hall at 7:30 p.m. and 8:45 p.m. for almost two hours of swim-time.

This program has been initiated by the Student Life Committee, a committee composed of members of the student body and the administration, that attempts to address student issues and complaints. According to TAC President Emily J. Shapiro, SCW '97, a member of the committee, it began when she was approached by Gila Thaler, SSSB '98. Shapiro raised the issue at an agenda meeting and it was deemed a worthy topic for consideration. She explained that while "there is a clear inequality in our facilities," problems of security and *tzniut* necessitate a "creative solution." Accordingly, Mrs. Zelda Braun, Assistant Dean of Students, and Mr. Steve Young, Director of Athletics, arrived at the present so-

lution by canvassing the city for pools that provide swimming classes and could be of use to the college.

Hannah Shonfield, SCW '98, chairperson of the Student Life Committee reiterated that "This is part of the general lack of access of Stern women to university facilities." She said, "There was a student need for recreational swim" for exercise and relief, but the program will undergo a month-long trial period to ensure the demand is there before going ahead with the full budget. Funds will be necessary to pay for the extra van service, the hiring of a lifeguard and the security personnel who will have to remain at the pool at all times.

Student reaction to this program has been overwhelmingly positive. Hannah Charpak, SSSB '98, took two semesters of swim classes at SCW already and finds this to be an excellent exercise opportunity. Elizabeth Renna, SCW '99, added that she used to swim every week in high school and is very excited about this program.

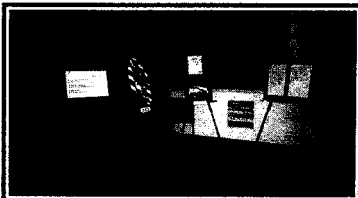
"It's about time I had an opportunity to go swimming at some point in my undergraduate school career," said Ilana Bruger, SCW '97.

But, as Young emphasized, "We'll see what happens in terms of the numbers." While many students have translated their interest in the program into action by signing up in the Office of Student Services, it is necessary to wait and see how many people actually show up before any final decisions are made.

## Besamim Holds Second Exhibit

By Observer Staff

Besamim, the SCW art and literature club, held its semi-annual exhibition on February 12-13 in Koch Auditorium. Approximately 16 aspiring artists and writers contributed. The Exhibit was open throughout the two days to enable students to visit at their convenience. Students contributed paintings, pencil and charcoal drawings, poems and essays.



Koch Auditorium temporarily transformed into a gallery for the Besamim exhibit.

This is the first year that two Besamim exhibits were held. Students asked Besamim to have more exhibits so that more artists would have a medium to display their pieces. As in past years, Besamim will publish a journal at the end of the academic year, providing students another opportunity to show their work.

"We encourage students to display their talents and at the same time, enhance the

beauty of the school. We were very pleased with the turnout and hope that with the joint efforts of the Besamim staff and the Stern student body, Besamim can expand even more in the future," said Besamim co-art editor Lisa Ickowicz, SCW '98.

In addition, Besamim sponsored a lecture on illuminated *Ketobot*, given by Shalom Sabar during club hour on February 12. "I thought that people really enjoyed the speaker and it was nice to hear a Jewish person speak on a Jewish topic in conjunction with art," said Ickowicz. Most of the 25 students who attended the lecture were in the art field, but other students not connected with art attended as well. Sabar integrated the artwork in the *Ketubah* with the architecture of the place where it was designed.

Yael Schor, SCW '98, who contributed works to both exhibits this year, said, "When you can produce two exhibits full of quality work, it makes you feel like a valuable part of a viable art department. It's nice to have a forum to display the works produced. Otherwise, most of the Stern Community isn't aware of the quality of work that their fellow students are producing."

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# SCW Students Attend The International Conference on Feminsism and Orthodoxy

By Nitzan Pelman and Ilana Sperling

The word "feminism" evokes images of militant women, despoiling on college campuses our misogynist society. It was a revolutionary movement that took our parents generation by storm in challenging traditional notions of gender roles. In the Orthodox community, there has been an ongoing ambivalence regarding this phenomenon and its effect on the religious woman's life. On February 16-17, the first annual International Conference on Feminism and Orthodoxy was held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, to examine the sometimes contradictory relationship between feminism and Orthodoxy, and to find points of reconciliation within a halachic framework. The gathering attracted approximately 1,000 Jewish women and men from diverse backgrounds and countries. Although most women were affiliated with Orthodoxy, various ideologies and denominations were represented.

Upon arrival, women had the option to daven with a women's *tefilla* group. Blu Greenberg, the keynote speaker, began the conference with introductory comments and presented a general overview of the current situation regarding Orthodox women. She highlighted issues concerning women relevant to the Jewish community of the twentieth century: the predicament of *agunot*, a woman's role in the synagogue, the status of ordination for women in a halachic community and the importance of women receiving an equal education in all realms of Jewish learning.

The conference continued with a presentation on the plight of *agunot*. Agunah Inc., an organization dedicated to helping *agunot* in their struggles to attain their rightfully de-

served gets, described to the audience the horrific reality in the life of an *agunah*. The founders of Agunah Inc., Dr. Susan Arranoff, Rivka Haut and Honey Rackman, write a column entitled "Chains" in the Jewish Press to educate the Jewish public on the importance of a tough communal stance against recalcitrant husbands. The *agunot* themselves discussed their personal stories. Yehudit Robinson, SCW '99, exclaimed, "I felt powerless to help these *agunot*, and this left me with an overwhelming sense of hopelessness. If you believe in the Halachic system, then there must be a solution to freeing these women within with in the confines of halacha."

The conference also addressed the need for active participation of women in synagogue life. Many speakers advocated women assuming positions on synagogue boards, thus having more of a voice in communal decisions. The option of women's *tefilla* groups was discussed by speakers such as Miriam Shachter and Rabbi Avi Weiss, who then presented them as Halachic options for those women who seek active roles in prayer. Among the participants at the conference were women whose experiences in women's *tefilla* groups ranged over a wide spectrum. Some were avid participants and read from the Torah on a weekly basis, while others had never attended such a *tefilla* group. Many women expressed their feelings of exclusion within the confines of a typical orthodox synagogue. The role of the *michitza* was often the catalyst of such

sentiment as it distances women from the activity in the main sanctuary. There was much debate over whether it was the *michitza* itself which was the source of discomfort and feelings of alienation, or the fashion in which it was traditionally positioned. Other women present did not see the *michitza* and *davening* in a male-led ceremony as offensive or exclusionary.

Dr. Tamar Ross, a noted scholar and educator, was exceptionally well received. She addressed the religious feminist's response to what is perceived as the patriarchal tone of the Bible and Chazal. Dina Zudick, SCW '98, commented, "I felt that Dr. Ross gave a sophisticated analysis that was well grounded in halacha." Stephanie Ives, SCW '98, added, "Tamar Ross raised the intellectual level of the conference considerably and addressed the real underlying issue behind all the specific details that were discussed by the other speakers."

Rachel Leiser, SCW '98, expressed a commonly voiced critique of the conference. "There was a lack of *kavod* for the Rabbinic establishment, and an ignorance on the part of the participants regarding the complexity of halacha," said Leiser. Rabbi Avi Weiss, a well known educator at SCW, addressed these concerns. In his speech he voiced his opinion regarding the interplay between Rabbinic authority and *Tzarchei Tzibor* (communal needs). Rabbi Weiss argued that the women advocating for change must display respect and reverence toward the halachic system and its authorities. He emphasized that everyone ultimately wanted what was best for *Klal Yisrael*, the

divergence of opinion rested only in the means of attaining this goal.

Rabbi Saul Berman, Associate Professor of Judaic Studies at SCW and supporter of women's issues in the Orthodox community, was amongst the many rabbis represented at the conference. His lecture focused on the inherent positive good in increased options for women in halacha which are conducive for the enhancement of women's spirituality. He does not view this reality in terms of the concessions granted to women in the face of feminist influences. Rabbi David Silber, founder of Drisha Institute for advanced Judaic learning for women, highlighted the value of women's learning. He expressed a need for an innovative response on the part of the Rabbinate with respect to the new phenomena of women well versed in Talmud and halacha.

The conference posed many questions for which there are no easy answers. The controversial nature of the issues and calls for action may hinder implementation and acceptance in the greater Orthodox community. Additionally, many objected to the affiliation of some speakers at a conference under Orthodox auspices. Dr. Moshe Bernstein, Professor of Bible at SCW and YC, commented, "My problem with the conference is that it did not limit active participation to individuals who are not unequivocally Orthodox." Regardless of the flaws that many felt existed at the conference, there was an overwhelming elation that these issues received public attention on the part of the Orthodox community.

## KINDERTRANSPORT

Continued from page 1

Some people expect only lightweight amusement from a show. McGovern suggested, but he tries to "do as many things as you can in theater... life is full of tragedy and comedy."

The audience was receptive to the message of the play. Said one Touro student, whose father was one of the children saved by the Kindertransport, "It was very convincing...it helped me conceptualize what he went through." Danielle Keats, SCW '97, said, "I thought it was far more powerful than past plays. The subject is very appropriate--the student body can connect to it."

Tickets cost \$7 in advance and \$8 at the door. Revenue from ticket sales, however, only covered approximately 25 percent of expenses. Funding from SCWSC covered the rest of the costs, such as the rental of lighting equipment.

Audience size varied from day to day. Monday, the beginning of the school week, saw the smallest group, while on Wednesday, a group of students from HAFTR swelled the already large audience to 154 people. A showing would be considered "sold out" with 120 people, but SCDS, reluctant to turn anyone away, managed to find seats for everyone.

Behind the stage door, the play's technical staff contributed their time, effort and expertise. For example, the play has a complicated lighting plot. With scenes taking place in the present sharing the stage with flashbacks, it was a challenge to keep the spotlight on the action. This was the responsibility of Dina Rogin, SCW '98, who also worked the lights for last year's production of *Steel Magnolias*. Other crew members obtained costumes and props. Miriam Ben-Ezra, SCW '98,

related, "In the last week of rehearsal, Mr. McGovern asked if I could sew, gave me the fabric and told me to make this costume [for the Ratcatcher]."

For the week of production, Koch Auditorium became a theater. Black curtains covered the walls; thick electrical wires trailed across the floor. Despite these efforts, it could not be disguised that an auditorium is not a theater. "I have this dream that somewhere hidden in this building is a real theater, with black walls, inclined seating," said McGovern. However, he also pointed out that, "Shakespeare had a blank stage." Comparing *Kindertransport* to other plays she had seen, Keats commented, "The caliber [of acting] is excellent. The only difference is the facility." Last spring, when SCDS was planning to put on the musical *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, they hoped to use the theater at the Main Campus, but were unable to obtain permission.

Despite these limitations, the result of four months of hard work by all those involved was a very engaging play. "I never would have thought young girls could perform like this," said the mother of Joelle Bollag. The Bollags live in Switzerland, and Mrs. Bollag came to New York to see her daughter play Helga, a role that made good use of her accent. Said Meira Schneider, SCW '98, the show's stage manager, "We worked really hard on it--it had to be good."

## YUNMUN

Continued from page 1

and Assistant Conference Coordinator added that, "The conference is successful because it shows the academic aspects of Jewish Studies," and so in a sense illustrates a Yeshiva University philosophy towards education.

Montag also added that another reason for holding the conference is to give yeshiva students the opportunity to partici-

pate wholeheartedly in an academic conference. Many Universities hold model United Nations conferences, but these conferences tend to be held over the weekend and students are forced to miss sessions because of Shabbat. YUNMUN allows religious high school students to be full and active participants in a model United Nations conference.

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# Talmud Torah K'negged Kulam

By Bracha Rutner

Gemorah has been taught in SCW since 1977 when Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik Z"l began learning with students in what is now the reference library. Dean Karen Bacon, the then newly appointed dean of SCW, attended the *shiur*. She reflected that both the personality that came to teach and the subject matter that was taught "generated enormous excitement."

Rabbi Saul Berman was instrumental in bringing Gemorah studies to this institution. As chairman of the Judaic Studies department in the 1970's, he felt that a change was needed. SCW prided itself in its Judaic Studies program, yet it was lacking in many ways. The program's focus changed by emphasizing the importance of understanding the text in order to improve the understanding of the content. Gemorah was the first step. In addition to Gemorah, Rabbi Berman created the Core Program which requires SCW students to take six semesters of Judaic studies; nine credits each semester and 14 additional elective credits. Rabbi Dr. Ephraim Kanarfogel, the current dean of Judaic Studies and one of the first Gemorah teachers in SCW, said that Core had a "great impact on students and created more learning opportunities."

Over the years, women's learning in general has changed. Women are being exposed to many more things as talents are being re-evaluated and attitudes are changing. Gemorah is being taught in an advanced and serious manner, in high schools and in a mul-

titude of Yeshivot and seminaries that numerous women choose to attend for at least a year preceding college. Subsequently, these women wish to pursue continued study in this area, and as many of these women chose to attend SCW, the demand for Gemorah has increased.

The Gemorah curriculum that was originally constructed has been altered slowly over the years. Initially there were, as today, three levels of proficiency available: beginners, intermediate and advanced. They were all taught two days a week for an hour and fifteen minutes each session, the same amount as a regular class period. Five years ago, the Beit Midrash on the sixth floor of the school building was created in order for the women to have a *kavua* place to learn. Students in the intermediate and advanced levels were expected to do preparation for class in their own time and thus required a proper place to do so. The Beit Midrash's inauguration was created not only to fill this need but to also provide any woman who wished to learn Torah a proper atmosphere and environment.

Minor additions to the Gemorah program included supplementary beginners level and new teachers. The two beginners levels are now taught by Rabbi Avi Weiss and Rabbi Mark Penner and the intermediate and advanced classes are taught by Rabbi Moshe Kahn. However, the begin-



Students in the Advanced Talmud Shiur take the opportunity to ask Rabbi Kahn questions.

ners Gemorah has almost no expectation for outside preparation. The class exposes women to Gemorah but its main goal is not to have the women move on to intermediate Gemorah, but rather to be comfortable and knowledgeable about the subject matter. Rabbi Kahn's intermediate and advanced classes are both expected to do much preparation outside of classes as the students must come to class ready to read and discuss the Gemorah and Rishonim which Rabbi Kahn assigns.

Recently, there has been much recognized realization that serious Gemorah study demands more time and consistency. Three hours was not enough lecture time and to expect the students to do all the preparation in their "own time" was sometimes not realistic. "To do a good job preparing for class, a student must devote at least two hours a night

to Gemorah. Having a set time for Gemorah preparation during the day would minimize *chevruta* scheduling conflicts and would enhance the overall quality of the class," said Adena Saltzman, SCW '98. Another problem with the program was that it has no continuity. It was very difficult for stu-

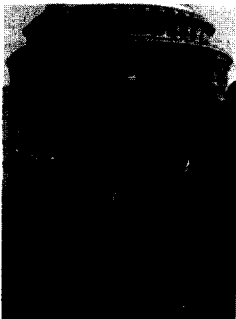
dents to change levels if they felt the need because between the beginners and intermediate Gemorah there was a vast contrast in the expectations of the students. Adina Sacknovitz, SCW '97, a student who did move up from the beginners level to Rabbi Kahn's intermediate class said, "It was a big jump, larger than I expected it to be. The gap between the classes is very great." Women who are serious Gemorah learners want the feeling of a *shiur* as opposed to a class. Gemorah is difficult to learn as a "subject" because there are many intricate parts to it and to truly understand it, much discussion is necessary. This is best done in a comfortable environment, and not under classroom conditions.

Students realized these problems and began to brainstorm about ways to resolve


*Continued on page 11*

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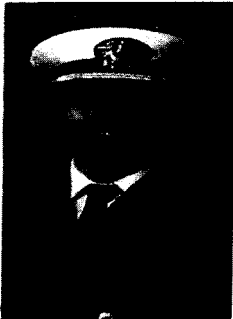
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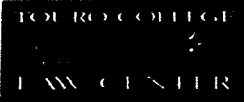


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## Interactive Class Taught By Husband and Wife Team

By Ora Shinnar

In an effort to expose the student body to the issues that will dominate the coming century, SCW has offered two courses that introduce the student body to the important



Dr. Devra Davis and Dr. Richard Morgenstern

role of environmental concerns in local and global affairs. The course on "Environment Health and Public Policy" that was offered last semester, and the course "Environment: Health or Economics?" that is available this semester combine a large number of disciplines to offer a comprehensive view of one of the most important issues that will shape the 21st century.

Professors Devra L. Davis and Richard D. Morgenstern, who are wife and husband, have extensive backgrounds in the field of public health and economic planning. Morgenstern served as a senior official at the EPA for 15 years, and was their chief economist and acting Deputy Administrator. Davis was appointed by President Clinton in the last administration to work on environmental health issues, and is presently the Program Director for Health Environment and Development at the World Resource Organization.

The class is offered simultaneously at the Uptown and Midtown campuses, made possible by the use of newly-installed interactive video technology.

The focus of the class that is offered this semester is to show students the interplay between public health and economics, and how each affects public policy. Both the

class offered last semester and the one offered this semester aid in raising the level of environmental awareness of the students in YU. New studies emerge weekly that detail harm that has resulted from environmental exploitation, be it air and water pollution, pesticides, toxic entry contain flaws, which leave conclusions open to criticism from opponents. The difficulty encountered by the economic calculations is the reluctance, or inability, to set a monetary value to items that need to be measured. How valuable is a life? A healthy child? Clean water and Air? These questions need to be asked, and answered, in order for policy to be formulated. There are a limited number of resources available in the world, and often forcing a factory to spend money to improve its safety will cause people to be laid-off, which could result in the loss of their families' only source of income.

Environmentalism has ceased to be viewed as a fringe science, and has proved itself to be a necessity for the future survival of the human species. Davis points to the previous election as proof. "One of the exciting things to come out of the last election was the realization that Democrats and Republicans share a commitment to protecting the environment," she said. The key differences relate to how to best provide this protection, with the Democrats tending to favor a stronger role for government, while Republicans tend to prefer more private-sector initiative.

Davis said that both she and her husband are impressed with the intelligent questions raised by the students, and have seen a "dawning of awareness" of issues relating to the environment.

The couple's connection to YU came through Dr. Harvey Babich, Professor of Biology at SCW, with whom Dr. Davis has written a number of papers, and continues as Davis supervises SCW Scholars on research in the fields of breast cancer and the changing ratios of males to females born in various countries throughout the world.

Both professors hope that raising the awareness of today's generation of students will contribute to a future where environmental issues are the cornerstone of our public policy.

## A Behind-the-Scenes Look At Milner's Mart

By Kayla Pliskin

Every student bemoans the fact that Milner's Mart does not have the flavor of Froz Fruit requested and that the bottled water is warm, but how many people realize the hard work expended to make Milner's the best under its difficult conditions?

Turning an ear to a conversation between the cashier and a patron, one may hear: "Do you have Snapple?" "Sure." "Diet Raspberry?" "We're out." "Peach?" "It's not cold." "Lemon?" "We've got that one." Complaints for this pseudo-grocery store run the gamut. "They advertise all this new stuff, but

they don't have it. They never have toilet paper. It's annoying to come all the way down and find that they don't have what you want," commented Alyssa Shulman, SCW '99.

People want more of the popular items. "Tabachnick is really good but there's no more. Once a week, they have Laffy Taffy but only cherry," complained Adina Bloomberg, SCW '97. "They should have faster service," offered Ayelet Grun, SCW '99.

But everyone had sympathy for the workers. "It's really hot, and they are overworked. The line is ridiculous. I feel bad for the workers because they are doing their best," pitied Bloomberg. "There has to be a system to get things to flow better."

Miriam Grossman, SCW 2000, works a two-hour shift late Monday night. She waits on customers, digs out food and rings transactions. In free moments, she might stock the shelves and refrigerators. "Sometimes it is more stressful than others," said Grossman. "During finals and midterms, there are long lines. The register sometimes breaks...and some of the customers are difficult. But the managers do a lot of work," she added. "They have to deal with a lot."

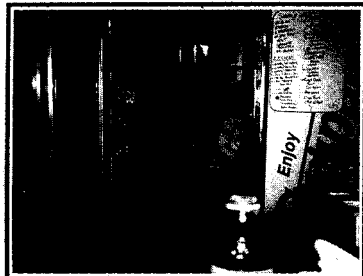
Zipporah Axelrod, SCW '97, and Shira Kahn, SCW '97, are the secret producers of the Milners enterprise. "It's definitely hard work. Very hard work," said Axelrod. "The food is kept in the piano room and we have to shlep it into Milners and stock it. Snapple cases are not so light."

The store may close at midnight but stocking lasts till 1 a.m. But it is more than the hours they put on their time sheets. "There are phone calls, talking to people such as Papitto from the kitchen, Mr. Singer, and Yossi uptown," said Kahn. Axelrod and Kahn are learning the skills of the business world. They must schedule the workers, monitor the payroll, keep up with the supplies and the customers, and deal with problems as

they arise. "All day it is on my mind...We have to deal with it in some aspect everyday," admits Kahn.

But it has its rewards. "On a small level, I have learned how to run my own business. The stock room is small so we order as much as we can to fill it," said Axelrod. "We have to know when the companies deliver. We order Coke weekly."

Kahn commented on the situation of food shortages. "You have to know what the girls want. Snapple cannot keep up with the girls...We try to always have all the flavors but it might be warm because the fridge can only hold so much," she said.



Student employees of Milner's Mart deal with the demands of fellow students on a nightly basis.

During finals, it took an hour to stock Snapple and in four hours it was gone. "It was like a tornado," said Kahn.

"Our goal is to make people happy...we know people will buy no matter what...but there is a need

and a want and we have to fulfill both," said Kahn. "We want to please our customers," agreed Axelrod. "We've started getting cereal, but we can't store milk," she said. "This year's new register is very helpful...a big improvement...from the really old, non-digital register of last year."

Although the stock room is small and limiting, it is full and every space is used on top of the Snapple cases and the coke cans and the store is stocked every day. "We work well with what we have," said Axelrod. And this is the first year in the history of Milner's, according to Mr. Singer, that it was open during finals. "It felt good to be open," added Axelrod.

Considering the circumstances, they are doing their best. Although they hope to get air-conditioning in the spring, much is still desired. "It is a small store. Not like uptown. We don't have [a lot of] room; but for the small amount, we have lots of food," stated Axelrod. "What we really want is a new place," said Kahn.

The conditions may not be great, but the employees are. "They don't always have a chance to sit down and can have up to 200 people a night," noted Kahn.

Even Grossman admits that there are some advantages. "You don't have to wait on line, you get to see people...and you know where everything is."

Kahn remarked about the slowness in making improvements to Milner's. "There's bureaucracy. Until we get what we want, it takes a long time. It is no one person's fault. But the girls are supportive." Grun is grateful, "that the school provides something that is not caf food to munch on...since munching is essential to study habits!"

Kahn urges all the students to "realize and appreciate the workers and not take Milner's for granted."

## Top Ten Signs You Are Waking Up Too Early

By Laverne and Shirley

10. You know what your 9 a.m. teacher looks like.
9. You actually get YOUR copy of the *New York Times*.
8. You know what the caf served for breakfast.
7. You know that the caf serves breakfast.
6. You finger the YU e-mail system and you're the only one logged on.
5. You're in the Brookdale lobby for the changing of the guards.
4. You never use the snooze button on your alarm.
3. Even the Advanced Talmud students are still sleeping.
2. You're already awake when the Office of the Registrar calls to inform you that your schedule is messed up.
1. Your roommate hasn't gone to sleep yet.



# "about women, etc." 1987-1997

By Susan Jacobs

Women's issues, or rather the issues of being women, have long been central to the social awareness of SCW. Students at SCW must come to terms with their own impending womanhood, while defining their personal positions on a whole gamut of social and religious issues. This has always been the case, but ten years ago, in the February 18, 1987 issue of *The Observer*, Erica Schoonmaker brought these struggles to new light with the institution of a column titled "about women, etc." The column, which was continued in subsequent issues, was intended to focus on many of the issues impacting SCW students which were felt deeply, but not necessarily verbalized.

In her column, Schoonmaker writes candidly about her transformation from girlhood to womanhood; a transition felt by most SCW students during their college years, but one which is rarely addressed. Ten years later, observing Schoonmaker's candor, one has to wonder why we fail to discuss such issues today. In 1987 Schoonmaker expressed what many students were feeling; much of that is still felt today, without being given the avenue of public expression.

Schoonmaker discussed the change in her use of terminology to describe herself. She wrote:

"Somehow it happened. I don't know when. The word woman slipped in unnoticed and replaced the word girl.... I wonder, though, how many of us at Stern College for Women are comfortable being called women, as individuals and as part of a group."

The issue of whether SCW students should be called "women" or "girls" has been over-exhausted, but the issue of whether SCW students consider themselves women persists. The debate may no longer rage in the classrooms, but many a dorm room's midnight conversations turn to such issues. The question is not perhaps, "What should we be titled?" but rather, "When do we become women?"

One alumna of SCW, who asked not to be named, said, "I didn't become a woman in SCW; I was very much a girl, but I liked it. I got to be young and explore my interests. I didn't have to be set; it was a good point in my life to be young." Regarding becoming a woman, Francoise Sorkin, SCW '97, said, "It's not an over-night thing. I'll always be a kid in my heart." Sorkin did note that she often has the appearance of being a woman, "but it's a fool's game. It's just impressions, that's all it is. Everything is relative." Indeed, what many perceive as the definition of womanhood may merely be physical appearances; those who appear to be women may be emotionally girls. Or perhaps womanhood is not defined clearly by the emotions. Schoonmaker realized suddenly that she had become a woman, but this moment of self-awareness may not come so explicitly to all SCW students.

Before coming to college, many students mistakenly believe that they are completely grown up already. A SCW junior

said, "It's not like once you're in college you're all grown." She noted that she has grown a great deal since coming to SCW. She added, "Sometimes people are too quick to judge others religiously without realizing that they are still growing." It seems that perceptions of growth of different sorts seem to be based on physical appearances or false definitions. Lisa Kaplan, SCW '99, came to SCW directly from high school. In June of 1995 she was a student at a high school "for girls" and by that August, she was a student at Stern College "for Women." "I guess a lot happened in two months," said Kaplan.

Rywka Shulman, a Bible instructor at SCW said, "There is an assumption that you grow up and go to college. I think the stress is [that] emotionally students have grown up, but academically this is the place where that will happen." Shulman emphasized that college learning concentrates more on methods of learning and less on the information itself. There is a presumption that high school students are merely expected to memorize and regurgitate information, whereas college students are expected to learn how to acquire information for themselves.

What all of those interviewed seemed to agree about is that titles do not make women. Schoonmaker emphasized the importance of SCW students defining their own identities. She wrote, "We should feel obliged to undergo such a search for identity or it will be determined by others..."

As students in a women's institution this question is in our hands. Are we shirking it? What is at Stern call ourselves women, is the "wo" only a prefix to "men" or does our identity come from a strong sense of individuality?

The task for SCW students remains the same. College is a time for self discovery. No student should doubt the importance of defining her identity. This is the time of life and SCW is the place.

## 10 Years Ago in *The Observer*:

As part of the Torah U'Madda Project, Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein spoke about "Congruence, Confluence and Conflict."

Articles titled "It's Raining on Prom Night" and "Greased Lightning" debated the pros and cons of coed social events. The topic was raised by a controversial "Fifties Night" co-sponsored by the sophomore and senior classes of SCW and YC.

Milner's Mart reopened as a student-run store. It had been closed for several years. Previously it had been run by dorm mother Mrs. Milner.

Labor union workers protested outside SCW chanting, "Hey, hey, what do you say, Yeshiva workers need a raise! Hey hey, Ho ho, YU better give up the dough!"

Security breaches including men entering the dormitory and complaints about security guards led to increased security measures. The guards would now ask for an ID from everyone who entered the dorm.

## Yale Model Israeli Knesset

Continued from page 1

until 4:15 p.m. debating the various bills and trying to pass their party's bills into the plenary. Each Knesset member had the opportunity to write a bill on any topic related to their assigned committee.

Delegates dined and ate their Shabbat meals at the Yale Hillel house. On Friday night there was a special address by a Yale professor of Hebrew language, who spoke of the development of Israeli culture through literature.

The plenary sessions continued through Sunday, when the Knesset concluded with an awards ceremony. "YMIK was an interesting experience. I learned a lot about the Israeli government and parliamentary procedure. I am definitely looking forward to

going again," said Kinneret Cohen, SCW 2000.

SCW and YC students contributed a strong presence in the YMIK conference this year, as well as in the past. Delegates from each school were chosen through an application and interview process to select the most qualified students. The conference was partially subsidized through the SCWSC J. P. Dunner Political Science Society.

"As a member of the first delegation to YMIK four years ago, I think this delegation proved most competent and knowledgeable of the issues at hand," said J. P. Dunner Political Science Society President Sharona Cohen, SCW '97.

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## TAC Shiurim: Learning Outside the Classroom

By Yehudit Robinson

"We did it because we love Torah!" was a TAC leader's explanation for the plethora of *shiurim* that have occurred over the past two weeks. While extracurricular *shiurim* are not new to SCW, some of the speakers and the institutions they represent presented new opportunities for Torah enrichment to the SCW student body. In addition, several *shiurim* were part of inaugural learning programs.

During Club Hour on January 29, Rabbi Eli Horowitz of Yeshivat Sharei Hebron addressed an overflowing audience on the topic "Chevron... Without Politics." Aliza Maslow, a TAC Shiurim Committee Head, explained his selection as a speaker. After meeting Maslow in Hebron earlier this year, Rabbi Horowitz asked if he could choose a topic to present at SCW because of his wish to share Israel's Torah with diaspora students.

Rabbi Horowitz discussed the relationship between the nation and the land of Israel, focusing on the historical/legal, spiritual and personal bonds Avram had and we continue to have to Israel. He emphasized Avram's as a behavioral prototype of this relationship. For example, while he was a monotheist, he respected the idolatrous nations amongst whom he lived. Further, Eretz Yisrael was given to Avram to give to the Jewish nation. Ideally, he concluded, the relationship between the people and the land should be as strong as that of Adam and Chava.

Rabbi Horowitz's plans to return to SCW on a monthly basis to address students. Maslow explained that future visits were not originally planned, but rather came as a response to how well he was received. Interested students can sign up on sheets in the sixth floor Beit Midrash.

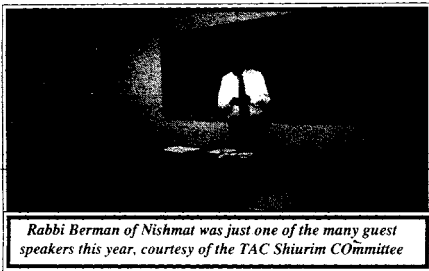
Rabbi Mann of Yeshivat B'nei Torah and Masoret located in Far Rockaway and Inwood, New York, came to SCW on Tuesday, February 4, to publicize Masoret and to attempt a resolution at the perplexing narrative of Genesis 22 in a *shiur* called "Was it a Bird? Was it a Plane? Was it Yaakov? Was it Eisav?" In an interactive presentation attended by approximately 15 women, Rabbi Mann offered an original thesis to explain the text's glaring peculiarities, such as whether Yitzchak was deceived, why Rivka was able to transfer a potential curse onto herself, and why Yaakov feared Yitzchak's touch. He concluded that Yaakov's activities did not deceive Yitzchak. Yitzchak's goal was to create a worldwide monotheistic kingdom. To achieve this goal, he envisioned dual roles for his children: Yaakov would serve as a spiritual leader, and Eisav as a military leader.

Following the conclusion of Rabbi Mann's *shiur*, Iliana Sperling, SCW '99, said, "It was thought-provoking. He offered a lot of interesting questions on the *inyan*." Masoret has developed a reputation

as an intellectual *yeshiva* for women who wish to learn Torah on an advanced level. In fact, Rabbi Mann told the participants that the ideas he presented were formulated in a class he taught to his Masoret students.

The next afternoon during Club Hour, Rabbi Berman of Nishmat, an institute for advanced Torah studies for women in Israel, presented a response to the question "Can We Make Sense of Sacrifices?" to a group of over 30 students. Like some of the other speakers, Rabbi Berman requested to come to SCW. Ora Shimmer, SCW '98, explained, "I spent two summers there [at Nishmat]...and Rabbi Berman asked me [to visit]."

On Thursday, February 5, Tobi Rotenstein, a student at the Bernard Revel Graduate School, spoke at the first annual TAC Alumnae-led Rosh Chodesh Chabura Program. TAC President Emily J. Shapiro, SCW '97, said the Chabura's purpose was both to bring recent alumni of SCW to promote Torah *lishma* and to inform SCW women about available opportunities in Jew-



Rabbi Berman of Nishmat was just one of the many guest speakers this year, courtesy of the TAC Shiurim Committee

ish education, either at Revel or elsewhere.

The 13 participants of the *shiur* entitled "Did Avraham Wear a Yarmulke?" used midrashic and psbat analyses to discuss whether the Avot observed the 613 commandments. In addition, they questioned the authority of the midrashic approach and the inherent anachronistic problems in suggesting the Avot actually were observant. Shapiro noted that many of the participants remained after the *shiur*'s conclusion to speak with Rotenstein.

The next *shiur* took place on Sunday, February 9. Over 70 SCW women, along with their mothers, sisters, and friends attended TAC's first annual Mother/Daughter Breakfast *Shiur*. Smadar Rosenzweig guided the participants through sources to understand the concept of "Prayer and Progeny in Genesis." She emphasized prayer's power to overturn decrees in the lives of barren women. For example, the prayers of Rachel, a righteous woman the daughter of wicked parents, were not as worthy of being answered as those of her husband Yaakov, a righteous man the son of righteous parents. The power of her pain, however, overrode her lacking familial history and Yaakov's complacent response that he already had children from his marriage to Leah.

TAC, through their Torah lectures, hope to negate the mistaken idea that Torah enrichment is unavailable at SCW, especially once one has completed their Judaic Studies requirements. The TAC Shiurim Committee is willing to entertain students' requests for new speakers.

## Seforim Sale

Continued from page 4

RIETS, he agreed to run the sale anyway, and in the middle of the this past semester he began to work on choosing, ordering, pricing and organizing a myriad of material.

The sale includes over 4500 titles from over thirty distributors, ranging from companies in Israel, to music and software companies, and even to Random House Publishers. Random House distributed "Hitler's Wilding Executioners", a book on the *New York Times* Best Sellers List that sold out all 30 of its copies in two hours.

Originally, SOY planned to use Belfer Hall as the location for the sale, but Facilities's Management refused, claiming that the room was too important to lock up for such a long period of time. The sale was relocated to the Sherk Shul in Schottenstein Hall, a much smaller facility with less delivery and public access. To fit the sale into the Sherk Shul, Taragin would have been required to reduce his inventory by two thirds, reducing the selection of some sections, and completely cutting out others, such as children's books and history. This proved to be unfeasible, and SOY threatened to cancel the sale. As a result, Facilities Management agreed to allow the use of Belfer, but the sale would have to be cut short by a week and cleared out very quickly after the end. However, according to Taragin, after the initial problem, both Facilities Management and Student Services were extremely helpful and even allowed him extra storage rooms

in Belfer Hall.

The selection at the sale is comprehensive. There are 20 different sets of *Shas*, six different printings of the *Risva*, and *Mishna Berurahs* in all shapes and sizes, including a pocket edition. In many cases Taragin ordered a publisher's entire catalog, including some obscure seforim to add variety. Because so many companies publish the same seforim, he was able to do price comparisons between companies and then buy the seforim at the lowest prices. There is a section at the sale that is only books and seforim published by Rabem and teachers at YU, which includes many writings of the Rav, z"l. The sale carries a selection of music, ranging from children's tapes, to cantorial music and instruction, to a very large Carlebach section, and to the current, modern trends of Dedi, MBD, Avraham Fried and Mendy Wald. There are the typical Judaica items, such as *kipot* and *tzitzit*, as well as the more unusual, such as the newly designed Key-Tov belt, which utilizes a key to stay closed so one can carry a key on *Shabbat* in an area without an *eruv*.

There is a web page with a full catalog of items, (although no prices), which can be accessed at 501.yc.yu.edu. The sale ends on February 23, and SOY will need help packing and returning the inventory. Students are encouraged to help, and will be paid three dollars an hour towards the items at the sale.

## Editorial: YUNMUN VII

Continued from page 2

just a dual curriculum of Torah and secular studies, but rather a way of life. It is to use the light of Torah as a framework to guide us through the darkness of the world. In other words, total involvement in the secular world with a Torah outlook.

Far too many Orthodox Jews believe they can only achieve growth in Torah by shying away from the secular world and its problems. Such thinking however, fails to grasp an important dimension of Torah. Those whom seclude themselves from the world are, in effect, not recognizing the Torah's true potential. Though it often ap-

pears otherwise, Torah is not alien to the world; in fact, the world was created for the Torah. It is our mission as Torah observant Jews to immerse ourselves in the secular world in order to reinstate the Torah values, from which the world has swayed. Involvement in organizations, like the UN, is one means through which this can be achieved. It is thus vital that YU continue to invest time and money into YUNMUN and any other programs that perpetuate the Torah U'Madda ideal.

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# CULTURAL ARTS

## Members of *RENT* and *STOMP* to Perform at Wetlands to Benefit NY Substance Abuse Clinic

By Dina Bogner

Think that the members of the so-called "Generation X" do not care enough to make an effort to give to their communities, and to the members of those communities that are in need? Think again.

At Wetlands, on Monday, March 10 at 8 p.m., Xplosion I, a forum for "Generation Xers" to express their talents in support of the New York community, will be hosting Concert Contact. All of the profits from the \$15 tickets will go to the Educational Alliance's Project Contact, a drug rehabilitation center located in New York's Lower East Side.

Cast members of the Broadway musical *RENT*, the off-Broadway hit *STOMP*, four New York bands; Duncan Blue, Knock-

out Drops, FBI, and Dead Bolt Feather and other downtown artists will perform a burst of music, dance, spoken word and live Internet "chats."

The producers of the event hope to benefit Project Contact, known for its help in rehabilitating those struggling with drug abuse, by helping to raise funds, raise consciousness about the growing epidemic of drug use and to raise awareness about the resources available at Project Contact.

Tickets are available through Ticket master at (212) 307-7171, at the Wetlands box office after 5 p.m. or at the door. You can call me, Dina, at 779-3257 for more information.

## Talmud Torah K'neged Kulam

Continued from page 7

them. After meetings with Dean Bacon, Rabbi Kanarfogel and Rabbi Kahn, the first step was made. Advanced Gemorah would now meet four times a week instead of twice a week. Classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays were extended by 25 minutes; they would begin at 8:40 a.m. and end at 10:20, as opposed to a regular class period which is held from 9:00 a.m. until 10:15 a.m. The faculty and students worked together to smooth out any potential stumbling blocks they would encounter with scheduling changes. Students in advanced Gemorah would be giving up a class period and potential loss of credits and so this class would now be worth five credits. In order to have this change take place, there would need to be a core group of women that would be truly interested and committed in partaking in this class. TAC President Emily J. Shapiro, SCW '97, spoke to the students and found a group who earnestly desired a course of this kind.

The beginners level also encountered change. While Rabbi Weiss' class remained the same, Rabbi Penner's class was defined. Instead of exposing the women to only the logic and a surface knowledge of Gemorah, the class now titled "advanced beginners" focuses on teaching the students skills. The class tries to build the gap between the introductory and intermediate levels. "I want to provide my students with the opportunity to learn the text of the Gemorah well and allow for the women to move up to the next level," said Rabbi Penner. Aliza Friedman, SCW '98, a student in the class, said, "This class is truly challenging. I feel that my skills have improved since I began the course and Rabbi Penner has much to offer."

Another addition, a completely student initiated agenda, was night seder. Shonni Mirvis, SCW '97, and Shapiro were the compelling forces that created this program. Night seder would take place twice a week on Sunday and Tuesday nights from 8 p.m. until 10 p.m. in the school Beit Midrash to provide women with a scheduled time to prepare for Gemorah, but would be open to any woman who wanted to learn Torah during those hours. A letter was sent to all the Gemorah students informing them of this change. The intention of night seder is to "assist the students in finding *zman kavua* in their schedules for learning" and to "improve the overall atmosphere of the Beit Midrash and talmud Torah in Stern," said Mirvis.

Shapiro was one of the main student voices behind the change in the Gemorah program. She initiated the meetings with the faculty, spoke to the students and helped to create the program that now exists. "I hope that this will just be the first step, a precedent for change in the Judaic Studies program on a whole. The development and advancement of women's learning, that is happening today must be reflected at Stern College. There is a great interest on behalf of the students to adapt the class-oriented structure of the Judaic Studies program," said Shapiro.

Rabbi Kahn helped facilitate the advances made in the schedule. "Gemorah requires more than two days a week for anything to be accomplished," commented Rabbi Kahn. With more time spent on learning, there will be more results. In his classes, Rabbi Kahn places incredible emphasis on

## Kindertransport: A Smash Hit Drama

By Kim Okayon

The SCDS graced us with five nights of fine acting in mid-February. *Kindertransport*, a moving play that spans from the Holocaust era to our own, was performed from the 9th to the 13th in Koch Auditorium. The play documents the life of one Jewish child, Eva, who is sent from her parents' home in Germany to Britain, part of a movement that spared nearly 10,000 Jewish children from the Nazis. Eva's destiny slowly unfolds in flashbacks, as a young woman in the present day sifts through her mother's old boxes and discovers the child's things.

The play, written by Diane Samuels, was set on a stage that did not change. On stage, 14-year-old young Eva's story was played out almost as if on a touch that the audience could almost feel. It belonged to whatever house or room she was inhabiting, while on stage right, Evelyn and her friends, mostly Jewish, were flashbacks that told the story as Faith's father's desire to know about his wife's mother's tragic story.

collapse came, it was believable, moving and satisfying. Chani Krich, who played Faith, embodied breathless anger and compelling curiosity. Dina Bogner's character, Lili, Eva's British guardian, served as a thread linking the two onstage scenes, and she pulled it off well, switching from stage left to stage right with a deftness that added a third quality to the play. Thus *Kindertransport* the movement and presence of a child in her portrayal of Eva, both subtle and powerful in a sense of Eva, joy or sorrow. Joella Gollan, as Helga, is believable in her role as rejected mother, frantic and heart-eyed. And as the Katchich, Rachel Gollan rounded out the cast, serving as a fitting reminder of what Eva's mother must have felt.

"The play was well paced and thought provoking," said Laura Baran, SCW '98, "but it was the superb acting that made it powerful." Many women walked out of the auditorium wanting to check and research for themselves the history and the actual analysis of the play.

"I enjoyed the play and that someone had written about my mother's life," said Patricia Friedman, SCW '98.

skills and he feels that it is important because in order to carry on proper learning of Gemorah, post-college women, as well as all people, must be proficient in their reading and understanding of the Gemorah and *Rishonim*. Therefore, Rabbi Kahn felt that a four day a week schedule would be a positive step, allowing for more learning time and more accomplishment.

Dean Bacon felt a desire to expand the program in virtue of the fact that more hours were necessary to learn properly. She was anxious to do something, truly believing there was much to be done. "If students are prepared to undertake the studying we are prepared to deliver them with the opportunity," said Dean Bacon. Working with other faculty members, Dean Bacon came up with the idea of having advanced Gemorah meet four days a week. Based upon her advice and with her approval, the new changes promptly began in the Spring semester.

Rabbi Kanarfogel, as Dean of the Judaic Studies department, also played an essential role. He felt more time was required for class and for preparation time. Gemorah needs to be an "everyday experience," according to Rabbi Kanarfogel, in order for the learning level to increase and to further contact amongst the students and faculty.

Implementation of this change has resulted in positive feedback from the students. There is now more opportunity to learn and to prepare. As Tzippy Russ, SCW '98 put it, "Having class everyday really allows us to work through the *sugya* in a way we weren't able to before." The intensity has increased and the consistency has been heightened. "I enjoy that the fact that there is always more to do. Conceptual dis-

cussions on the Gemorah text and various *Rishonim* are continuous and the whole picture becomes clearer sooner. We can do much more in a shorter period of time which enhances our skills and overall knowledge of the Gemorah itself. My mind is truly absorbed and involved in the Gemorah during a greater span of time," said Devora Khayyat, SCW '98, a member of the advanced Gemorah class.

But problems still exist. Rabbi Kahn does not only teach Gemorah, he is also an instructor in *halacha* and with the additional day of advanced Gemorah class he had to terminate one of his three *halacha* courses. Moreover, these changes have only taken place in the advanced level. Coordination between the various levels is still a problem because the disparity between "advanced beginners" and intermediate is still great. The intermediate class is also upset that no changes have been made to their level. "I think that it is wonderful what has been done for the Gemorah program, but this should only be a stepping stone for the future of the whole program. It is a problem that our class only meets twice a week," stated Shoshana Monderer, SCW '98, a member of the intermediate Gemorah class. Many students want the four day a week class offered on their level. "I believe that if women choose to learn Gemorah at an intense level four days a week, it should be available to them at any level," said Nitzan Pelman, SCW '98, also a student in the intermediate class.

"This is just the first step in enriching the quality of the Judaic Studies program at Stern and I am excited about future innovations," commented Mirvis. Revisions recently made to the way Gemorah is taught in SCW are the onset of many changes that lie ahead.

# SCW SPORTS

## SCW Fencers Receive Medals in Individual Competition

By Cheryl Younger

SCW's fencing team shone at Stevens Institute of Technology's annual individual fencing competition. In the event held on Sunday, February 23, two SCW fencers were awarded medals for their excellence. Rose Eljas, of the foil squad, and Yedidah Goldman, of the epee squad, were the first two Stern fencers to win medals since the fencing team's establishment last year. They both won sixth place medals. This regional competition lasted three and a half hours and included YU, Bard College, and Stevens Institute of Technology.

Most fencing competitions are scored based on the team's collective performance. A match is won by obtaining five touches on one's opponent. During this individual competition, however, team members fenced against their own teammates as well as members of other teams. Scoring was based both

on the total number of matches won and the total number of points obtained. In order to be successful in this competition, each touch on one's opponent was of extreme significance. One could not afford to lose a match by a significant number of points, as it affected the total score accrued by that fencer.

As the long tournament came to a close, Josie Fusco, SCW's fencing coach, felt "elated" with the team's performance. "The excellent outcome of this tournament...with Rose and Yedida each winning a medal...and everyone performing so well...can only be attributed to the hard work and perseverance of these women," said Fusco.

For a schedule of upcoming tournaments or information about joining the team, please contact Abby Shapiro at 726-0148 or Rose Eljas at 448-9359.

## Lady Macs vs. Lehman College

By Shaindy Frenkel

You could say that the Lady Macs have had a tough season so far, having only recorded two wins in eleven games, but they are anything but disappointed. Their game on the night of Wednesday, February 12 against Lehman College may be the reason why. No, the Lady Macs did not win, but they played with a lot of excitement and enthusiasm. Their energy provided for over 20 steals and fast break points. They were aggressive and therefore able to break their opponents' full court pressure. They were also successful in getting to the free throw line and

converting on most of their attempts. In the end, the Lady Macs scored a respectable 49 points, quite a difference from the 31 points they scored in a victory against SUNY Maritime on February 4th.

Their second victory came against the College of New Rochelle on January 26th. It was a true nail biter, the Lady Macs winning by a four point margin 49-45.

The players who "lit it up" during Wednesday night's game against Lehman were Sheila Wainberg, who scored 24 points, Shana May, who had 10 points, and crowd favorite Sandi Bhagdadi, who contributed with seven points.

The *Observer* would like to thank the Department of Facilities Management and the Student Life Committee for their assistance in moving the Observer Room to its new location on the fourth floor of Brookdale Hall.

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## Fitness Flash

### Bad News on Spot Training

By Michal Greenwald

Many people believe that they can burn fat from around their middle by doing ab exercises, sit-ups, side bends, etc. But the fact is, spot training does not work. It does not burn enough calories to noticeably reduce fat. While you may be developing strong toned muscles underneath, you will never see results unless you reduce your body fat.

Not only does spot training not work, it can make you look thicker as your muscles grow larger and your fat

remains the same. If you want to get rid of excess fat, you must do exercises that get your heart rate pumping. Running, walking, the stair master and jumping rope are just a few examples of exercises that burn and burn. SCW also offers gym classes such as body conditioning that definitely keep your heart rate up.

Don't forget that in order to see results, you must exercise consistently over a period of time. Once you combine aerobics with spot training, the results can be fantastic.

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