



The
Yeshiva
University

The Observer

The Official Newspaper of Stern College for Women

April 15, 1997

Volume XL NUMBER 9

8 Nissan 5757

Elections Reflect Apathy Towards SCW Student Council

TAC Elections Show Fierce Competition

By Ayelet Grun

Throughout the day on April 2, students filed into Koch auditorium to vote for the various leadership positions for the '97-'98 academic year. Ballots for the SCWSC Executive Board, Class Boards and TAC leadership positions were distributed. SSSBSC elections were postponed from April 2 to April 9.

Positions for the TAC board were highly competitive with two candidates running for President, seven for Vice President, four for Treasurer and three for Secretary. Following a tie between Nitzan Pelman and Mechal Weiss for the position of TAC president, Weiss emerged victorious in a second round of voting held the following day. Yael Schor, SCW '98, and Shira Genack, SCW '98, won the joint position of TAC Vice Presidents, while Alisa Hirshaut, SCW '99, will assume the position of Treasurer. Tamar Wadler, SCW '98, was elected Secretary of TAC.

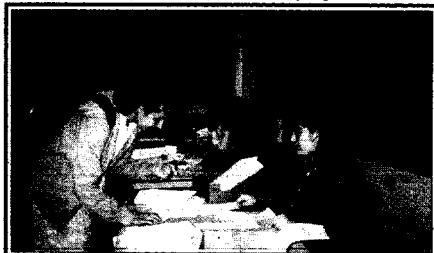
The SCWSC election confirmed Hannah Shonfield, SCW '98, as Student Council President, Shira Hecht, SCW '98, as Vice President, Nava Bak, SCW '99, as Corresponding Secretary and Jennie Weiss, SCW '99, as Treasurer. All candidates ran unopposed. Sarah Golpaniani, SCW '99, withdrew her candidacy for Recording Secretary the night before the elections. The position will be assumed by write-in candidate

didate Gila Silbeger, SCW '99.

Despite the importance rendered to Student Council positions, all candidates running for the SCWSC Executive Board ran unopposed. The only Class Board po-

sitions will be filled by President April Simon, Vice President Linda Strauss, Treasurer Caroline Bitton and Secretary Miriam Grossman.

Outgoing Freshman Class



Elizabeth Renna, SCW '99, votes as Canvassing Committee
Chairwoman Naomi Storfer, SCW '99, looks on

sitions contested were the Vice President and Treasurer of the Junior class.

The elected Senior Class Board positions are as follows: President Elissa Gross, Vice President Elana Weiss, Treasurer Danielle Victor, Secretary Leah Hirshaut.

The Junior class elected President Adina Loberfeld, Vice President Charna Schwartz, Treasurer Shaundi Kahn and Secretary Feigy Glicksman.

The Sophomore Class Board posi-

tions were filled by President Allison Witty suggested that more students ran for TAC rather than SCWSC because, "students are more concerned with the importance of Jewish life in SCW than with academic life." Current TAC President Emily J. Shapiro, SCW '97, noted that "a lot of students come to SCW because of the type of activities TAC offers," creating "a Jewish twist on a Univer-

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SCW Student Council Constitution Ratified

By Dassi Zeidel

The newly revised Stern College for Women Student Council Constitution was voted upon and ratified by a two thirds majority of students who voted on April 2, in conjunction with SCWSC and TAC elections. Before casting their ballots, students were provided with a copy of the old Constitution and the proposed new one, with the revisions highlighted.

The basic functions of the Constitution serve to outline the election procedure and the role of the Class and Executive Boards.

Last year a committee was set up to make changes to the Constitution. Revisions were made in the grammar of the text, as well as the structure of the student council and the roles of each of its members.

The Constitution contained a provision to convene a committee every year to amend the code of laws. According to Leebie Mallin, SCW '98, a

member of last year's Constitutional Committee, the committee reviewed the Constitution's structure and set up an amendment process. Should a problem arise in the statute of laws, a student vote would be held to decide the issue, thereby abolishing the need to convene every year if there are no corrections to be made.

There were several significant changes in the newly ratified Constitution. The SCWSC President can now delegate supervision of various clubs to whomever she deems appropriate, whether it be someone on the Student Council Executive Board or any other member of the student body.

Hannah Shonfield, newly elected SCWSC President for the '97-'98 school year, is the current Parliamentarian for the '96-'97 academic year. As Parliamentarian, it is her duty to "explain the Constitution when necessary and makes sure it is being upheld by the student council."

The role of Parliamentarian was re-

defined in the new Constitution and a new genre of responsibilities were added to the position. The Parliamentarian oversees SCWSC committees and helps delegate the responsibilities of the Student Council President. The position of Parliamentarian is not an elected position, but rather one appointed to this role by the leaders of the Student Council via an application process. As Parliamentarian and Chairperson of the Student Life Committee, Shonfield was invited to Student Council meetings and prepared the Constitution for its ratification.

Many students had not even been aware that a SCWSC Constitution existed before they saw it on the ballot at elections. One student thought it would have been helpful had each student been given a copy

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New Editors Chosen for Next Volume of The Observer



Editor-in-Chief
Leslie Ginsparg



Executive Editor
Susan Jacobs

By Observer Staff

The Executive Board of *The Observer* for the '97-'98 academic year will be headed by current News Editor Leslie Ginsparg. Ginsparg will assume the position of Editor-in-Chief, and will be assisted by the new Executive Editor, Susan Jacobs.

Ginsparg, a junior from Chicago, is a History major. She hopes to pursue a Master's degree in Journalism after graduating from SCW.

As an intern at CNN America, Ginsparg has gained hands-on experience in the field of journalism. She hopes to apply the skills she has learned at CNN with the experience she has gained as Associate News Editor and later News Editor of *The Observer* in fulfilling her role as Editor-in-Chief.

"This year's governing board, under the leadership of Racheli Felsman, did an excellent job. *The Observer* has come a long way and I hope to continue and improve upon its success," said Ginsparg.

Jacobs, who is from Charleston, West Virginia, is currently a sophomore and has been an active writer for *The Observer* since her freshman year. As Features Editor this year, she is well known for the popular "20 Years Ago" column and her in-depth profiles of members of the YU community.

Jacobs is double majoring in English Communications Journalism and Judaic Studies. Last year, she was the first-place winner of the American Jewish Committee Annual College Essay Contest for her essay on the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin.

"I hope that the SCW student body will contribute to *The Observer* so that it will truly represent their views," said Jacobs.

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Editorials

Apathy Defined

In the minds of most Americans, elections usually conjure up the image of hopeful candidates fiercely campaigning. At such a time, important issues are aired, debated and discussed. Probably the most essential part of elections, however, is the power they grant to the electorate. This power is meaningless, though, when elections lack choice. The 1997 SCW Student Council election is a case in point. The very small number of students whom expressed interest in running for office is representative of a much larger problem, which looms over nearly every facet of SCW. Apathy.

Webster's dictionary defines apathy as "lack of interest, indifference or lack of emotion." The average SCW student, however, needs no definition, she need only look in the mirror.

Where does this apathy come from and how can we as a student body eliminate it? Many explanations are given for this phenomenon. It is maintained that SCW students are active outside of college life. Students have religious, family, and social responsibilities. SCW's lack of a campus, narrow academic opportunities and second class status within the YU establishment are

also often sighted. Each of these claims has truth to it, yet they are not valid justifications. Students in all colleges have outside responsibilities. SCW's problems should serve as a stimulus, calling us to action, in order to fight against such injustices. Why is this not the case? Why does the same active minority head every club, committee, and board? Why do student leaders have to beg students to participate and why are events often canceled due to lack of interest?

The true source of SCW's apathy is none other than SCW students. One can not blame external forces for something that one has the power to curb. Apathy is not in the realm of the irreparable. If every SCW student would take an interest and get involved, then no such apathy would exist. There are no shortages of ways to participate. Furthermore, SCW is a small school composed of a fairly homogeneous student body; a perfect environment for activity. SCW students are destined to be the leaders of the Orthodox Jewish community. If the current state of apathy does not change, the future of the Orthodox Jewish community is grim indeed.

Second Class Students

Tuesday March 18 was a festive night at SCW. The elephants and other members of the Barnum and Bailey circus made their annual procession down 34th street. The Office of Student Services enhanced this year's celebration by providing refreshments from Dougies and beverages. This was much appreciated and the OSS deserves the gratitude of SCW students.

One can not help recalling, however, that a similar program took place at YC many months ago. The question then arises why it took so long

to surface at SCW. An even more pressing question is why is it that nearly all innovative programs start at YC and are only much later, if at all, brought to SCW. SCW's Campus Conversations, a spin off of YC's Dorm Talks, is another example of this phenomenon. SCW is a distinguished division of YU and deserves to be treated as such. We, at SCW, are still waiting for the day when a SCW initiated event is adopted uptown. Until such a day, SCW can have no more than second class status within the YU community.

Opinion

By Leebie Mallin

"Reform and Conservative are not Judaism at all." I was understandably disturbed. Such a statement clearly violates the halachik view that the offspring of a Jewish woman is indeed Jewish. As I learned more about the intent surrounding the above statement, however, my dismay slightly faded. After all, the Union of Orthodox Rabbis did not mean to imply that Conservative and Reform Jews are not Jews, but rather it was a rebuke of the failure of these movements to adhere to halacha. Though it was not conveyed through the proper medium or in an appropriate way, how could an observant Jew disagree with the message? It was not until I overheard comments made by a Conservative Jew in response to the above statement that I realized how very provincial my view was.

Living in the isolated bubble of YU, it is far too easy to forget that the most contentious Jew-

ish issues are not women's Megillah reading and whose kashrut is most reliable. These disagreements, premised on the acceptance of Torah law, are outside the realm of the majority of world Jewry. The Orthodox community must be sensitive to this fact. Even though we are not the spokespersons for an Orthodox organization, our words and actions have repercussions. By virtue of the fact that we are Orthodox Jews, there are effects which result from our behavior.

At a time in which Jewish unity is in disarray, it behooves each and every one of us to do our up most to foster camaraderie by concentrating on issues of agreement. If we are ever to achieve the *achdut yisrael* that we all hope and pray for, the entire spectrum of Orthodox Judaism must do so. As the saying goes, no one ever became *frum* as a result of having stones thrown at him or her.

1976), Rabbi Weiss' week-long hunger strike on behalf of Natan Scharansky (November 11, 1982), and a nuclear arms symposium (April 8, 1987). Historically, opinions in Stern have been anything but provincial.

It is disappointing that the Stern student body no longer lives up to the legacy left by past students. There is no dearth of issues that ought to be discussed in a college newspaper. Some current events that could have been discussed are Hebron, the Nation of Islam march, the results of the Nelson trial, and the recent terrorism in Israel. On the home front, issues to be explored could be the role of a Stern student as a woman and a Traditional Jew, the deplorable state of Faculty Salaries and lack of adequate athletic facilities in comparison to other colleges of the same size. The former issues affect the student body as Jews and as members of the larger community, the latter as members of the Yeshiva University community. It is unreasonable not to have coverage of these issues in *The Observer*.

Minan Gloger
SCW 2000

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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Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Alan Epstein asserts (letter to the editor, Feb. 27 issue) that one of the greatest desecrations of G-d's Name is the conspicuous non-observance of many Jews, and that many of these Jews aren't ignorant of what *yiddishkeit* (especially in the bigger cities) is all about, and are therefore fully accountable for their violations of Jewish Law. I would like to argue two of the main points implied above. Firstly, I have learned from interacting with many Jews as a former Manhattan public school student and president of my high school's Jewish Culture Club, that most of today's (young, New York City) Jewry have little or no understanding of what the Torah observant lifestyle is about; and frequently their little knowledge is tainted by stereotypes and misconceptions. (Although I don't have the data, I venture to guess, based on my experience, that many Jewish kids have NO Jewish education—not even rudimentary education up to bar/bat mitzvah age, as Mr. Epstein suggests they have.) Secondly, it seems that Mr. Epstein made his declarations without fully investigating their truth. Such actions imply that we may criticize the supposed stance of other Jews without finding out what their stance actually is and trying to understand why these Jews approach Judaism the way they do.

Many non-Orthodox Jews (especially the unaffiliated) do not claim to represent G-d or a Divine Will. Therefore, their non-observance does not come close to being as dire a *chillul Hashem* (desecration of G-d's Name) as does immoral or insensitive acts by Orthodox Jews who make it known that they are representing Torah and G-dliness. Unfortunately, many Orthodox Jews are responsible for one of the greatest *chillulei Hashem* that exists today: quickness to judge and aloofness or hesitancy to listen to and empathize with those Jews—even within our own community!—who see things differently than we do. Even if we as Orthodox Jews may disagree with the beliefs of our secular brothers and sisters, often we are still able to validate their perspectives based upon where they are coming from.

I am not advocating agreement or passivity of the Torah community in regards to any value the secular culture decides to espouse—but disagreement MUST occur in an educated and open

environment, where each side listens to the other—and, most importantly, where each side attempts to understand where the other is coming from and why they believe what they do. To fulfill OUR part in not desecrating G-d's Name, we must disagree *without* hostility.

I reject a common viewpoint held by many Orthodox Jews that our purpose is to "make as many Jews as possible *frum* (observant)". To be sure, the *kiruv* (outreach) movement should only grow in its vitality. However, sometimes such a viewpoint leads people who espouse it to accomplish the exact opposite—it may repel those who are not receptive to *kiruv* efforts. A great number of Jews don't like to be told that they are wrong. Orthodox Jews are right, and that their souls must be saved. Perhaps some Orthodox Jews tend to be too concerned with showing that they cannot tolerate opinions antithetical to Torah and not sensitive enough to the fact that many Jews will disagree with the "absolutes" of the Torah position *no matter what approach* Orthodox Jews may use to educate them. Under these circumstances, we must exercise special caution not to put down these Jews' viewpoints. Perhaps then they can say, "I know those Jews disagree with me, but they sure are respectful and open-minded. I admire them." For those people who cannot accept this as an end in itself (or at least a temporary end for the duration of the *galut* [exile]), consider the message that these people would pass on to their children regarding Torah-observant Jews. It is conceivable that these messages would be far more positive than what is now the case—and might make Torah observance among the children's generation more likely than would be otherwise.

Let's leave it to G-d to institute universal Jewish Torah observance (and universal Gentile Noahite-Laws observance) when He sees it fit to bring Moshiach. For now, we must acknowledge our less-than-utopian world and do our best to sanctify G-d's name through our respectful interactions and non-hostile disagreements with others who do not see Torah as Truth, and even (especially) with those who do.

Deborah Roth
SCW 98

From the Executive Editor

It is hard to believe that the end of the year is rapidly approaching, and that this is my last time writing in *The Observer*. The next issue will be put together by the incoming staff for the 1997-98 school year. I wish them the best of luck!

It seems like just yesterday when I was writing about how strange it was to be a senior. Now, I am writing about how strange it is to be graduating.

As this issue comes out, Pesach will be upon us. As I think about the Pesach story, I feel the need to make a correlation between *yitzias mitzraim* and, what else, graduation.

When *B'nei Yisroel* left *mitzraim*, they did not know what to expect or where they were going. They could only rejoice at their new found freedom which Hashem gave them. They had been in *mitzraim* so long that being free was an entirely new concept for them to grasp.

As we seniors graduate, we are in almost the same predicament. For the last 16 years or so of our lives, we have been in school. We have not had to fully experience the outside world and have been semi-sheltered in our classrooms. It is now time for us to go out, not knowing what to expect or where we are going. Sure, we may know in the short term where we will be next year, etc., but what happens after that? I can honestly hope that we won't be wandering around in the *midbar* too long.

There is another aspect of the Pesach story that must not be ignored. After Hashem split

the *yam Suf* for *B'nei Yisroel*, they immediately rose up in praise of the miracle that had just occurred. They were showing their appreciation and gratitude for what Hashem did for them.

We can learn an incredible lesson from *B'nei Yisroel*. They saw the good that Hashem did, and immediately recognized it. *Hacaras Hatov* is a *midda* we should all possess.



I can only speak for myself, but as a graduating senior, I owe an incredible amount of gratitude to our school. I had an unforgettable experience at SCW, and for that I thank everyone involved.

Finally, I would just like to thank the staff of *The Observer* for making our year so successful. It has been a year that I will never forget.

Andrea Snyder

From the Editor's Desk

In this same column published in the first issue of *The Observer* at the beginning of the academic year, I excitedly wrote about "the abundance of optimistic feelings" that welcomed me in September, and the changing attitudes which I felt were a reflection of the end of the old era of apathy among SCW students. Over seven months have passed since those words were written. The spring semester is com-

ing to an end, and as I review my last issue as Editor of *The Observer*, I can't help thinking about whether my assessment was correct. This year I saw a student council who worked extremely hard at meeting the needs of our students, and who went beyond simple needs to try and make the school year a little less stressful and more fun. Yet when the time came to continue the legacy, every member of next year's Executive Board ran uncontested.



That fact in no way diminishes the qualifications or capabilities of the incoming student council. However, I can not help wondering why there was so little student interest in these positions. Was I being overly optimistic about this school year? Upon reviewing the happenings of the past two semesters, I couldn't have been totally incorrect. I would love to simply blame the past elections on "spring fever," but one question still persists: Are we reverting back to the old apathy which SCW has been plagued with for so many years?

There are no easy answers. The fierce competition for positions on next year's TAC Board confuses the situation further, and leads me back to my original conclusion that although the SCWSC elections reflect apathy among our student body, there is still a glimmer of hope that this instance will remain an exception.

I will end with the same words that I wrote in that first issue which seems to have been written so long ago: "Maybe the cup is half full after all." Although I say it a bit more bitterly right now, I can only hope that as the new school year rolls around next September, we will all be reenergized and will once again be ready and willing to fill that cup "all the way to the top."

Racheli Felsman



From the SCWSC President:

Dear Fellow Students,

As the year comes to a close, several contradictory feelings permeate my being. I am sad to let go of my many years at Stern, but ready to move on with my life; I am sad to see my term as SCWSC President end, but happy and confident to be leaving my office, as well as all SCWSC positions, in good hands. It has been a positive year and with that in mind, I would like to thank many of those who made this year what I deem to be a huge success.

Thank you Emily B., Chana, Rachel, and Laurie for EVERYTHING (in the unlimited sense of the word)--You're the greatest! Thanks to the class boards, club presidents, committee, publication, and honor society heads for your activity. A special thanks to Leebie Mallin, Hannah Shonfield, Racheli Felsman, and Andrea Snyder.

I would also like to thank all of those at SCW who contributed greatly to SCWSC and SCW, although mostly in the form of anonymity: Thank you Mrs. Braun, Dean Nulman,

Dean Himber, and the Office Student Services for your support, encouragement, help and invaluable advice.

Thank you Dean Bacon and the Office of the Dean for discussing student and schoolwide concerns with an open mind, as well as your readiness to react.

Thank you Sam Mandelbaum, Mr. Singer and the Offices of Facilities Management and Food Services for all that you do in your inimitable and accommodating way.

Most importantly, I thank you the students for your advice, suggestions, feedback and support!

May next year be an even better one for all those remaining at SCW and much *hatzlacha* to the graduates in whatever path you choose!

Sincerely,
Tami Finkelstein
SCWSC President

From the TAC President:

Dear Students,

It seems as if I just wrote my first welcoming letter to the student body. I can't believe that it is already time to goodbye. It is encouraging that I still feel much of the same enthusiasm and energy that I did when I wrote that first letter. The momentum of student activity and participation has not slowed down even in these last month of the school year. The events surrounding Purim and Pesach have been more spirited and creative than ever. We plan on continuing this pattern right until graduation.

I must take this opportunity to thank this year's TAC board--Nitzan, Chani, Deneira and Rivka. There is no way that TAC could have been so productive without their constant dedication and assistance. They deserve tremendous thanks for the time and effort they contributed throughout the year. I would also like to thank each and every TAC committee head. The committees are the main structure of TAC and each one contributed to our over-



all success. Finally, I must thank my fellow presidents, Tami Finkelstein and Michelle Stein. It was a pleasure working and creating with both of them.

The TAC elections reflected an exciting culmination to the year. There were talented and qualified students running for all positions. Congratulations Mechal, Yael, Shira, Tamar and Alisa! I am confident in the potential that the incoming board has to continue what we have started, and grow above and beyond! I hope that all students will consider ways in which they can contribute to and benefit from TAC next year.

To the graduates--Mazel Tov and *Hatzlacha* next year and in the years to come. I look forward to seeing you all at Senior Dinner and Graduation!

Sincerely,
Emily J. Shapiro
TAC President

Senior Awards

Congratulations to the following professors and students who will be recipients of this year's Senior Awards:

Judaic Studies Professor - **Rabbi Kanarfogel**
Secular Professor - **Dr. Fried**

Prof. Nathaniel Remes Memorial Award for service rendered to the school, character and personality - **Debra Bielory**

Glity Stern Award for character and commitment to the Jewish community - **Tami Finkelstein**

Lisa Wachteinheim Memorial Award for character and service - **Emily B. Shapiro**

Ramie Kertznar Memorial Award for Strong Commitment to chesed and Jewish identity, and for demonstrating the same resilience and strength that was characteristic of Ramie - **Melanie Aram**

"DAYYENU"

As Jews throughout the world prepare for Passover, we bear in mind the stanza from the Haggadah: "Had He brought us before Mount Sinai but not given us the Torah, *dayyenu*—it would have sufficed us." The experience of Sinai even without the revelation would have been enough, because at that precious moment in our millennial history we were, as the Sages put it, "like one person with one heart."

That lesson is not lost upon us. So, while there are profound theological differences between Orthodoxy in all its various manifestations and sub-groups, and the non-Orthodox religious movements, we are all part of the one Jewish people. "Like one person, with one heart."

Hence, any assertion that non-Orthodox Jews are not to be considered as Jews is not only false but indefensible in both content and intent.

Orthodox Judaism affirms that loyalty to Torah and the Halakha represents the sole authentic expression of the sacred Jewish tradition. It does not however in any way impugn the integrity of non-Orthodox Jews. In no way questions the genuineness of the spiritual searching of those who sincerely are working their way into Judaism and have come to conclusions that may not be in consonance with Orthodox teachings. It in no way denies the democratic and human rights of any Jews to worship or not worship as they please. At a time of wholesale defection from Judaism, including conversion to other faiths, there are more important tasks for Jewish leadership than an injection of divisiveness into the dialogue amongst concerned Jews as to the future of our people.

Jews should avoid unnecessary and unhelpful distractions. And the Jewish community should not attribute to Orthodox Jewry as a whole unwelcome and unwholesome rhetoric by a fringe group.

May this Passover inspire us to fulfill our Jewish potential. "Like one person with one heart"—all year long.

Norman Lamm
President, Yeshiva University

Declaration Condemned by Orthodox Community

By Leslie Ginsparg

Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, President of Yeshiva University, was one of the many representatives of the orthodox community to criticize a declaration put forth by The Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada (Agudath HaRabanim) which denounced Reform and Conservative Judaism. The eight-part declaration was issued at a press conference held at the New York Hilton on March 31. The organization's statement was tied to the controversy in Israel over "Who is a Jew?" and a bill outlawing Reform and Conservative conversions performed in Israel. The organization was distressed by the pressure that Reform and Conservative leaders were putting on the Knesset to recognize their conversions.

The Union of Orthodox Rabbis, while the oldest Orthodox Rabbinic Organization in North America, founded in 1902, only represents a small percentage of Orthodox Jews. The Union represents approximately 600 Orthodox Rabbis.

The declaration, which has been criticized by both Orthodox and Reform Rabbis alike, stated that "Reform and Conservative are not Judaism at all. Their adherents are Jews, according to the Jewish Law, but their religion is not Judaism." The statement continues with eight provisions further explaining the organization's position. "There is only one Judaism: Torah Judaism. The Reform and Conservative are not Judaism at all, but another religion." While the Union referred to their statement as "A Historic Declaration," they stated that it is not a new decision, but "as old as Sinai." The Union further criticized the Reform and Conservative movements for condoning interfaith marriages and homosexuality.

The Union then stated that after leading generations of American Jews "towards assimilation and intermarriage, they [Reform and Conservative movements] now attempt to export their alien ideology to Israel." Alluding to the aforementioned bill, the Union stressed the importance of supporting the Israeli government in their "refusal to change the status quo regarding the exclusive Orthodox Rabbinic authority. Even non-Orthodox political leaders recognized that unless Jewish religious family law remains under the authority of the sole Rabbinat, the Jewish nation would be hopelessly divided."

The Union quoted well-known Rabbis who they believed supported their position, including Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, who was a Rosh Yeshiva at YU and was considered to be the intellectual and guiding force of YU and REITS for decades. Rabbi Soloveitchik was

quoted as saying, "The Karaites of the Geonic period were closer to Judaism than are the Reform of our time."

The Union urged members of the Reform and Conservative movements to withdraw their affiliation and attend Orthodox synagogues. "We hope they will join an Orthodox synagogue where they will be warmly welcomed," said Rabbi Hersch Ginsberg, acting chairman of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis. They also advised Reform and Conservative Jews that in order to insure that their children and grandchildren remain Jewish, "Make certain, then, to be guided, by an Orthodox Rabbi in all areas of marriage, divorce, conversion, etc."

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, which represents the Reform movement, criticized the Union of Orthodox Rabbis' statement. Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, called the declaration "sad and pathetic." He stated, "Our legitimacy flows from the richness of our Jewish lives, the strength of our communities and synagogues, and our own deep commitment to G-d, Torah and Israel." Yoffie also said that this statement illustrates the problems caused by the religious dominance granted to Orthodox rabbis in Israel. "This only strengthens our resolve to fight for recognition in the Jewish state."

Rabbi Dr. Lamm, in a statement entitled "Dayyenu" which appeared in *The New York Times* on Friday, April 11, stated that, "Any assertion that non-Orthodox Jews are not to be considered as Jews is not only false but indefensible in both content and intent. Orthodox Judaism affirms that loyalty to Torah and the Halakha represents the sole authentic expression of the sacred Jewish tradition. It does not, however, in any way impugn the integrity of non-Orthodox Jews." Lamm referred to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis as a "fringe group."

The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America (OU), which should not be confused with the organization which issued the declaration, and The Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) also repudiated the declaration. They said that the declaration "does not reflect the sentiments of mainstream Orthodox Jewish thought, since it implies the disenfranchisement of Jews as Jews."

Rabbi Avi Weiss, Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies at SCW, stated that, "what is unusual is not the statement. Jewish History is full of such fragmentation." Rabbi Weiss cited the disputes between the Rabbinic community and groups such as the Karaites and the Maskilim as examples. He found it unusual that, "The RCA and the OU,

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Campus Conversations: A Discussion on Cloning

By Esther S. Finkle

Cloning, a topic which has appeared frequently in the news over the past few months, was the subject of the second forum in the newly instituted SCW series, Campus Conversations. On Monday, April 7, Rabbi Moshe Tendler spoke to the SCW student body on the issue of cloning, and its halachic ramifications.

The program, Campus Conversations, was first initiated last semester, when students expressed the desire to hear Rabbi Dr. Lamm, the president of YU, addressing the women on issues deemed pertinent to their lives. This forum was facilitated as an equivalent to Dorm Talks, which are conducted regularly with YC students uptown. The first Campus Conversations was held on Wednesday, December 18, 1996, when President Lamm addressed the student body on the subject of dating and marriage. The success of the event warranted its continuation, and on April 7, at 8 p.m., the second Campus Conversations took place in Koch Auditorium.

For some time, women have expressed interest in hosting Rabbi Tendler as a speaker at SCW. Rabbi Tendler is currently the Rosh Yeshiva of RIETS, as well as a professor of medical ethics and biology. "It was a beneficial experience to not only have a Rosh Yeshiva speak on this topic, but one who is knowledgeable in the field of biology as well," stated Michelle Segall, SCW '97.

When TAC President Emily J. Shapiro spoke with Rabbi Tendler to arrange the program, he suggested cloning rather than other medical ethics issues that are his object of study. The issue of cloning is one that has been in the forefront of the media, and has sparked a full spectrum of reactions throughout the scientific community. The lecture was geared to give students



Rabbi Moshe Tendler

a greater understanding of this complex issue in addition to a Halachic response.

The cloning issue emerged at the end of February, 1997 when the Roslin Institute's Dr. Ian Wilmut cloned a sheep, Dolly, from a single mammary cell taken from an adult sheep. The technology pioneered at the Scottish institute, which allowed for laboratory reproduction, raised many questions and reactions. As this was the first higher life form to be cloned, the possibilities and consequences of cloning humans were discussed.

For the women of Stern College, and the greater Orthodox Jewish community, one of the biggest challenges was how to approach the issue through a Torah perspective. "When a breakthrough in the scientific world happens, you wonder how it is going to be handled by Halacha," said Aviva Katz, SCW '98.

Continued on page 10

Opinion

Women and Judaism

By Yehudit Robinson

Along with two other students, I represented Stern College for Women at the First Annual Conference on Women and Judaism. Hosted from March 27-30 at Yale University, I experienced one of the best weekends of my life. I joined nearly 300 Jewish women from over 50 colleges and universities across the United States and Canada. Unlike similar events I have attended, this weekend was an unmitigated celebration—a celebration of our identities as Jewish women.

While maintaining our individual identities, amazingly we transcended denominationism; we blurred the boundaries that traditionally separate and that we use to separate us. We spoke, prayed, ate, danced and sang together. We explored the impact of our differing levels

of involvement in Judaism and women's issues in our lives. We were respectful in our evaluations of the many speakers who addressed us even as we disagreed with some of their premises. Perhaps this harmony was possible specifically because we did not attempt to deride any sector of Judaism.

Being with a group of women who were so enthusiastic about being Jewish certainly inspired me. I left with an enhanced feeling of *ahavat yisrael*, mutual love for my fellow Jew. I also left with increased pride of my femininity. Finally, I left hoping we would meet again, channeling the inspiration we had created this weekend, to create a community that would harmonize Jewish observance and our involvement with women's issues.

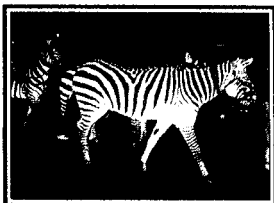
Elephant Extravaganza

By Esther S. Finkle

As the pressure of midterm examinations was looming over the student body, much effort was made in order to energize the students and engage them in the Purim spirit.

On Tuesday, March 18, SCW hosted a Purim party in honor of the annual midnight trek of the Barnum and Bailey Circus elephants down 34th Street, to their temporary residence in Madison Square Garden, the location of the circus. In a joint effort of the Office of Student Services and SCWSC to arrange an event for Purim, and subsequently alleviate midterm tension, a party was orchestrated surrounding the arrival of the elephants.

The entire event, which was conceived of the night before, was organized that Tuesday afternoon, just hours before the animals were expected to arrive. The parade of elephants was to serve as the entertainment and the other essential that was necessary for the party was food. That afternoon, Dougie's was contacted to supply refreshments for a couple hundred people, and they responded by having food prepared for the 12 a.m. kickoff. Many students, upon hearing about the event, assumed that it was part of Adar shick. However, signs that were posted around the school informed students that the party was not a joke. This was understood when students began to line up outside the Blue



Zebras parade down 34th Street on their way to Madison Square Garden

Lounge, the scene of the party, minutes prior to midnight when the event was scheduled to commence.

Shulamit Juni, SCW '97, who came for the affair stated, "It's a great excuse to get out and party at 1 a.m.!" Students crowded into the lounge, and filled their plates with Dougie's Buffalo Wings and Sweet Potato Chips. "It was incredible to see so many students together at such an amazing event that the university provided for us," stated Anella Rosman, SCW '99.

Women positioned themselves in any

available corner, and the overflow crowd made its way outside. In spite of the late hour, Mr. Zeldi Hran, Assistant Dean of Students, who helped organize the event, made a guest appearance to observe the success of the party, and join in the fun along with the students.

The elephants were scheduled to arrive between 12 and 1 a.m. As they began approaching around 12:30, students filed out of Brookdale and on to the sidewalks of 34th street to cheer for the oncoming procession. The women packed them selves along both sides of the street, and others cheered and clapped from the windows of their rooms.

Caron Wolf, SCW '99, who admired the spectacle from her 2nd floor window, exclaimed, "I never imagined such lively school spirit, the unity was amazing and it was a lot of fun to see something so rare in New York City."

The Barnum and Bailey elephants have been traveling this route for 127 years, since the beginning of the circus. The elephants do not travel in this manner for publicity, but simply because it is the most efficient way to get them to their living quarters for the duration of the circus in a particular city. Before arriving at 34th Street, the animals were left off at the Long Island Train

Yard, where they then proceeded through the Queens Midtown Tunnel. Upon exiting the tunnel, they continued down 34th Street to Madison Square Garden. This is the mode of transportation the circus uses in all 92 cities that it visits in a two year circuit. The elephants, who were coming from Virginia, made their way to Massachusetts after their final New York appearance on April 6. This year's entourage included 16 elephants, 3 of which were calves. Other animals in the procession included ponies, horses, camels and zebras.

SCW students waved and cheered for the animals well after they passed into the distance. Several students began singing and carrying over the spirit from the Purim Hagiga that took place a few hours prior. Two students, Pasha Secunda, SCW '98, and Michal Werblowsky, SCW '98, who were dressed in gray elephant costumes since the Hagiga, accompanied the elephants all the way down to the Gardens. Their actions made them the subject of several photograph opportunities and interviews. "It was totally OOC (out of control)," said Secunda. Shortly after 1 a.m., the celebrations came to a close, and lingering students made their way back to their apartments and dorm rooms.

Student Locked in School

By Leslie Ginsparg

Adena Saltzman, SCW '98, found herself very surprised when she tried to leave the Midtown Center at 1:15 a.m. on Sunday, February 23. The lobby lights were off and the security guards, who are normally stationed at the entrance to the building, had already left.

The Midtown center closes at 1 a.m. on weeknights. Before locking the building, security guards check all floors to determine that there are no students on the premises.

Donald Sommers, Chief of Security, said that the incident involving Saltzman was a mistake and he has advised security officers to use more caution when closing the building.

Saltzman had been learning by herself in the sixth floor Beit Midrash. When no guards arrived to lock the doors at 1 a.m., Saltzman assumed they were just running late and took advantage of the time to finish up what she was doing. At 1:15, she left the Beit Midrash and proceeded downstairs to the lobby. When she found the lobby dark and empty, she tried to leave the building. Finding the first set of doors locked, Saltzman exited by pushing the latch on the doors. The second set of doors, which lead to the outside, were also locked. But as they do not have a latch, Saltzman was unable to get through those doors. She tried to reenter the building, but the first set of doors locked behind her.

Saltzman remained in the area between the two sets of door until 5:30 that morning, when the school building was opened for the day. While the area was well lit, it was not heated.

Sommers stated that the security guards accidentally missed the sixth floor that night. While he has instructed the guards to be more careful, he also stressed that students need to cooperate with building closing times.

To insure that similar incidents will not occur in the future, Sommers ordered that an emergency phone be installed in the area between the two sets of doors. The phone will enable students to contact security guards stationed in Brookdale Hall.

Saltzman has been good natured about the whole experience. "People make mistakes. They didn't do it intentionally. Thank G-d I was fine."

SCW Holds First Annual Honor Society Induction

By Yehudit Robinson

During Club Hour on April 2, Dean Karen Bacon and SCWSC President Tami Finkelstein, SCW '97, presided over the First Annual Hon-



(l-r) SCWSC President Tami Finkelstein, Dean Karen Bacon, Michal Rotblat, Naomi Gordon, Cheryl Younger and Mor Reis

ors Societies Induction. In the presence of faculty and fellow students, members of Alpha Epsilon Delta Society, The English Honors Society, Psi Chi Society and Sigma Delta Rho Society received formal recognition for their academic excellence. The ceremony included short presentations by the respective club presidents followed by the individual presentation of membership certificates to each society member. A reception and group photographs concluded the event.

Finkelstein, who is responsible for the inception of this formal recognition of academic achievement, introduced the program. She expressed her satisfaction in the recently instituted changes formalizing SCW's honor societies. Alpha Epsilon Delta is now affiliated with a national society, and Psi Chi is in the process of joining the national chapter. There is a formal application process for prospective members of each of the four societies, and each group now has a faculty advisor. In a later interview, Finkelstein said, "This is a distinction that should be awarded and acknowledged. G-d willing, this event is the first of many more, which can only be bigger and better."

SCW Dean Karen Bacon next gave opening remarks. She noted her excitement in recognizing outstanding students, hoping they will all continue to grow and become leaders. Bacon later noted, "One success inspires another. I think public recognition will inspire people to join existing societies, and to form others."

Cheryl Younger, SCW '98, President of Alpha Epsilon Delta Society, was the first honors society representative to speak. She presented certificates to the 18 members of the pre-

medical/pre-dental honor society. Prospective members of this nationally recognized society were required to submit an application with recommendations and to maintain a minimum G.P.A. of 3.5.

Younger explained that the SCW chapter of AED, now in its second year of existence, has expanded its presence. "This year we've had a lot of wonderful programs, including 'Shadow a Doctor' Program, a convention, and various speakers, and we have membership cards," she said.

"It is an honor to be inducted into a prestigious society such as this, and we are very appreciative of Deans Bacon and Orlian as well as members of the faculty for attending our induction," said AED member Rhonda Forest, SCW '99.

Mor Reis, SCW '97, President of the English Honors Society, was next to induct members. They were all either English or English Communications majors or minors, have a minimum G.P.A. of 3.3, and have submitted an application including faculty recommendations and an essay.

Reis explained that the English Honors Society, in its first year of existence at SCW, has been fairly active. The society has sponsored a Movie Night featuring "Much Ado About Nothing," a trip to the Broadway show "Miss Saigon,"

a Shabbaton with guest speaker Professor Peninah Schramm and a Saturday night trip to Hackers, Hitters, and Hoops. In addition, they are presently sponsoring a writing contest; interested students can submit pieces to the Office of Student Services. Those seeking more information about the society can visit their eighth floor bulletin board.

Naomi Y. Gordon, SCW '97, Psi Chi president, initiated members into this nationally recognized undergraduate Psychology society, also celebrating its first year at SCW. All members of the society were accepted on the basis of their applications and maintaining a minimum major G.P.A. of 3.6. Gordon later noted that membership in this society is "a great thing to have when applying to grad school."

Michal Rotblat, SCW '97, President of Sigma Delta Rho, read the names of the 25 students who had been accepted to this science research society, open to all biology majors with a minimum G.P.A. of 3.2. The society recently co-hosted a Shabbaton and plans to publish research abstracts in the Sigma Delta Rho Journal.

A variety of faculty members attended the event to show their support for the students. Lisa Aaronson, secretary to Rabbi Kanarfogel, Chairman of the Rebecca Ivry Department of Judaic Studies, commented, "I thought it was very nice...this is the first time there's been a ceremony to honor the people who go into [the societies]."

ו'ס"ד

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Purim at SCW

Pre-Purim Party at Stern

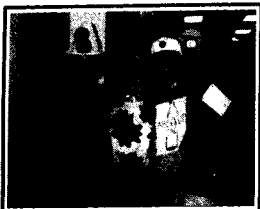
By Miriam C. Grossman

Although it was in the middle of mid-term season, crowds of SCW students came to drink and dance at the pre-Purim chagiga. The "Pour-em" chagiga, jointly sponsored by TAC, SCWSC and SSSBSC, was held on Tuesday night, March 18. In keeping with the theme, Koch auditorium was decorated with giant posters of drinks such as Snapple, Budweiser and Tropicana Orange Juice.

The "Pour-em" chagiga was the final event organized this year by the TAC Chagiga Committee, headed by Leslie Ginsparg, SCW '98, Penny Joel, SCW '97, and Aliza Kravetz, SCW '97.

Screened from view by balloons, a band provided music for the dancing which was the chagiga's main feature. The enthusiastic dancing paused while The Belles, SCW's a capella group, clad as nuns in an illusion to Sister Act, sang Purim songs with a twist. Their performance was followed by Purim shuck, performed by a group of SCW students who did not hesitate to skewer the faculty, security guards and other familiar aspects of SCW. The interlude also included a *D var Torah* by Kravetz.

Parsha Shiur, normally held in



(l-r) Michal Rotblat, Rina Weinstein and TAC President Emily J. Shapiro in costume at the "Pour-em" Chagiga

Brookdale Hall on Wednesday nights, was temporarily transplanted to the school Beit Midrash, enabling students to take a break in dancing and hear about the *parsha* from Elana Siderer, SCW '98.

Refreshed by hamentashen and a variety of drinks served in champagne glasses, attendees continued dancing until 11 p.m. Allison Berger, SCW '98, gave her evaluation of the party, "The lavish event qualifies as the most spectacular experience of my career here at SCW. All those involved in planning the event should be commended for a job well done."

Purim Concert Canceled

By Julie Stampnitzky

Due to insufficient ticket sales, SCWSC and YCSC decided at the last minute to cancel the concert which was scheduled to take place on Thursday, March 27. The Purim concert, which was to have featured Mordechai ben David, attracted only one third of the requisite number of attendees.

The price of tickets, \$22 and \$27 for YU students, was calculated to enable the student councils to break even on the event if they had a full house of 1100. On Wednesday, the day before the concert, its organizers decide to call it off, because only about 350 tickets had been sold. In contrast, the Chanukah concert, which featured Avraham Fried and Dedi, was completely sold out.

All individuals who had purchased tickets were notified by phone that night, and told that their money would be refunded when they turned in their tickets. Would-be concert-goers were acutely disappointed. Said Tzini Roth, SCW '99, "I was really looking forward to going. I'd finished my mid-

wanted to focus on the students and give them a chance to buy tickets."

A variety of reasons were suggested for the small number of tickets sold. There were several other concerts scheduled for the same week, including one by Dedi on the same night. Some students, when questioned, acknowledged that they were not as interested in hearing Mordechai ben David. "I don't particularly like Mordechai ben David," said Bruriah Rivkin, SCW '99. "If I have the money, I spend it on something I really enjoy." Other students also mentioned the price as a deterrent. Shapiro suggested that although the tickets were in the same price range as those to the Chanukah concert, which were \$20-28, students were more likely to have put aside the money in anticipation of that event, or they might have received monetary gifts. Said Shoshana Greenberg, SCW '98, "It was \$22 that I didn't have."

There is no denying that the concert was scheduled at an inopportune time, in the middle of midterms season at SCW and YC. Rifky Gantz, SCW '99, said that she had enjoyed the Chanukah concert, but chose not to attend the Purim concert because "it was around mid-term time."

Despite this year's lack of success, Shapiro said that she thought there would be a Purim concert next, with more tickets sold to the outside community, if necessary. "I wish *hatzlacha* to the next student council," said the outgoing vice president. "I hope that next year we'll still sell tickets to the students first, so that they have first choice."

SCW Celebrates Purim at Adopt-a-Bubby Chagiga

By Gila Rosenthal

This year's Adopt-a-Bubby post-Purim Chagiga took place on Wednesday, March 26 in Koch Auditorium during club hour. About 20 elderly women and men were present in the auditorium, and with double that number of SCW women present, each Bubby and Zaidy was able to enjoy the attentions of at least one member of the younger generation at any given time. Festively decorated with streamers and "Happy Purim" signs, the room shone almost as much as the faces inside it. There was food, there was music, there was dancing and shmoozing, and, short of Buffalo wings and a parade of elephants, what more could an SCW student ask for in a Purim Chagiga?

Munching on a Hamentashen, Bubby Esther proclaimed, "I'm having such a good time—but I haven't stopped eating!" Besides the nosh on the tables, each guest was given a *Mishloach Manot* basket to bring home.

A circle formed on the dance floor, and slowly but surely the Bubbies joined in, with one particularly energetic lady donning a Mexican hat and prancing in the middle of the circle, to the delight of her audience. Rochi Steiner, SCW 2000, gave a *D var Torah* about the significance

of *Mecheivut Amalek*,

and afterwards singing broke out among the participants, all of whom professed to be having a wonderful time. As one Bubby, Dorothy, put it, "I enjoy seeing all the smiling faces!"

Adopt-a-Bubby, a TAC committee headed by Ilana Bruger, SCW '97, Susan Jacobs, SCW '99, and Ora Shinnar, SCW '98, works with three dif-

ferent Senior Citizen organizations, pairing up an elderly lady with a college student. The volunteers visit their "Bubbies" several times a month. Four or five women participate in Project Ezra, an organization on the Lower East Side from

which most of the Chagiga attendees came;

three visit in Penn South, a housing develop-

ment between 26th and 28th streets on

9th Avenue, and four or five attend Dorot, a

Senior Citizen group on the Upper West

Side.

Aside from these regular activities, Chanukah and Purim Chagigot are held each year. This past Chanukah event was smaller and more sparsely attended, probably as a result of its scheduling during mid-term exams.

According to Jacobs, about 60 SCW students had signed up for Adopt-a-Bubby at the Club Fair earlier this year, and many of the most eager participants in this Chagiga were students who were not actively involved in the program but would like to be.

"It's a big commitment," agreed Dalia Jacobs, SCW '99, who pays weekly visits to an elderly lady in midtown Manhattan. "But it's completely worth it. I feel that I gain just as much as my Bubby does."

Indeed, there is much to learn from vast life experience, and the elderly are ca-

ger to teach.

One woman at

the Chagiga,

when asked

how she was

enjoying her-

self, responded,

"I always enjoy

myself, no mat-

ter where I am.

That's the only

way to get

through life."

At the

party's conclu-

sion, one of the

ladies, Rose

Ribeck, whose

two daughters had

attended SCW, asked

to speak. After

thanking all who were

involved in coordinating

the event, she ad-

vised, "Make new friends,

but keep the old.

One is silver, the other gold."



Shaindy Kahn, SCW '99, and a "Bubby" at the Adopt-a-Bubby Purim Chagiga

**The SCW
Student Body
would like to wish
a sincere
Mazel Tov to
Residence Supervisor
Alexis Levitt
on her recent engagement.**

SCW in the News

By Nava Bak

In the last few weeks, SCW has made its way into two widely-read newspapers. In one appearance, Stern took a ribbing in the Purim page of *The Jewish Week*, a paper distributed to a large number of Jews in the NY-NJ metropolitan area. SCW's ego was certainly repaired on March 25 when an SCW Junior's letter to the editor was published in *The New York Times*.

"Howard Stern College?" was the headline of the article that, juxtaposed with a photo of Howard Stern, encompassed a quarter page of *The Jewish Week's* Purim edition. The article proposed that SCW was actually named after controversial talk-show host Howard Stern. It credited "Yeshiva U.'s ace public relations department" with covering up this fact for years, making up stories about elderly women leaving millions of dollars to the school they have "never visited." The name "Dean Karen Ham" was used in reference to SCW's Dean Karen Bacon.

Dean Bacon had not been aware of the article until a student brought it to her attention. Her reaction was ambivalent. It was "neither funny nor offensive," said Bacon, although she assured that her sense of humor is not "highly developed." The Dean found a way to view the article as a positive reflection of SCW. "Stern must have name recognition," she noted, "since it was granted a quarter page of this paper."

While the editor of *The Jewish Week*, Gary

Rosenblatt, is teaching a course at SCW this semester, he said his personal involvement had no impact on the inclusion of SCW in the Purim page. Rosenblatt noted that he did find the article funny and that all jokes were "in the Purim spirit."

Perhaps a more productive use of the press was displayed in a letter entitled "Only One Jerusalem" to the editor of *The New York Times*, written by Julie Stampnitzky, SCW '98. Stampnitzky, a Biology major, was bothered by the inaccurate distinction made between Jerusalem and "East Jerusalem" in many articles in *The New York Times*. Her letter noted that the term "East Jerusalem" was only used between 1948 and 1967 in reference to land "illegally occupied by Jordan." Stampnitzky noticed that in his April 1 column "On My Mind," A.M. Rosenthal made the same point as she had in her letter. As far as the effectiveness of her letter, Stampnitzky was happy to see that in an April 2nd *New York Times* article an Arab neighborhood was described more accurately as an area in southeastern Jerusalem. Stampnitzky noted that, "We'll have to wait and see if this [omission of the term 'East Jerusalem'] is a trend."

Stampnitzky encourages everyone "to write to *The New York Times* or another paper, to make their feelings known." Sending letters through e-mail, as Stampnitzky did, makes the process simple. *The New York Times'* e-mail address is letters@nytimes.com.

Pre-Pesach Lecture Series Held on Main Campus

By Aliza Fox

As soon as the Purim holiday ended, TAC and SOY started preparing for Pesach with a weekly pre-Pesach lecture series. These shurim, held at the Main Campus, have been drawing large crowds. TAC has been providing two buses weekly to make transportation uptown possible.

At the first two lectures there were approximately 200 people present, and many had to stand in the back or by the door to hear the speakers. "I am really amazed at the amount of people who attend. It is so nice to see the overwhelming interest in extra shurim," said Dana Bienenfeld, SCW '98.

The *Roshai Yeshiva* who are part of the series are Rabbi Herschel Schechter, Rabbi Mordechai Willig, and Rabbi Bingyom Yudin.

Rabbi Schechter spoke about insights into the Haggadah. He gave an overview of different topics in the Haggadah. "Rav Schechter's shur was very informative. I walked away with a broader knowledge of the Haggadah," said

Alison Farhman, SCW '98.

Rav Willig spoke about a woman's obligation at the Seder. "I thought it was very good because it was practical halachot that applied to me. I enjoyed it very much," said Shari Klein, SCW '98.

On April 8, Rav Yudin spoke about the Four Cups of wine.

While students were grateful for the opportunity to learn from the *Roshai Yeshiva*, many complained of the hassles involved with traveling to the Main Campus in order to participate in the lecture series. The TAC Shurim Committee will be offering an additional Pre-Pesach shur at the Midtown Campus. Rav Michael Rosensweig, Rosh Yeshiva of MYP, will be speaking in Koch Auditorium on Tuesday, April 15, at 8:30 p.m.

"I appreciate the effect that I was given the opportunity to attend these shurim. Through these shurim I was able to perform the mitzvah of 'asking and lecturing' 30 days before a holiday," said Klien.

The Four Faces of Rabbi Levene

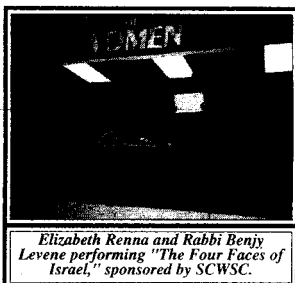
By Yehudit Robinson

Rabbi Benji Levene of Geshet, YC '68, entertained YU students on Monday, March 31, in Koch Auditorium, presenting his one-man show, *The Four Faces of Israel*. Based on a self-created script he has performed worldwide for over 20 years, he creates four stereotypical Jews whose differing views about Judaism and Zionism have traditionally created misconceptions and mutual distrust. After answering in monologue scripted questions asked by Sophomore Class President Elizabeth Renna, SCW '99, his characters then responded to audience questions. Rabbi Levene hopes, through the caricatures, to shatter prevailing preconceptions and promote Jewish harmony.

His first character, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Deutsch, is a bumbling old chassid, unable to remember how many children he has. His family has lived in Meah She'arim for over 100 years; like other residents of that neighborhood, he did not serve in the Israeli Army. He does not consider his views extreme; he believes the whole world shares his philosophy. To the misdirected owners who drive cars into Meah She'arim on Shabbat, he throws rocks. Communal leaders, however, have admonished him to stop; his unskilled throws often hit unintended targets. Responding to an accusation of Chassidic misogyny, he explained that Chassidim encourage women to leave the house—for example, to go shopping. He discussed his Zionist views; a non-religious state is not a Jewish state. Audience members asked him whether the state could be secure if people refused to fight. After his departure, the audience debated whether his children would remain in Israel.

This discussion was interrupted by the entry of Motti Goren, a macho bus driver who spends several minutes removing cigarette packs and lighters from his person before he sits down. His knowledge of Judaism is a bit convoluted, though very sincere. While somewhat boorish, he professes a love for Israel; reacting to a perceived lack of cultural identity, he forces his wife and two children to listen to national "favorites" such as "Babel-Wad." In addition, he frequently leads his family on *tiyulim*. The audience was impressed by his sincerity and decided his children's cultural bonds would keep them in Israel.

The next character, artist Jean-Paul Simone, sauntered onto stage bearing an artist's palette. He felt his marriage to his non-Jewish wife Christine and the birth of their uncircumcised son Noel did not detract from his ardent Jewish identity. He did not understand the questioner's doubts as to his attraction to the land, describing the bliss he ex-



Elizabeth Renna and Rabbi Benji Levene performing "The Four Faces of Israel," sponsored by SCWSC.

periences living and painting in Safed's artist colony. In a discussion following his departure, the audience doubted his tenuous connection to the land would extend to his child.

The final character, Harry Abelson, full of affection for Israel, joked, "Israel is real, heh heh." An American philanthropist, he repeatedly reminds the audience he has given "4.5 million to Israel this year, not to mention what I gave last year," but does not want to live in Israel. He says he loves Judaism, despite his limited command of Hebrew. For example, he admits he once confused Peres with Press, entering unannounced into the Prime Minister's home. He staunchly supports Israel and visits Israel constantly, but will never live there because he feels he was not properly received when

he attempted *aliya*. Instead, he hosts parties in his Jacuzzi for members of the Israeli consulate. He disagreed with an audience member who suggested Israel may no longer need or want American aid.

Following the conclusion of the show, Rabbi Levene entered as himself to discuss the purpose of his presentation. He explained Geshet's goals of uniting Jews while helping strengthen commitment to Judaism. He has made only slight changes in his script over the years he has used it; he feels his characters are "universal." Responding to a comment that his characters seemed relatively uneducated, he explained that he "doesn't want to get involved in politics," comedy appeals to people in a way complicated lectures cannot. His audiences typically protest portrayals of the character they perceive to be most like them. For example, feeling offended, American audience members have left when Abelson notes his generosity. This discomfort is the reaction Rabbi Levene wishes to provoke. The same people who complain Rabbi Deutsch, for example, is grossly misrepresented, proclaim the other three caricatures are perfectly accurate.

Rabbi Levene is the grandson of Rabbi Aryeh Levene, who was known as "The Tzaddik of Jerusalem." Like his well-known grandfather, he has a great love for all Jews; he hopes, through his performances, to foster Jewish unity and Torah knowledge.

Constitution Ratified

Continued from page 1

of the Constitution in the Orientation packet that each new student receives at the beginning of the school year. "If I had known about the Constitution and it had been more accessible I would have been able to vote on it," she said.

Rena Helprin, SSSB '98, thought that the SCW Constitution was the one she saw in the *Guide To The Perplexed*, which is actually a copy of the YC Constitution. The SCW Constitution has not been in the *Guide* since it has been under reconstruction. Now that the changes and ratification have been made, SCWSC is planning to have the Constitution published in next year's *Guide*, where it will be accessible to all students. If students have problems with or questions about the Constitution, Mallin assures them that SCWSC will be "very happy" to be approached by students and will do their best to answer all questions.

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Meet the New SCWSC Executive Board

Hannah Shonfield, President:



Leadership is one of Shonfield's strengths and she is extremely dedicated and committed to "improving the college atmosphere here in SCW."

Shonfield has many new ideas and programs for next year. "I am Finkelstein, this year's Executive Board President, did a wonderful job and I would like to build upon the foundation that she has laid," said Shonfield. "The momentum amongst the student needs to be increased and more student must become involved."

Being Executive Board President is a tremendous responsibility. The President is required to oversee all activities that SCWSC runs, create new and exciting activities, delegate responsibility and voice student opinions to the administration. Hannah Shonfield, SCW '98, realized all these responsibilities and chose to run for President because "I feel that I am incredibly devoted to the school and have been involved in many of the goings on here in Stern College for Women."

This year, Shonfield served as Parliamentarian and chaired the Student Life Committee, and thus knows much of the politics of the school, how to handle student complaints and the most effective methods to approach the administration.

Many students did not turn out for voting this year and Shonfield senses that this is simply a reflection of the apathy of many students in SCW. "In order for this to change, new social programs need to be implemented and pastimes created to bring girls together and create a cohesive unit of students," commented Shonfield. "I have many goals and plan for the upcoming year and the students in SCW can look forward to a very successful year."



Shira Hecht, SCW '98, would like to see more student involvement and an increased awareness of activities taking place and lecturers speaking in SCW. As Student Council Vice President, she feels that she will be able to accomplish this goal. "I was Vice President in Elementary school and in high school and I decided to carry on the tradition and be Vice President in college, too," said Hecht.

There are many complaints amongst the student that improvements need to be made in SCW and Hecht feels that as Vice President she will be

Shira Hecht, Vice President:

able to appropriately voice these complaints and help resolve them. She wants to be a "voice for the student body and truly help make changes in the student life here at SCW," stated Hecht.

Some of her new ideas for next year include a student teacher forum to discuss broad and specific topics and to create programs to increase student participation. Hecht lives in NY, attended Central High School and Michlala. She hopes to continue her education in a joint program with Revel.

Gila Silbiger, Recording Secretary:



Silbiger is excited about her new position on student council, and hopes to have a positive effect on student life. "I hope to plan more student council activities that not only attracts

After completing Bruria High School and a year in Michlala, this is Silbiger's first year at SCW. She is biology major, and an aspiring Physician's Assistant.

more people, but has a lasting impact on their college experience." Even though this is Silbiger's first year on campus, she feels that she is qualified to make her aspirations for the coming year a reality.

Nava Bak, Corresponding Secretary:



school towards activities in SCW. People see signs hung up in school for activities and often times ignore them. That needs to change," said Bak.

Being involved in student life is important for Nava Bak, SCW '98, and that is why she chose to run for corresponding secretary of the Executive Board. She would like to see more student council run activities and more involvement by her fellow students. "There is much apathy in

Bak has not been involved in Student Council prior to this year but feels that she is completely qualified for the job. She has leadership qualities that she will bring to the job with her.



Jennie Weiss, SCW '99, is from Atlanta Georgia and came to SCW two years ago as an early admission freshman. She has been involved in many school activities, including President of the Sophomore class and involvement in the Zachor Club. Weiss attends Sy Syms School of business.

"The important for students in college is to have fun and be involved in school, aside from the academia," said Weiss. The activities and ideas she has for next year are to try and increase

Jennie Weiss, Treasurer

student participation in activities and have true school spirit. She is excited to do things for school and for the students.

"Students are simply not involved enough and they do not take advantage of everything that SCW has to offer," stated Weiss. Her plan is to inform students of activities planned and to be a voice for the students. "I want to improve the overall atmosphere in SCW," she said.

New TAC Executive Board Elected

By Adena Saltzman

On Wednesday, April 2, the student body of SCW elected the officers of the Torah Activities Council of 5758. One interesting result of the election is that none of the new officers of TAC 5758 have ever held a position on TAC's board. The diverse combination of people on the new TAC Board may predict change and innovation for the year to come.

The new President of TAC will be Mechal Weiss, SCW '98. After an exact tie with Nitzan Peiman in the general election, Weiss won the position of president in a special run-off election held on Thursday, April 3. Weiss is a graduate of the Yeshiva of Flatbush and attended Midreshet Moriah during her Freshman year in Israel. Her previous involvement in



Incoming TAC President
Mechal Weiss

Midreshet Moriah, Schor is full of new ideas for the upcoming TAC year. Among her ideas are plans for a comprehensive information center and *ge'machs*. The *ge'machs* would include services such as source books for shiurim, bridesmaids gown, and wedding shitch.

Also serving as Vice President of TAC will be Shira Genack, SCW '98. Genack came to SCW this year after two years at Michlala. She graduated from Bruria High School, in Elizabeth, New Jersey, and is anticipating a terrific year for TAC.

The new Secretary will be Tamar Wadler, SCW '98. Wadler has been at SCW for two years. She sees being a member of the new TAC board as a way to participate in, and direct, religious life at

SCW. Wadler was involved this year with the publication of Hamevasser, the Judaic Studies Journal of YU. She wants to pursue her Judaic Studies on a graduate level, and hopes to teach Tanach on an advanced level. She attended Shulamis High School and Brovender's.

Alisa Hirshaut, SCW '98, an alumna of TAG high school, and of Darchei Bina in Israel, is looking forward to a productive year as TAC Treasurer. A speech pathology major, Alisa is currently completing her first year at SCW. She is excited about becoming more involved in religious student life in the upcoming year.

As is customary for TAC, two students were elected to the position of Vice President. Yael Schor, SCW '98, from Silver Spring, Maryland, is completing her second year at SCW. A graduate of the Hebrew Academy of Greater Washington, and of

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Dr. Soloveitchik Delivers Lecture on Contemporary Orthodoxy

By Atara Graubard

On Monday, March 24, students and educators from YU filled Weissburg Commons to hear Dr. Haym Soloveitchik deliver a lecture on "Rupture and Reconstruction: The Transformation of Contemporary Orthodoxy." The talk was based on the article which appeared in *Tradition* in 1994. Students were expected to have read the copies of the publication, which were distributed in the preceding weeks on both campuses. Soloveitchik, who teaches Jewish History in SCW as well as in BRGS, has delivered lectures on the topic in several locations before the long-awaited one at the Main Campus.

After dinner was served, Soloveitchik opened his address with a discussion of the factors that led to the development of his views on the phenomenon in the Orthodox world which is generally termed a shift to the Right. He described how he realized that those elements of the Orthodox world that historically pursued a secular education and supported the modern state of Israel—the issues that separated *charedi* Jews from Modern Orthodox ones—still do. Soloveitchik suggested that the increased emphasis on *chumra* is a reflection of the increasingly text-based emphasis in the entire Orthodox world.

After a brief analysis and elaboration of some of the main points of the article, Soloveitchik opened the floor to questions. The

lively interactive session, which lasted one and a half hours, held the audiences attention most tightly. However, some students felt that although Dr. Soloveitchik's answers were interesting, he did not specifically address all of the questions raised. "In his article, Dr. Soloveitchik did not add new elements to the discussion. Rather, he recapped most of the salient points of the article. After the talk, I still had several questions that I did not feel were fully clarified," said Peshia Secunda, SCW '98.

Soloveitchik also did not clearly advocate a specific recommended course of action to the audience, which was primarily composed of products of the text-based society. In keeping with the new Orthodox community's search for the stringent answer described in the article, several students queried if some of Soloveitchik's points could be considered directives. He pointed out that his article, in keeping with his role of historian, was solely the description of a phenomenon.

Shoshana Monderer, SCW '98, noted that she felt that the most beneficial part of the lecture was the fact that Dr. Soloveitchik delivered it. "Often times, we don't get the opportunity to meet important Torah personalities. Seeing people like Dr. Soloveitchik speak brings us in contact with *talmidei chachamim*," said Monderer.

Gary Rosenblatt: Editor and Teacher

By Susan Jacobs

Being the editor-in-chief of one of the largest Jewish newspapers in the United States is a full-time job in itself, but once a week Gary Rosenblatt, editor and publisher of *The Jewish Week*, also teaches a print journalism class at SCW. While journalism classes at SCW are often taught by experts in the field, this is Rosenblatt's first time teaching at SCW. Himself a YU alumnus, Rosenblatt brings important perspectives to the class. As a journalism professional, he also has ties to other journalists for both secular and Jewish publications. This semester the class has heard from a handful of professional journalists who write for publications as respectable as *The New York Times* and as infamous as *Lilith Magazine*, but each week the students have unique access to a man who has carved out a niche for himself in the world of Jewish journalism.

Rosenblatt was a student at YC before the university offered a journalism major. He was involved with *The Commentator* for all of his four years at YC, and was Associate Editor his senior year, but planned on pursuing a teaching career. After graduating from YC in 1968, he entered the City College of New York, intending to study English literature. However, a part-time job with *The London Jewish Chronicle* made him realize that he enjoyed journalism more than literature.

From *The Chronicle*, Rosenblatt moved on to a job as sports editor for *TV Guide*, and then spent about a year as a freelance writer for *The New York Times*. In 1972 he joined *The Jewish Week* in a full-time position as assistant editor. "I was about 40 years younger than the next youngest editor," said Rosenblatt, "so I got to do all the stories you couldn't do on the phone. If you had to go somewhere, then I had to do it. It was a lot of good experience." He stayed in that job for two years before moving on to Baltimore to be the editor-in-chief of *The Baltimore Jewish Times*. During his 19 years as editor in Baltimore, he expanded the paper to be one of the largest Jewish newspapers in the United States. In 1993 he returned to New York to be editor-in-chief of *The Jewish Week*.

Rosenblatt offered some thoughts on being in New York again after a successful tenure in Baltimore. "I loved my job in Baltimore. I don't know that I thought I'd ever leave," he said. "So why move to New York when people are moving away from New York? I guess part of it is the challenge of dealing with the largest Jewish community in the world, and the challenge of trying to be as inclusive as possible; trying to reach as many people as possible."

The Jewish Week is unique among Jewish publications because it appeals to a wide range of people, from unaffiliated Jews to committed Orthodox Jews. This is not always an easy task. "I tell people my job is like hosting a big family dinner," said Rosenblatt. "To make sure that even the relatives who don't necessarily always speak to each other can all sit around the table and talk to each other and not throw food at each other. They can behave themselves and have some sort of civil discourse even if they disagree." A critical part of *The Jewish Week* is to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas across the spectrum of the Jewish community.

Every week Rosenblatt writes a column for

The Jewish Week, and often he also writes the paper's editorials. "The distinction is that the column is more personal," he said. "It's clear that I write about my personal views. The editorials really reflect the views of the paper." At times, Rosenblatt has written his column on the same topic as the editorials and expressed slightly different views in each. Asked if being Orthodox sometimes led to conflicts of interest with the positions of the paper, Rosenblatt said of endorsing or opposing certain issues, "I think its more [an issue of] being sensitive to Judaism in general. The paper will not editorialize in favor of one denomination or another. That sort of defeats the purpose of what we're trying to do." He related the recognition of opposing viewpoints to the study of Talmud, where debate exists within a certain context and is not destructive.

Rosenblatt said that many people in the Or-



Gary Rosenblatt

thodox community are unaware of the many opportunities for *shomer Shabbat* Jews in the world of journalism. While there was a time when the inability to work on Shabbat would have prevented Orthodox Jews from working for newspapers, there are enough opportunities today that those who are interested can find viable job options. "I think it's a little easier now than it was twenty years ago," he said.

Asked if there is a future for the newspaper format of journalism, in light of the popularity of television and computer news sources, he responded, "I'm not so pessimistic. There's some intrinsic value that people have in holding a newspaper in their hands rather than down-loading it or reading on a screen. You can take it wherever you go. You can read it when you want to, at your own leisure. I don't see that changing for a long time."

While some consider the idea of Jewish journalism an oxymoron, Rosenblatt does not consider the terms mutually exclusive. He compared newspaper reporting to the model of the Torah—an objective account of historical events. "It tells you like it is. Any of our heroes in Tanach are not whitewashed in terms of if they make mistakes [The Torah] leaves it to the reader to make value judgments." Jewish journalism can be productive or destructive, but good journalism leaves moral dilemmas to the readers. Thanks in part to Rosenblatt's instruction, the print journalism students at SCW have the opportunity to decide for themselves what positions they will take about what news is fit to print, and how events should be reported.

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Declaration Condemned

Continued from page 4

mainstream Orthodox Jewish organizations, with tremendous power have come forth and said this not us, not what we believe." He further stated, "I don't believe Reform or Conservative movements are legitimate halakhik movements. But there is a step between saying it's not a legitimate halakhik movement and saying it's not Judaism."

When asked about the inclusion in the declaration of a statement made by Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, Rabbi Weiss said, "Everyone tried to mold the Rav to who they are. The Rav had a

love for all Jews. He understood what was happening in the Jewish community." Weiss stated that while Rabbi Soloveitchik was always careful with the language he used, the people who put out this declaration acted irresponsibly.

Rabbi Weiss noted that while the declaration was supposedly for the purpose of encouraging Reform and Conservative Jews to join Orthodoxy, it has actually caused harm to outreach programs. He asked, "Has this statement encouraged one Jew to become Orthodox?"

Music for the Soul

By Kayla Pliskin

As the night shall be filled with music... That's what you can expect from the Kumzitz Club for an evening of singing and melody. Once a month, the Beit Midrash is cleared of furniture and a single light illuminates a circle of women who have come to sing.

The club, headed by Shira Pfeffer, SCW '99, and Yehudit Robinson, SCW '99, originally began as a choir to sing Jewish music. However, "everyone just wanted to sit and sing and a kumzitz would fulfill that," said Pfeffer, so the club evolved accordingly. Although SCW has shulim, chesed opportunities, and chevra from Eretz Yisrael, until recently there was no real chance to sing. "I really missed it," commented Pfeffer, "and it could only enhance the atmosphere, so we decided to give it a try." Robinson added, "People are able to express themselves through music in ways that other mediums don't always do."

Before 9:30 p.m. of the appointed night, Pfeffer and Robinson go down to take over and prepare the Beit Midrash. "Chairs and tables are put on the side, the lights are turned out, and one light (in lieu of candles which are a fire hazard) is set in the middle," described Pfeffer. Light snacks are available for refreshment. A song sheet, courtesy of Columbia University, provides the words to the songs in Hebrew with English translations. "I enjoyed most seeing the lyrics in English. It adds meaning when you know what you are saying," said Chava Badrian, SCW '99.

Before the singing begins, everyone does a



Members of the Kumzitz Club singing in the 6th floor Beit Midrash

quick self-introduction. "It's nice because you meet lots of people and you don't always know them in the hall," remarked Pfeffer.

The first kumzitz, held on Thursday, February 27, lasted several hours and was attended by thirty singers throughout the night. "People come in all the time— whoever wants a good sing," said Pfeffer. The second kumzitz was shorter and smaller, but it was on a Tuesday night. "It depends on who comes and what they're looking for," said Robinson.

"Our goal is to be 'marbitz shira l'rabim' [spread music to the masses]," explained Robinson. "For me, it is a matter of living up to my name," said Pfeffer.

The Kumzitz Club tries to meet once a month. Future events will be publicized in advance. "We invite everyone to come. Good voice or not, all you need is *nach*," declared Pfeffer.

Elections

Continued from page 1

sis level."

Prospective candidates for SCWSC Executive Board positions were required to fill a petition with 75 signatures and present it to the election committee heads. Naomi Storf, SCW '99, and Esther Finkle, '98. While the only qualifications for the candidates were a 3.0 grade point average and studying in SCW all of next year, Esther Finkle, SCW '98, emphasized that candidates "must be ready to fulfill any challenges and responsibilities that come their way during their term."

Despite the importance rendered to such positions, voter turnout was low. Storf and Finkle counted only 309 votes, approximately one-third of the student population. Storf attributed the low turnout to the noncompetitive nature of the race, adding that the lack of interest to run for SCWSC positions shows "a lack of school spirit and a lack of dedication to the student body at Stern."

Echoing Storf's sentiments, one student commented, "Some students are uninterested and don't care—they do not plan on voting." Another student added that "there's nothing to vote for."

Shonfield countered that, "just because you are running unopposed doesn't mean you are not qualified. Sometimes you are the most qualified for the job and no one wants to run against you."

Under her leadership, Shonfield plans to change students' "negative attitudes" and perceptions regarding SCWSC. Too often, she noted, students fail to realize that SCWSC does more

than "plan roller skating parties." Rather, the student-run organization serves as the mediator between the university faculty and the student body. Incumbent Vice President Shira Hecht, added that Student Council makes it easier for students to "make their voices heard" regarding academic and social concerns. She suggested informal student-teacher forums for raising student concerns and easing tensions.

Shonfield encourages students to voice their concerns. "I don't only hear people, I listen to what they are saying," she said.

In addition to increasing students' awareness, Shonfield hopes to "raise the enthusiasm level [of] our school." Interactive events between SCW students where students can meet other women and enjoy themselves in a non-academic setting would help unite the student body into a cohesive unit.

Future Treasurer Jennie Weiss noted that "a lot of people don't take advantage of what the school has to offer." Getting more people involved in school activities would contribute to a sense of pride in SCW. She added that "Stern is a great school and if everyone helps out we can make it even better... Be proud to say 'yeah I go to Stern College and I really like it.'"

Shonfield is very excited about the prospects available for next year. She feels that the elected board members for next year are highly qualified and will help transform and increase the SCW spirit.

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Cloning cont.

Continued from page 4

Rabbi Tendler began his lecture by stating that we must have "a fundamental understanding of how Torah functions in our lives." He stressed that for Orthodox Jews, cloning cannot be decided upon by secularists because the foundation of our faith is that G-d instructed us to what to do, and we are now mandated to approach the rabbinical community to facilitate appropriate responses.

Rabbi Tendler stated the premise that the world of Torah and the world of science are one, and no dichotomy exists between the two. He brought several biblical proofs explicating how the Torah itself dictates the attitudes that Jews should possess towards science and consequently, how we should proceed upon these recent scientific developments. Rabbi Tendler mentioned the secular responses to cloning, and criticized them for their inability to pinpoint why the new technology is of great concern to so many people. In response to secular views on cloning, he stated that, "If you have no Torah or no G-d, it does not make a difference what you think, we are living in a democracy, and we go by the majority."

Because cloning brings the scientific world closer to understanding the intricacies of the cell, there are positive aspects to cloning research. The problem lies within the purpose for which this research is intended. If it is being done to manipulate the physical world and to produce beings with characteristics adored by society, then the great technology that has been produced is serving the wrong purpose. However, if the research is aimed at curing diseases and improv-

ing lives, then the technology is being used for a positive end. Rabbi Tendler went through a list of the genetic technology that has been developed and presented the positive and negative ways it could be used. The negative aspects include such reasons as the fear of mastery over man, possible loss of individual identity, concern for wrongful use regarding ethnic cleansing as was employed with Nazi eugenics in the Holocaust, and what is referred to "price tagging" of specific genes as superior and inferior, causing social discrimination. He also cited two Halachic issues that could arise from cloning technology. Through this technology, an inversion of generations could occur where family relations would be indiscernible, whereby the commandments of Honor Thy Parents and inheritance laws could not be fulfilled.

The positive aspects of cloning research are that Assisted Reproductive Technology could be employed on sterile males, as well as new technology in relation to organ transplants. "There is a supposition in this world the cloning is immoral, and I expected him to expand on that view point through a Jewish perspective. However, he explained that there are positive aspects to cloning as well," explained Tani Cohen SCW '2000.

Rabbi Tendler ended the lecture with two Midrashim that conveyed the fact that one cannot know what the ultimate consequences of a matter will be. However, the Jewish people have the Torah as a guide, and scientific issues can only be approached through it because the two are inseparable. Positive and negative results will emerge from this technology, however, the key lies in the purpose for which it will be used.

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Cultural Arts

By Dina Bogner

From now until the end of the semester (and hence, the end of my *Observer* career), I have decided to write all of my articles in one big column. Within the column I will express my opinion on all the things I have seen or done since the writing of my previous column. I stress here that all the adjectives I employ in lauding or trashing a particular play, movie or what have you (and I know I tend to use too many) stem from my opinion alone though I am not quite sure why anyone would think that I would express anything other than my opinion. At least it is my opinion. *Hamavim Yavin*

Well, it's actually been a tremendously busy month or so. As I have been pretty much ignoring my schoolwork and all other major responsibilities since, oh, the beginning of the semester, I have managed to squeeze into my hectic schedule more plays than usual. As fate would have it, the first of my marathons of plays was actually by far the best (at least the best that is still open), and regrettably, it is the least fresh in my mind. Yet I will try to do it justice. That play was "The Last Night of Ballyhoo."

When I first received tickets to this play I had absolutely no idea what it was about. The title certainly did not help me out, and the play had not opened yet, so I had not read any reviews. A small blurb in *The Village Voice* told me that "The Last Night of Ballyhoo" was written by Alfred Uhry, who won a Pulitzer (and later, an Oscar) for his first play "Driving Miss Daisy". It described "Ballyhoo" as dealing with a Jewish family in Atlanta at the time of the premier of "Gone With the Wind" and of Hitler's invasion into Poland. After reading that I was excited to see the play, but I was worried it would be yet another Holocaust involved story. Thankfully, I could not have been more wrong.

"The Last Night of Ballyhoo" tells the story of a well-off German Jewish family in Atlanta. The year is 1939 and Lala Levy, played by the wonderful Jessica Hecht, who plays the role of Susan on "Friends," is 22 and living at home with her mother, aunt and uncle. Dana Ivey, the in-

comparable stage and film actor, plays the mother desperate to see her unusual daughter married before she turns into a queer old maid. Enter Joe Farkas, a young, handsome Jewish boy from Brooklyn, who was hired by Lala's uncle to work for the family's bedding company. Joe, played by the sweet and extremely likable Paul Rudd, who you might know from "Clerks" and "Romance and Juliette," seems not to be interested in the goings on of Atlanta's Jewish youth, namely Ballyhoo, the festivities planned on Christmas week. It is for the dance on the last night of Ballyhoo that Lala desperately needs a date. Joe interest in Ballyhoo perks up when he meets Sunny, Lala's bright and beautiful cousin, played by newcomer Arija Bareikis. The story plays out with some wonderfully funny, heart-breaking and beautiful turns.

The play begins as a comedy, and it is certainly funny for the mass audience to observe a Jewish family that feels a Christmas tree is perfectly acceptable in a Jewish home as long as it does not have a star on top, one that remembers the Passover Seder as a horribly boring evening they once observed at the home of a business acquaintance. And although I laughed often throughout the play, especially at the way Ms. Ivey answered the phone in a spookily polite and singsong voice when she expected a suitor of Lala's on the line, so much of the comedy broke my heart. As I am quite sure it was meant to. The entire cast was just perfect (though Rudd could take some lessons on easing his Brooklynese). Celia Weston, the riveting actress from "Dead Man Walking" as marvelous as Sunny's slightly clueless mother, and Stephen Lagay was to die for hysterical as Lala's friend Peachy, who could not be less like Joe if he tried.

The play's most pressing issues are that of the self-hating Jew and of racism among various types of Jews—Jews of Polish or Russian descent are referred to by the family as "the other kind." It was a totally unique and wonderful play. I was sucked into the story, and it moved me as no other play I can think of. There were some elements

that became sort of hokey, but it did not matter in the slightest, as the play was so relevant and real to me. Critics of the play had a problem with its overwhelming enjoyability. They felt it sort of slid down one's throat too smoothly. True, it was an extremely enjoyable experience on the whole, but no few who constantly deals with the issues of his or her identity, and with the identity of the Jewish-American people on the whole, can consume "The Last Night of Ballyhoo" without getting a major catch in his throat.

Very succinctly, I will rindown the other less than wonderful plays I have seen. The new Tenth Anniversary cast of "Les Miserables" was a real disappointment. I have a true fondness for this play, and I expected it to be infused with new energy after they chucked out half the cast and replaced them with new faces. The new costumes were spiffy enough, but the new performers were lacking. Juliet Lambert, who plays the new Fantine, has a thrilling voice, but her short time on the stage does not allow her performance to save the show. As for Epiphone, the character that we all love so much, after listening to the fabulous Judy Kuhn on the cast recording for so many years, and hearing Lea Salonga, one of the world's all time most beautiful voices, perform the part, Sarah Berry's turn as the wail left me cold. Not worth the time or the cash.

I am sure everyone involved with "Jekyll and Hyde," the new musical, wanted it to be frightening. I doubt, however, that they desired it to be so frighteningly bad. It was a sort of bizarre experience, because I really liked some of the songs, and many of the performances were strong, but it was just too hard to take a musical so seriously. Sure "Les Mis" and "Phantom" are hardly walks through the park, but it was just too much to take when Jekyll/Hyde, played admirably by Robert Cuccioli, starts singing as one character, and then turns his body so that we can see that his ponytail has come undone on the other side (and therefore, that side is evil) and sings as the other character. The show is stagnant, predictable and not very entertaining. Next.

"Steel Pier" is a new musical about the dance

marathons in Atlantic City in the 20's. The show is all about spectacle-dancing girls on the airplanes wings and has little substance. The play was totally fun to watch, but if you leave a musical and you cannot remember one song from the entire show, you know that show's a bomb.

Horton's latest new play, "The Young Man From Atlanta" received fabulous reviews and is sure to be at TKTS come Chai HaMoed, so you might be tempted to take it in. WARNING! WARNING! This play is NOT for anyone under 60, nor is it for anyone who actually expects to be entertained when they see a play. The performances in the play are quite wonderful. Shirley Knight and Rip Torn are tremendous, and William Bitt McGuire and the rest of the ensemble are terrific actors who make the most of their parts. However, I kept wishing they were fortunate enough to be in a better play. Nothing truly happened in this play, which is all right sometimes, in a special play, but, I am very sorry to say, "The Young Man From Atlanta" was not that play.

So, the point of this column was really a sort of shopping guide for all of you who are going to be in the New York area over Chai HaMoed. Every year there are hundreds of matzo-and-hard-boiled-egg-carrying people in the Times Square area and at TKTS trying to decide what to see. I have given you certain guidelines to abide by. I strongly recommend "The Last Night of Ballyhoo" and totally expect the aisles of the Helen Hayes Theatre to be filled with matzo crumbs that night. Also, there is no singing in the play, which makes it appropriate for a wider audience of "yarmulkes." By the way, I have not heard good things about "Titanic," or "Annie." I also continue to recommend "Bring in Da Noise, Bring in Da Funk," "The King and I," and "Rent" (though I am sure its sold out already). Just in case you are presented with different prospects that day, I am pretty sure I will be running around Times Square that day myself, G-d willing. So PLEASE do not make any rash decisions without attempting to consult me beforehand. Have a *Chag Kasher V'Sameach* and I'll see you on Broadway.

SCWSC would like to thank the following:

Office of Student Services

Office of the Dean

Sam Mandelbaum and
Facilities Management

Mr. Singer and Food Services

and the students of SCW

for making this year a
huge success.

Top Nine Reasons Why Top Ten Lists Are Stupid

By Laverne and Shirley

9. It's presumptuous to think that everyone can count that high.
8. They are written by paranoid list makers who 1) feel the need to number everything.
7. The word "list" makes me think of shopping and I get all excited for no reason.
6. They were first made popular by people who couldn't sleep.
5. Usually, the funniest part about them is the drumroll.
4. I can barely back up my opinion with one valid reason, let alone ten.
3. I still don't fully understand why they start with the number ten reason.
2. They are usually longer than most people's attention span.
1. When is this list going to end?!

SCW SPORTS

Stern's Iron-Clad Athletes A Year in Review

By Shaindy Frenkel

As the school year comes to a close and the restless SCW women await their summer vacation, their hearts are eager for some fun under the sun. But now is as good a time as any to reflect back upon Stern College's athletic teams, who enjoyed some fun of their own during the school year.

Each of the three athletic teams, namely basketball, fencing and tennis, had their moments of triumph and defeat during the season. The basketball team, lead by Coach Steve Young, was a gutsy bunch of women, who were ready to face any opponent that came their way. Although their record does not account for their hard work and perseverance, they know that they put all of their energy into every match.

The fencing team, being in only its second year of existence, improved tremendously from

last year. Although they did not achieve victory as a team, many fencers shined in their individual competitions. Next year, you could expect even better things from the fencing team as they improve to greater and greater extent every match.

Last, but certainly not least, is the tennis team, coached by Evan Goldstein. The tennis team enjoyed its most successful season by winning every single one of its matches. The players worked extremely hard and, at times, had to overcome freezing temperatures to pull out a victory. But, in the final results, there were only smiles on those frost-bitten faces and a sense of accomplishment on their minds.

Win or loss, it doesn't really matter. Each competitive team member gave it their all. They shed blood, sweat, and tears--the mark of a champion.

Fitness Flash

Wake Up Already

By Michel Greenwald

"I'm so exhausted!"

How many times have you heard those words on your way to an early morning class or from your own mouth? How many times have you dozed off in school only to be awakened by the sound of the janitor cleaning up at the end of the day? (OK, so maybe that only happens to me). Well sleep no more! There is a cure for this constant fatigue experienced by so many, and that is none other than moderate exercise. You've heard me right. The one and only thing you least want to do when the bed makes so much

more sense is the most effective cure. How does it work? I won't keep you in suspense any longer. When you do not exert any mental or physical exercise you increase fatigue. In other words, the more you rest the weaker you'll become. Remember the old saying, "a body in motion tends to stay in motion." Well, it applies here.

So go ahead and get it out. Wake up a little earlier and join the crowd of sleeping in class take a better walk. I bet you'll feel like a new person with the rest of your day will be that much more active. Hey, you've got nothing to lose but pounds itself.

**The Observer Staff
would like to express their
gratitude to
Mrs. Carol Kronman
for her recent
purchase of
computer equipment.**

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