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Observer

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Lab Renovations Behind Schedule

Labs Now Slated to Open in Fall of '99

MIRIAM ELJAS
Features Editor

In an effort to assuage students for traveling Uptown for their chemistry classes, YU has provided transportation and additional \$100 on each student's cafeteria card. Yet for some students, the reduced time and endless stress resulting from the displacement cannot be compensated. "It makes it harder to fit in all your classes when you get back from Uptown at 1:30 and you have been gone for five hours. The whole process is exhausting," said Esther Bronstein, '00.

For professors as well as students, the entire ordeal has been disorienting. "I feel a little dislocated. I am always leaving something behind here or there," said Chemistry Professor Cecily Dobin.

Students and professors feel that this dislocation can be tolerated as long as it is only a provisional arrangement for the benefit of the Chemistry Department. "As long as it is only temporary I can deal with it," said Dobin. Chemistry Department Head Dr. Lea Blau shared similar sentiments, explaining that "we are looking for the results and we hope it will be worth the extra effort for the students."

But exactly what temporary means is now becoming a source of disillusionment. Rumors of a '99 spring semester Midtown chemistry lab inauguration excited students until it was discovered that the facilities would not be completed until the fall of '99.

"In the early planning stages we had hoped to do it by the summer and fall of '98," explained Dobin, now hoping for a spring '99 opening. "This [idea] was quickly replaced by reality," she continued.

However, according to Leonard Brandwein, Pre-Engineering Advisor and head of laboratories at YC and SCW, this was never the case. "The projected date, as scheduled, was always for fall of '99," Brandwein explained that a three-month delay for various administrative tasks postponed the renovations. March 1999 was the earliest possible date for the completion, and according to Brandwein it made no sense to interrupt the lab course mid-semester to return to Midtown.

"[That was] assuming all the preparation, work and demolition would have begun last May. Instead, it began last August," said Brandwein. He assured that the setback would not cause delays for the fall opening. "Once it got started it was o.k., but delays in the beginning were caused by a fear of cost."

Yet even this goal, spanning over an additional eight months, might not be met, according to some of the faculty. "I fervently hope it will be ready, but I would not be shocked if they were not," said Dobin. Associate Dean Ethel Orlan, echoed Dobin, saying that "anything is possible."

Students majoring in chemistry or fulfilling requirements will depend on the use of chemistry labs for more than one year. "I am taking organic chemistry next year and the

thought of having to go Uptown again is frustrating," said Sarah Cate, SCW '01.

The delay not only impedes the improvements but frustrates the faculty. "I don't think it has really started, there is no real change; the type of change that you usually see when you remodel," said Blau. "I don't think that the renovation is in full speed and I hope that it will pick up soon." According to Brandwein, the entire process was held up by a decision to put in an air conditioning and ventilation system in the entire old building.

Another factor that held up the renovation was the removal of existing furniture, equipment and hazardous chemicals. "Packing up and moving was very traumatic," said Dobin. "Disposing of the chemicals was a major undertaking. The Safety Officer of the university had to oversee [it]." Storing the chemicals and tools was also a difficult task. "Each decision took a week— even where to store what we have already packed," she explained.

A tour of the chemistry wing in the science building reveals four workmen and one ladder. Wires dangle from the ceiling as the workmen shuffle about, laboring with the electrical wiring. Test tubes and miscellaneous lab instruments line the walls. One room is cluttered with the chaos of extraneous paraphernalia from wall to wall. The only visible work completed so far is the demolition of the lab desks and cabinets and the removal of floor tiles. "Some of the tiles had asbestos,

see Labs, page 12

Uplink Communications Program Debuts at SCW

MICHELLE FOGEL
Staff Writer

Four prominent journalists composed the first panel discussion of a series devoted to careers in communications. The first event of the Uplink to the World of Communications series on Friday, December 4th, addressed job opportunities and issues students may face in pursuing careers in print journalism. The panel discussion was held in the Ivy Student Center of Schottenstein Residence Hall.

Rebecca Ascher-Walsh, a senior writer for Entertainment Weekly, spoke candidly of her experience working for a male-dominated news conglomerate. She explained that magazines such as Entertainment Weekly, a non gender-

specific magazine, are still more male-dominated than magazines like Vogue and Cosmopolitan, which are run primarily by women. Entertainment Weekly is part of the Time Warner



Uplink panelists (l-r): Stephanie Nano, Rebecca Ascher-Walsh, Kristin Van Ogtrop, Marcella Rosen, and Barry Zuckerman.

company of magazines, known to be a male-dominated organization. "If you can't hold your liquor at lunch like the boys, you shouldn't be here," said Ascher-Walsh.

Kristen Van Ogtrop, the senior features editor for Vogue magazine briefly outlined her career, which included starting out as an editorial assistant for Vogue, and then moving up to become a senior editor at a less prestigious magazine before rejoining Vogue as a senior editor. Van Ogtrop described her start at Vogue as something she basically "stumbled" upon. "I thought I needed to do a lot of writing [to enter the journalism field]," she said. Instead, "I needed to be a good assistant to manage editing."

New York Times business writer Barry Zuckerman described his colorful journalism career of writing for the Columbia Journalism Review as a journalism critic, for the International Herald Tribune in Hong Kong before joining

see Uplink, page 12

Metropolitan Experience To Include Free Cultural Events

EILEEN CHUDOW
News Editor

During the Spring semester SCW and DSSSB students will have the opportunity to experience some of the wonders of Manhattan with friends and faculty members. This spring, the 1999 Metropolitan Experience "presents a semester of exciting free events," as the introductory brochure advertises, including theater, touring, dining and general recreation. The program is designed to give students the opportunity to "take advantage of these Big Apple opportunities to 'step out on the town...discover why New York City is considered the cultural center of the world.'"

Sponsored by the Offices of the Dean of Students and Student Services and the Stern College for Women Office of the Dean, the program consists of 16 events at no cost to students. Appropriate transportation will be provided. Each student may only attend one event. The events are limited to between nine and 20 slots. Students signed up to participate on Wednesday, December 16 on a first-come, first-served basis.

Mrs. Zelda Braun, Assistant Dean of

see Metropolitan page 12

Observer

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editorial

Don't Touch My Times

As a service to SCW students, SCWSC orders daily New York Times newspapers by request. Interested students pay \$23 per semester for Monday through Friday delivery. The newspapers are placed in BRH and SRH's lobbies in the morning for those students to take.

This year, however, students who have not paid for a New York Times subscription take a newspaper on their way to morning classes. They are, in fact, stealing from those who paid for the newspaper. Day after day, students complain that by 10:00 a.m. their newspapers are gone. It is unfair to deny them a service they paid for.

The problem has been resolved

for students in SRH by placing the New York Times inside the mail room. Thus, students on their way out to class do not inadvertently take a newspaper that doesn't belong to them.

A similar solution must be enacted in BRH. SCWSC should ensure that the newspapers are placed in the students' individual mailboxes every morning when the paper is delivered. This would protect the newspapers from being stolen by careless and/or selfish students.

An investment in additional knowledge should not be punished. Help students by re-routing their daily paper.

In the previous edition of the Observer in the article entitled "Judith Miller Delivers Epstein Lecture" by Dee Dee Lax, Noah Streit, YC '99, was misquoted. The quote should have read, "Noah Streit, YC '99, commented that she was 'extremely eloquent, an amazing grasp of the issues and yet optimism that isn't necessarily warranted.'"

Making the Best Worth Living

Ayelet Grun's article entitled Kristallnacht Revisited, struck a chord in my heart. I was always one of those children that had no direct family massacred in the Holocaust, no "great uncle with numbers tattooed on his arm," nor "a grandmother saved by Schindler." B"H my immediate family was practically untouched by the Nazi regime. As a child I never heard the somber tales of misery and survival and thus, felt the need to do my own research. However, no matter how much research one does on the Holocaust, the research amounts to one disturbing fact: the mass destruction of my people. I could never understand how people were in fact inspired by the Holocaust. A recent speaker at Stern, Rabbi Asher Wade's conversion was based mainly on his studies of the Holocaust. Grun, in her article has explained to me the inspiration. She is correct in stating that Kristallnacht and Yom HaShoa should commemorate the preservation of Yiddishkeit rather than its destruction.

I'm reminded of a story published in the popular series Chicken Soup for the Soul. A young boy is swimming in the ocean when he is suddenly dragged in by the undertow. A man on the beach quickly jumps into the water and brings the boy to safety. The boy is extremely grateful to the man and profusely thanks him. The man's

reply to the boy's gratitude is the simple and profound statement: "Just make sure your life is worth living." Today's generation has an obligation to both the victims and the survivors of the Holocaust to maintain the standards of Judaism, in whose name they were persecuted and killed. My ancestors were spared the Holocaust not for the purpose of my living the good life. Rather, the fact that I am a practicing Jew is hopefully making my ancestors' survival worth it. Instead of the annual testimonial days of remembrances, a day of remembrance that is based on the ultimate goal of observance should be created.

The Holocaust's cry has become "Never to Forget." Of utmost importance is to remember what we must not forget. While, we suffered greatly during the Nazi reign, we have persevered. We have survived and B"H our Torah has survived. We must never forget why our ancestors' survived. And in the end it will be our actions, not our stories that will allow us to never forget. Our observance will become our remembrance. I am grateful to Ayelet, for transforming a commemoration of the Holocaust into something inspirational as opposed to the self-pitiful wallowing it has become.

Shera Heyman, SCW '00

My Sanity is Being Locked Out

"Forgot the bleach. Alright, I'll just run up and grab it. Aarrghhhh...this is just so inconvenient....O.K., got the bleach. Should I lock the door? ..Mm...nahhh, just gonna run downstairs for two seconds and come right back." This was the conversation I had with myself last Sunday afternoon and when I returned to my room what did I discover? Yes, you've got it! the answer to the \$500 question is...I'M LOCKED OUT!!!

Are you feeling my frustration? The annoyance? How many times has this happened to you??

So I ask the guards, "Why did you do this to me?" The reply scared me. They lock the doors every hour, half hour, whatever it is, because apparently no has faith in the notion that I might have more intelligence than a cocker spaniel!! I can decide on the President of the United States, I can decide to marry, to have kids, I can even decide to commit a crime and have myself carted

off to jail or an institution for the rest of my life-but I cannot decide whether or not to lock my door. I am old enough to decide, along with a third of the Stern population, to poison myself with enough alcohol to satisfy every New Yorker on Saint Patrick's Day; but I can't decide to leave my door unlocked. O.K., I can see some of you girls out there might not have realized that the University part Yeshiva University was really there, but, now we know. People in Stern steal. Breath, breath, it's o.k., we've heard about such things before, we can get through it. Seriously though, I was shocked a bit myself, but, now it's out in the open and we're all aware of it. So I ask you- If we all know that leaving our doors unlocked makes us prey to thieves, are we not capable of taking responsibility for the consequences of such actions? We're grown-ups. I know some of you may not have realized it but, we are. I know that if I return with bleach in hand to a

room with nothing left in it but my Tigger mug, I'M A RAVING FOOL! That's right; my room is empty because I didn't lock my door, so I'M AN IDIOT. I can live with that. You know why? Because I'm a grown-up. It's not Yeshiva University's fault or my R.A.'s, or Miriam Gold's, or Dean Bacon's, or Rabbi Lamm's, or anybody else's fault; just mine.

Then, I'm absolutely flabbergasted to hear that parents have actually called to complain to Yeshiva University and many of the people listed above! You want to know what my Mom would have said if I'd told her I had nothing in the world but Tigger? "Ilana, why didn't you lock your door? What did you expect to happen if you didn't lock your door; it's your responsibility!?" True, she would have been surprised that there is theft at Stern. However, I'd been FOREWARNED! I could only blame myself. If you think this is too much responsibility to invest in yourself then GO HOME!!

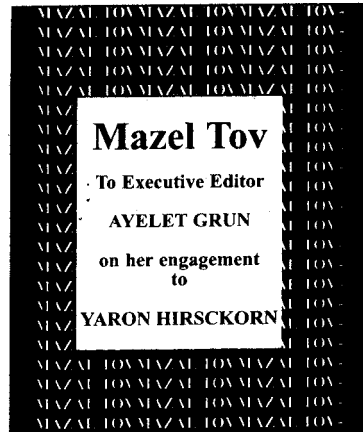
This isn't meant to be mean, just good advice because, only at home can you truly be treated as the children you want to perpetually be. However, those of us who remain here in the dorms would like to be treated our age. We are big girls who understand the complexities of turning a key -- and if we choose not to, we will have no one to blame but ourselves.

The purpose of a University is to cultivate mental growth and maturity, so, I'd like to request that Yeshiva University do just that. Put up signs beside all the elevators, or whatever you want, because having security lock our doors is just plain old degrading.

Question: Do they lock the BOYS' doors every hour or so up at Yeshiva College??? After all, I'm sure there's theft there also....

Ilana Kasten, SCW '00

See Pg. 7 for another letter



Raking the Muck, Yeshiva College Style



susan jacobson
editor-in-chief

I have hesitated for a long time to remark publicly about The Yeshiva University Commentator. The men's undergraduate newspaper is not formally associated with the

Observer, and I felt that only distasteful students had for that publication could be expressed by writing letters to the editor of the Commentator. But times have changed.

With the publication of the November 17 issue of the Commentator, its editorial standards have reached new

lows. Students now read the Commentator solely for its shock value, not to be informed about events in their school or the world at large.

What bothers me most is that the Commentator is often an outside link to YU for prospective students and the public in general, especially the broader Jewish community. Not only is the Commentator a poor example of what Orthodox Jews value, it also offends standards of decency held by most secular college newspapers.

It was not always like this. During my freshman year at Stern, the Commentator was a publication to be envied. Its editors consistently tackled issues that were relevant to the YU student body. And in the years since then, it has continued to serve as a sounding board for student ideas about college, life,

Judaism and politics. But this year is astounding for the Commentator's new depths of vulgarity, slander and blatant disregard for accuracy.

This might be easier to fathom if the Commentator's editors were uneducated and unprincipled. But I know them to be intelligent individuals who are capable of producing a paper that would confront issues with seriousness and objectivity.

It is my hope that the students of YU will demand that their student newspaper better represent their own values and ideals. It is a travesty that YU's newspaper is a gossip-mongering tabloid which publishes material that in some cases violates the standards of *halacha*.

The Commentator's editors have argued that readers have a right, indeed, a need to know information. I would agree

with this idea in principle. New papers exist in order to disseminate information that is both essential and of human interest. But the Commentator's application of this idea exceeds the bounds of reason and propriety. I don't think that everyone has a need to know everything all the time. Periodically, the Observer hears of scandalous events that would shock and fascinate students. But we have chosen not to print stories which only serve to defame their subjects without serving the greater good. This is not censorship. It is called having journalistic integrity.

As students of YU, we must invest even more thought into what we print. We are bound by a higher code of ethics. In ignoring these ethics, the editors of the Commentator do themselves and their peers a great disservice.

It's Not Just That We Have Eight Days, and They Have One



ayelet grun
executive editor

I was walking through Herald Square a few evenings ago, trying desperately not to get run over by the hundreds of Christmas shoppers scurrying to and from Macys,

when a big trailer pulled up near the intersection playing Avraham Fried songs. I have no idea how many people really paid attention to the trailer, or how many knew what it was for, but I certainly did.

That night was the first night of

Chanukah. Outside Brookdale Hall, minutes after Avraham Fried's voice faded into 34th Street, I saw several strangers stop and stare at fifty girls lighting *Chanukiot* by the lobby window. The sight never fails to make me smile.

The next morning I opened the New York Times to pictures of our Vice President (President to be?), Albert Gore, lighting Chanukah candles in the White House with children from my native Silver Spring community. President Clinton lit one too -- in Jerusalem with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Out of all the Jewish holidays, Chanukah is the one festival that raises the consciousness of almost every American Jew. It is the Jewish holiday

marketed most by Hallmark, and supported by distributors such as Toys R Us. In my opinion, all the hype is due to the holiday's proximity to Christmas. If Chanukah were in a different season, it would not be the most celebrated Jewish holiday in this country. There would be no menorahs in every store window, and no presents either.

It is almost as if American Jews have an inferiority complex when Christmas time comes around. Once a year, every Jew in the United States realizes he or she can not share in the tree trimming, eggnog drinking parties with a full heart. Jews are different than their Christian friends, and need to assert both their identity as Jews and Judaism's

capacity to have as much fun as Christianity allows. Easter doesn't do it to them -- only Christmas with all its hype does it to them.

I find it sad when a Jew only feels a Jew when he or she is faced with a tree in the living room. It pains me that my brethren take pride in their heritage by overcompensating on a holiday not even mandated in the five books of Moses. But at the same time, I am glad there is still one time of year when American Jews remember that they are different. If it takes Christmas to raise the consciousness of the Jew from its assimilated environment, then so be it. At least something will.

YU Shuttle Collides with 2 Cars

NECHAMA MILLER
Staff Writer

Three students were slightly injured on Monday, December 7th, at about 9:30 p.m., when a YU shuttle collided with two other vehicles on the FDR drive. The YU shuttle was carrying one YC student and two SCW students. YU students in the van received minor bruises and slightly sore necks. The passengers in the other cars sustained minor injuries as well.

The YU shuttle was traveling on one of its nightly trips from Uptown to Midtown, when it reached a curvy area along the FDR drive. It crashed into a blue car in front of it that sent the car skidding down the highway. The van then lost control and slammed into a little red Saab in its path. The driver of one of the cars claims that he may have blacked out for a moment.

Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) promptly arrived on the scene. The New York Police Department arrived as well, and questioned the YU shuttle driver. The YU students said that he appeared to be extremely concerned about their welfare, as well as that of the others involved in the collision.

Hard rain, wetting the road and causing the van's tires to be slippery, could have caused the loss of vehicle control.

DeeDee Webberman, SSSB '02, one of the passengers involved in the accident, said that the driver may have not realized how fast he was going compared to the car in front of him. Both Webberman and Rina Goldberg, SCW '99, the other female student aboard the van, mentioned that they heard that a green van may have hit the shuttle from the behind, and then drove away. Neither of them, however, felt any vehicle hit the van from behind.

Immediately after the accident, another YU shuttle was sent to the scene to pick up the original passengers. Webberman said, "the driver of the second van tried to downplay the whole situation to us... I don't think he realized that none of us were planning on suing."

Both Webberman and Goldberg agreed that after the accident, YC and SCW administration expressed a great deal of concern for their welfare and continually asked if it could be of any help. Webberman said that she received an overwhelming number of phone calls from different administrators including Zelda Braun, SCW Assistant Dean of Students, Miriam Gold, Resident Supervisor, and the resident nurse. "I really appreciated their concern for me," she said.

Although weeks have passed since the accident occurred, many have expressed their concern about the safety of YU's shuttles. Although security guards have assured students that this was one accident and that YU van drivers are extremely cautious, many students are skeptical. Reflecting on the situation, Oran Webberman, SSSB '00, said that she is "not surprised."

"As an out-of-towner,....when I get into any vehicle in New York, I feel as though my life is at stake," she added.

DeeDee Webberman's parents are extremely concerned about her sprained neck, incurred by the accident. In a recent telephone conversation, Mrs. Webberman emphasized that she is "very interested in finding out what really happened."

As of now, the accident is still under investigation. In the meantime, no legal action is being taken toward YU or toward the van driver by any of the passengers.
see Van page 6

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Registration Planned to Run Smoothly

ITA TARZIK
Staff Writer

Registration for the spring '99 semester is expected to run more smoothly. This past semester many students were informed at registration time that they were not financially clear, blocking their registration and causing general delays. In order to rectify this problem, the Office of Student Finances has notified students by mail of their financial situation prior to registration. Representatives from the Office of Student Finances will be present at the Midtown campus during registration week.

Registration for the spring 1999 semester is scheduled to begin Monday, December 21, 1998. The registration booklets will be available to students December 15, exactly one week prior to the start of registration. The academic advisors and the deans

will all be available to help students plan their schedules.

The Office of the Registrar is trying to accommodate SCW students as efficiently as possible. It plans to initially set up three computers to conduct registration, and will add a fourth and fifth if there are delays in registration. Hannah Wolf, Assistant Registrar, said she is confident that the office is prepared to handle registration smoothly.

Orlian said that she hopes students will welcome the new courses: Anatomy for the Artist, taught by Professor M. Trenk; Architecture of New York City, taught by Dr. Denton; and Economics of the Middle East, taught by Dr. Kanovsky, a visiting professor from Bar-Ilan University.

Orlian said that SCW administration has and will do its best to answer students' questions as quickly as possible.

BETH KESSLER
Staff Writer

Seniors graduating from SCW this year may not have a yearbook to remind them of their college years. Students have shown little interest in covering the printing costs involved in publishing *Kochavia*, SCW's yearbook. When seniors registered to have their yearbook pictures taken, the editors conducted an informal survey to determine how many seniors plan to purchase the yearbook. In order to buy a copy, a senior can either sell \$250 worth of advertisements or pay the necessary \$250 herself. Only approximately 60 students expressed a desire for this keepsake.

"I don't feel that there is a lot of school spirit, in the sense that I don't really know the seniors. Therefore I don't feel bad that I'm personally not getting a yearbook," Aliza Jurkowitz, SCW '99, said.

"It is nice to have a yearbook, but it's absurd for it to be \$250," said one SCW senior.

If the yearbook is not published, it

will be the third consecutive year that SCW has failed to publish a yearbook. The latest published yearbook dates from 1995/1996, and is available in the SCW library. Yearbooks from the past two years are still in the process of being finished. They have not been published due to a lack of student involvement. During those years, the yearbook had an editor but no staff.

Elanit Lipstein, SCW '99, is the editor of the 1998/1999 edition of *Kochavia* along with associate editor Shari Mermelstein, SCW '99. To cover high publishing costs, at least 100 students must commit to buying a yearbook. If this minimum number of students is not met, Lipstein will investigate creating a memory book instead of a yearbook.

A memory book is soft covered, and includes students' pictures and short descriptions. These descriptions would list students' majors as well as the clubs and organizations they joined. It would also include advertisements.

The regular, hard covered yearbook would include student articles and drawings.

Weidhorn Receives Farrow Award

SHIRA GRABER
Photography Editor

Known to his students simply as Dr. Manfred Weidhorn, the English professor, has received national acclaim for outstanding work in his field. Weidhorn's accomplishment of late, the Farrow award for Academic Excellence in the Field of Churchill Studies, was presented by Mr. Fred Farrow himself at a dinner November 6th in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Winston Churchill's daughter attended the dinner as well.

This prestigious award, given by the Churchill Center and the International Churchill Society every four years, is presented to individuals who make important contributions to Churchill studies. Weidhorn has written four books on Churchill's works and accomplishments.

Among them is his "Sword and Pen: A Survey of the Writings of Winston Churchill," described as "a benchmark for all who research and write about Churchill's writings" in the award commentary. His three other publications, include: "A Harmony of Interests," "Churchill's Rhetoric and Political Discourse," and "Winston Churchill in the Twayne English Authors series."

"Churchill wrote eight million words, in the forms of biographies, novels, and short stories," said Weidhorn. "I approached him as a literary figure; as a prolific, though not imaginative, writer."

Though Weidhorn is an authority in 17th century English literature and holds a minor in 18th century literature, his interest in Churchill stems from as far back as 1940. When the Vienna native and his family were escaping the Germans through France, eight year-old Weidhorn would translate newspapers to Yiddish or

German for his grandfather.

Weidhorn cultivated an admiration for Churchill based on the feeling and manner in which Weidhorn's grandfather spoke about Churchill. "My grandfather, speaking in awe, said that this Churchill was a great man and that we owed him a lot. Needless to say, at the age of eight, I had little inkling of what was going on, who this Churchill was, and what we owed him, but my grandfather's remark and the name 'Churchill' must have made an indelible impression on my consciousness," Weidhorn said.

A quarter of a century later, almost by accident, Weidhorn's awe grew into literary inspiration. When the name 'Churchill' was mentioned to Weidhorn in connection to the 17th century minor literary satirist Charles Churchill, thoughts of his grandfather and Winston Churchill surfaced. "The childhood experience now meshed with the grown man's awareness

that Winston Churchill had written many books, had even received the Noble Prize for Literature," said Weidhorn.

He also realized that he had survived the war partly due to Churchill's unflinching leadership of Britain and against Hitler. "By interpreting Churchill's writings, I was helping to carry out the mandate written on a stone in the pavement of Westminster Abbey, 'Remember Winston Churchill.' I had more reason to honor that injunction than many other people did," said Weidhorn, smiling.

"Out of that recollection came the Twayne project which eventually grew into four books," he said.

Weidhorn devoted several decades to this endeavor. "I put in many hours of hard work, at times I thought I had bitten off more than I could chew - I even wanted to quit," remarked Weidhorn. "But I stuck by and now I feel this award is vindication for my hard work."

Israel Birthright to Provide Free Israel Trips for Jewish Youth

BROOKE KLEIN
Staff Writer

In an unprecedented effort to stem the tide of assimilation and enhance Jewish identity among Jews living outside of Israel, a \$300 million worldwide initiative to fund educational visits to Israel was unveiled November 16 by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu before the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations in Jerusalem.

The program, entitled "Birthright Israel," is financed by three different groups. One third of the funds come from the Israeli government, one third from United Jewish Appeal (UJA) Federations and the final third from major Jewish North American donors. It will give about \$1,500 per individual for an educational Israel program, said Eliot Hoff, Birthright's public relations administrator. "It is very exciting because Netanyahu

promised to contribute to this program, this is the first time that Israeli money is going to the Diaspora," said Hoff.

Birthright would cover the cost of airfare and the first ten days of a trip to Israel with any one of over 200 established Israel travel programs. "The expenses for the rest of trips lasting more than ten days would have to come from another source," said Charles R. Bronfman, co-chairman of The Seagram Company in Montreal, in a November 16 New York Times article. From the first of January in the year 2000, the amount of \$180 will be deposited on behalf of every Jewish baby born in the Diaspora as a first payment towards the gift of an Israel trip. Friends could augment that original investment along with family, Bar/Bat Mitzvah money and community organizations, eventually building up enough for a trip to Israel, Bronfman said.

Birthright's idea originated from Yossi Beilin, a former Israeli cabinet min-

ister and a member of the Israeli Parliament. The program appealed to Bronfman and Michael Steinhardt, one of Wall Street's wealthiest money managers. Each contributed \$5 million dollars to Birthright Israel. Steinhardt told the New York Times that, "Israel is the cement that can bind the Jewish community together."

For now, the program is based in New York City, on 111 8th Avenue and is housed in the Israel Experience offices. Michael Papo serves as the Executive Vice President of Birthright, and Barbara Abrams is its consultant.

Birthright Israel is hoping to change the statistic that 69% of American Jews have never visited Israel. "This is an international program, any young person recognizing themselves as Jewish is eligible," said Barbara Aaronson, consultant to the Birthright program, to the New York Times. "In six or seven months kids will be able to start signing up for the program and it will be administered by local Jewish

Federations," she said. The program, however, is still in its initial stages, Aaronson said.

Aaronson added that research suggests that kids who go to Israel during adolescence tend to affiliate with Judaism as adults. It solidifies their connection.

Steinhardt told the New York Times that he hopes the "Birthright" trip can develop into a tradition like that of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah in 10 or 15 years. All the details have yet to be worked out.

Steinhardt said that the program would be open to any young person "who chooses to voluntarily associate his or her future with that of the Jewish people... regardless of nationality, economic status or denomination, every Jewish youth will be eligible to participate in a trip that will change their lives. This is a gift from our generation to our children and grandchildren."

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Bikur Cholim Involvement Increased

MECHAL TESSER
Staff Writer

Every Monday and Tuesday night, SCW students pile into local vans, going not to the dorms, but to Beth Israel Hospital, a short 10 or 15 minute ride away. The students go to perform the mitzvah of *bikur cholim* (visiting the sick).

The students obtain a current list of Jewish patients and their room numbers at the desk immediately inside the hospital's entrance. In groups of twos and threes, students visit as many patients as possible in the short time they have. "It's a great way for us to connect with the Jewish community of New York, and to help others," said Amira Saltzman, SSSB '00.

According to signs posted around campus, vans leave from Brookdale Hall on Monday nights and from Schottenstein Residence Hall on Tuesday nights at 7:00

p.m. and leave Beth Israel between 8:00 and 8:15 p.m., when visiting hours at the hospital end.

The proximity of NYU hospital to the Midtown campus provides the SCW population with another chance to perform *bikur cholim*. A list of Jewish patients is available at the desk in the Tisch Medical Center, located on 1st Avenue between 32nd and 33rd Streets. Students are able to walk over and visit patients whenever they have free time during the day. Volunteers are also needed to soothe the children before their surgery, and to answer questions they may have.

Shonnie Kesselman, SCW '99, one of the heads of the Bikur Cholim Committee, encouraged students to take advantage of these opportunities, saying that "it's a big mitzvah that people can really get involved in, and I hope a lot of people will, since it's so close to school."



SCW Students visit the sick patients weekly in nearby hospitals.

Increased participation would also have a practical advantage. A minimum of four students is required for YU transportation to Beth Israel Hospital. "Often we leave late and everything is

delayed because we're waiting for girls to come," Saltzman said.

Visiting patients either in NYU or Beth Israel hospital can be done consistently, yet requires no commitment.

29th Street Outreach Program

MELISSA ROTHENBERG
Staff Writer

SCW students have long contributed to the mid-Manhattan Jewish community, including Congregation Talmud Torah Adereth El, popularly known as the 29th Street Synagogue. Having experienced a major decline in membership over past years, the synagogue is now able to open its doors to more people each week with the help of SCW students.

Alyssa Schnur, SCW '99, along with Alyssa Reisbaum, SCW '99, founded a learning program called "Higher Wisdom." This learning program for women was founded to spread Torah to the masses in a personal way. Schnur explained her aspirations for the program. "I dreamed of developing a learning program that would be more unique than just a 'one on one program' that would ultimately involve as many members of the community in the advancement of *Yiddishkeit* and Torah observance."

Higher Wisdom convenes every Tuesday night, and involves more than a dozen community members learning together with SCW students. The first fifteen minutes of the program consist of *chavruta* (partner) learning, which is fol-

lowed by a *shiur* (short lecture) given by a SCW student. The concluding section of the program enables the participants to verbalize their opinions and questions regarding the *shiur*. This schedule facilitates interaction between the community members and SCW students, as both learning one-on-one with students and hearing Torah in a *shiur* setting take place.

In addition to Higher Wisdom, the assistant rabbi of the 29th Street Synagogue, Rabbi Gideon Schloush, offers a learning program through Aish HaTorah, one-on-one Hebrew lessons and *chavruta* learning. Both SCW and YC students learn one-on-one with community members every Tuesday night. This serves as an opportunity for YU undergraduates to share their knowledge with community members on a regular basis.

Efforts continue to turn the Midtown community surrounding SCW into a more Torah observant area. One SCW student invited her *chavruta* to Friday night services at SCW, in order to enhance her student's studies. In addition to the two Tuesday night programs, Rabbi Schloush arranged for home visits to community members who are unable to come to the synagogue to learn. He noted the importance of adding young members to the synagogue.

Discovery: A Closer Look

RACHEL GENACK
Staff Writer

Aish HaTorah's popular program, Discovery, held an event at SCW in conjunction with TAC's Shiorim Committee. Discovery seeks to raise the essential questions of Judaism often ignored in standard education. The program sets out to prove the most basic tenets of Jewish belief.

Raising such questions as "How do we know that the Torah came from God?" and "How can there be free choice if God knows what is going to happen in the end?" Rabbi Daniel Mechanic of Brooklyn, New York addressed the students of SCW on Tuesday, November 24. The attempt to logically prove the truth of Judaism is a difficult challenge when many facets of religion are considered beyond rational thought, explained Rabbi Mechanic. "I want to demonstrate the divinity of Torah, and in so doing, be a catalyst for further Torah growth. Once people see the truth of Torah they will [hopefully] further their Torah education," Rabbi Mechanic said.

Discovery's methods have been questioned recently by the Orthodox community. Last summer, the Orthodox Union's quarterly magazine, *Jewish Action*, devoted its cover story to examining Discovery's "codes."

"The Discovery program can certainly be helpful for those who have limited exposure to Torah and Jewish studies," said Rabbi Dr. Ephraim Kanarfogel, head of the Rebecca Ivy Department of Judaic Studies. But Kanarfogel said that programs like Discovery must be an addition rather than a basis for belief. "Ultimately, the goal for students who have the ability [is to] pursue Torah study and development of faith through classroom and Torah study in addition to any other means," he said.

Elisheva Ginsburg, SCW '99,

TAC shiurim coordinator, said that Discovery is an important addition to SCW's extra-curricular activities. "Discovery touches issues that are not normally discussed in a classroom setting and need to be addressed," explained Ginsburg. "We felt that Discovery would be a lecture that students of all backgrounds can enjoy. It brings up issues that are crucial and fundamental to Judaism," she said.

Ginsburg was pleased with the feedback she received from students attending the Discovery lecture. Some even expressed an interest in having Rabbi Mechanic return. Ginsburg said that plans to invite Rabbi Mechanic back to SCW at a later date to develop the issues he discussed briefly are underway.

A regular Discovery session lasts for about three days, ten hours a day.

Ordinarily, the Discovery program is geared to non-observant Jews as a rational introduction to Judaism. Rabbi Mechanic's goal in speaking to SCW students, however, was to demonstrate the way he fields perplexing issues and how he deals with questions most people don't know how to answer, should they come up.

Many SCW students felt that Rabbi Mechanic was not only teaching them how to teach others, but also raised questions they themselves could not answer. "Sometimes we go through the actions without really thinking," says Rachel Moskowitz, SCW '00, a captivated attendee. She explained that the viewpoint presented by Discovery helps to explain Judaism in a more concrete and rational way. "Some questions are just assumed, but it's important to be exposed to the answer," she said.

Other students felt that the seminar was thought-provoking and helped them become sensitive to other people's questions.

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Van involved in collision

continued from page 3

admit that wearing seatbelts could have saved them from even the smallest of injuries. The driver wore one, but the YU passengers claim to not have even thought twice about it.

"I think if anything," Goldberg said, "this accident was a wake up call to all students who board the YU shuttle to know how important it is to wear a seatbelt, instead of thinking that they aren't prone to accidents."

Still, DeeDee Webberman continues to wear a neck brace, and Goldberg feels slight pains in her hands and neck. Both

"This could have happened to anyone, ...and it definitely could have been a lot worse," she said.

Still, DeeDee Webberman continues to wear a neck brace, and Goldberg feels slight pains in her hands and neck. Both

Much E-mail, So Little Time

DEE DEE LAX
Staff Writer

On the third floor of the Midtown Center, students hover over the computers in the computer lab. Some are writing papers, others are surfing the net and the rest are sending e-mail messages.

That is, if they can even get to a computer.

With the semester coming to an end, the computer lab has been crowded to the point that students must wait in line to use a computer. Chana Batko-Taylor, SCW '02, was forced one day to wait half an hour before a computer was available.

Mrs. Betty Gordon, SCW's computer lab coordinator said that SCW has the highest student-computer ratio, with one computer for every eight students. Every morning she refreshes the one room of computers to erase any viruses on the computers. The process takes about 40 minutes said Gordon. She usually cleans the computers at 8:00 a.m., before the labs open.

Although regular computer classes meet elsewhere, there have been three instances this semester where a class met in the computer lab, further limiting student use. Gordon said that these were isolated instances that were only for that one class period.

On December 3 and 4, SCW's computers were without Internet/e-mail access due to a wiring problem with AT&T. The problem was not directly related to the school, but many students were inconvenienced by the breakdown. Some computers were tied up by students trying to connect to the failed system.

Several students have complained of the scarcity of America Online (AOL) on SCW's computers.

"There is not enough AOL to go around and the school erases it everyday," said Lisa Younger, SCW '01.

Gordon explained that computer lab operators erase AOL each night to discourage students from using it. But almost everyday students themselves download AOL, tying up the computers and forcing other students to wait in line. Gordon mentioned that the school provides alternative Internet access by supplying ymail, a free e-mail service, as well as Netscape.

Gordon said that AOL threatens to bring viruses into the computers. However, she is investigating permanently adding AOL to the system with protective NT system measures. This endeavor, however, would require an entirely new computer system, which means high costs.

AOL has licensing limitations, and Gordon is not convinced she "wants to go AOL."

letter to the editor

Clean Clothes and Smiles

Having spent three and a half years at Stern, I've encountered my fair share of grumbling in the laundry room. There are people grumbling that there aren't enough washing machines and dryers.

There is the grumbling about people whose washer or dryer time has finished, yet they have not come back to retrieve their clothing, thus hogging a needed machine. And I've heard grumbling from people who return to take their clothes out of the machines only to find that someone has already done it for them and their clean clothes are now sitting in a pile on a dubiously clean surface. All right, I cannot lie-- I have been each of those people at one time or another.

I know many people who have. Well, today was a little different. After I put my laundry in the washer, I made plans to go out for the day with friends. I left my clothes in the dryer before I left knowing that when I returned, I would find them in a pile either on the table or on top of the dryer. And that was a sacrifice I was willing to make so I would not have to stay in the dorm waiting for the dryer to finish.

Tonight, I returned to the laundry room, and when I walked in I received what is probably the most pleasant shock of my stay here at Stern--or at the very least, of this semester.

Whoever had gone to the laundry room and needed the dryer that I was taking up, took my laundry from the dryer, and get this-- FOLDED IT!! I still haven't stopped smiling. I cannot get over the fact that someone who had every right to be annoyed with me for abandoning my clothes in the dryer, took time out of what I am sure is her busy schedule to fold my laundry so I would not be upset to return to the laundry room and find it out of the dryer. So, I write this not only to publicly thank

my anonymous laundry fairy, but also to urge everyone to get into the habit of doing random acts of chessed for people. Remember it does not have to take a lot of time or effort to make someone else's day a little brighter and put a smile on her face.

Devorah Cenko, SCW '99

Whoever had gone to the laundry room and needed the dryer that I was taking up, took my laundry from the dryer, and get this-- FOLDED IT!! I still haven't stopped smiling.

Orthodox Union's Torah Seminars for Women

Class Offerings for the Spring 1999 Semester

Sunday

| Time | Lecturer | Topic | Course # |
|------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------|
| 9:30 a.m. | Rabbi Mordechai Willig | Even Ha'ezer: Marriage and Procreation | 101S99 |
| 10:40 a.m. | Rabbi Michael Rosensweig | Teachings of the Rav | 102S99 |
| | Rabbi Herschel Schacter | | |
| | Rabbi Mayer Twersky | | |
| 11:50 a.m. | Mrs. Sally Mayer | Sh'elot U'teshuvot in Contemporary Halachic Topics | 103S99 |
| | Rabbi David Pahmer | | |

Wednesday

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------------|----------------------------|--------|
| 6:45 p.m. | Rabbi Eitan Orlian | The Tefilot of Shabbat | 201S99 |
| 8:00 p.m. | Rabbi Ari Berman | Shiur B'iyun | 221S99 |
| | Rabbi David Hirsch | | |
| 8:00 p.m. | Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky | Laws of Muktsa and Hotsa'a | 222S99 |

Tuition

Basic Rate: \$100 per course. \$75 per course for three or more courses
Student and Senior Citizen Rate: \$50 per course.

Checks should be made payable to the Orthodox Union

All Classes are one hour long unless otherwise noted

Spring Semester Calendar: Sunday, January 31-Wednesday May 5. Pesach Vacation: Sunday, March 28-Wednesday, April 14

Classes held at: West Side Institutional Synagogue 120 W.76th Street (between Amsterdam and Columbus.)

For more information please call Frank Buchweitz at (212) 613-8188

"Faithful Youth" Report Highlights NCSY Success

Most Alumni Marry Jewish and Grow in Observance

SARAH KOSTANT
Staff Writer

In the November 20, 1998 issue of *The Jewish Week*, the Orthodox Union took out a full-page ad proclaiming the success of its youth organization, the National Conference of Synagogue Youth. The ad reported that the Lilly Foundation had discovered, "after meticulously studying over 1,000 of our alumni, most, originally from homes with no strong level of observance" that only 2% of NCSY alumni had intermarried, as opposed to the 52% rate of intermarriage noted by the National Jewish Population Survey. The Lilly Foundation also explored other areas of Jewish involvement among NCSY alumni to gauge the movement's ability in influencing Jewish youth who had been at risk for losing their connection with Judaism.

The Lilly Foundation mentioned in the above ad (also referred to as the "Lilly Endowment" in the Executive Summary of this study) is an Indianapolis based fund which has focused most of its attention on "mainline Christian denominations (Methodists, Presbyterians and Episcopalians) that had experienced a membership loss of between 20% and 33% from their mid-1960s levels," according to the Executive Summary. The Lilly Foundation, mentioned in the ad as "America's largest philanthropic foundation," is interested in discovering what methods can be used to halt the movement of the younger generations from religious involvement in any religion. According to the ad in *The Jewish Week*, the Lilly Foundation thought that NCSY's "40 years of experience with alienated Jewish youth could serve as a model for religious and civic groups everywhere."

The Lilly Foundation funded a study using NCSY alumni as the barometer for the success of religious youth groups in general—not just Jewish ones. The study was led by Dr. Nathalie Friedman, a Barnard College sociologist, and was managed by Perry Davis Associates, a Manhattan consulting firm. Dr. Chaim I. Waxman of Rutgers University chaired the advisory committee.

What, exactly, does "success" mean when applied to a religious youth group? The Executive Summary, which contains the compact version of the full-length report, states that NCSY's goal is to "provide the most effective social, educational, and inspirational Jewish environment designed to motivate Jewish teenagers to follow an exemplary Torah way of life." NCSY alumni who pursue an "exemplary Torah way of life" attest to the NCSY's expertise in influencing youth to become closer to Judaism. The Executive Summary mentions three points that can be used to gauge the religious impact of NCSY on its constituents.

NCSY's Own Purposes

Under the umbrella of following an "exemplary Torah way of life" are many specific religious ideals. Since NCSY is an Orthodox organization, some of its hopes for its alumni are unique to its Orthodox affiliation. The Executive Summary of the survey reports that 96% of the NCSY alumni polled believe in the Divine Revelation of the Torah to Moses at Sinai, 50% spent some time learning in an Israeli yeshiva, and 65% incorporate weekly Torah learning into their schedule. Some of the statistics cited, however, are not exclusive to an Orthodox affiliation. For example, the report states that 92% of the respondents are associated with a synagogue, and that 80% of men and nearly

50% of the women polled made synagogue attendance a weekly event. Synagogue attendance occurs in Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform communities, however different their synagogues may be. The report also states that 64% of all respondents said that they had grown religiously during their tenure in NCSY, and that 60% are currently more "observant" than they were during their high school years. Religious growth and observance are relative terms and do not necessarily indicate that these alumni embraced Orthodoxy. Does NCSY consider itself successful in outreach if its alumni grew religiously, but did not become strictly Orthodox?

The answer is yes, according to Rabbi Baruch Lanner, Director of Regions and Educational Programming for National NCSY. He stated that NCSY's goal is to help young people become more observant, but that success is relative to an NCSYer's initial level; he or she might not end up strictly observant if he or she entered NCSY from an extremely limited

NCSY as increasing their level of observance. NCSY's effects on alumni, however, came in second to their parent's guidance. More recent alumni feel that NCSY had less of an effect on their religious growth, with 51% (compared to 87%) stating that NCSY was a "positive influence" in their lives. The Summary mentioned that "these numbers may reflect changes in NCSY's membership over the years." The number of NCSY participants that are not enrolled in religious schools has waned over the past few years; thus recent alumni come to NCSY from a stronger background and are less likely to cite NCSY as a strong religious motivation.

NCSY Alumni vs. Overall Jewish Community

The writers of the Executive Summary compared the NCSY statistics with their corresponding statistics from the 1990-91 National Jewish Population Survey to further emphasize NCSY's success in keeping Jewish kids within a religious spectrum. The NJPS study showed that overall, North American Jews were

low rates of intermarriage and high rates of Jewish affiliation would be expected.

The Executive Summary mentioned the following statistics in order to counter this doubt. According to the study, 28% of the NCSY alumni polled did not grow up in an Orthodox environment, and 26% of the respondents to the NCSY study do not currently consider themselves Orthodox. The majority of alumni polled who were involved with NCSY in its earlier days did not attend a yeshiva for their elementary or high school education. The Executive Summary, however, still notes that overall, the NCSY alumni questioned for the Lilly study came from stronger religious environments than their counterparts in the NJPS survey. The fact that 85% of NCSY alumni report that they are as religious, or even more religious than they were growing up, shows that a main thesis of the Lilly study still holds true: NCSY can influence young people to become more observant relative to the way they were brought up.

Lessons for Other Youth Groups

At the end of the Executive Summary, NCSY offers to "assist any of these [other Jewish] organizations in replicating or adapting the methodology and survey instrument to other youth populations. The need for cooperation in perpetuating Jewish faith and practice among all Jews is paramount. Similar cooperation and support is offered to non-Jewish, religious, and civic youth organizations as well."

Rabbi Lanner remarked that NCSY could teach other youth groups to follow its structure, to have weekend retreats, advisors who are mentors to kids, and awards for high involvement in the youth group. These methods can lead to greater enthusiasm among other youth group participants, but he said that it would be "naïve to think that the message of NCSY sells itself absent of its content." Other Jewish youth groups, such as USY and NFTY, have college-age men and women as advisors and run Shabbat programs. Their advisors, however, are chosen from a pool of college students who in many instances may lack the religious intensity, or "fire in the belly," of NCSY advisors who come from YC and SCW.

Rabbi Lanner added that many kids initially come back to NCSY events for the "strong social and emotional appeal...but the wholesomeness and friendliness...only works the first couple of times. Sooner or later the kid will encounter the message and must see it...independent of the emotional injection of a charismatic leader." Rabbi Lanner paraphrased Rav Soloveitchik Z"TL and said that the key to continuing Jewish observance is learning. Eventually the NCSYer must "fall in love with Torah for its own sake," or he or she will not progress to a higher level of observance.

Sarah Harris, SCW '00, has been involved in NCSY as a participant and as an advisor, and agrees that a social atmosphere is needed to draw unaffiliated kids into a Jewish environment. She points out that the coed events "keep kids coming back. They're not necessarily coming back for the right intentions because they're normal kids...but eventually, you see the light come on in some kids...they'll say, I need help with my *davening*, or you'll get in a conversation about *Yiddishkeit*, and then they'll come back for the right reasons." The statistics show that NCSY participants are coming back for the "right reasons," and that NCSY can provide a model for other youth groups to follow.



Members of the Long Island Region of NCSY.

background. Rabbi Lanner cited the example of a small town that sent a few teenagers each year to the NCSY Summer Kollel program in Israel. Their participation in the Summer Kollel program led them to adopt a higher level of observance than before. Some of these participants are completely observant today, but a few of them might not currently follow the *halacha* to the letter. Rabbi Lanner remarked that it would be insensitive to censure these NCSYers for "not being careful with picking pits out of a watermelon on Shabbat," since they came into NCSY with little religious involvement. "We must be appreciative of all progress made in these cases, he said, and be grateful for "any level of identification, even if not ideally sanctioned."

NCSY's Part in Religious Growth of Alumni

NCSY could not be deemed successful in increasing religious observance unless its alumni attributed their growth to NCSY. Part of the Lilly study attempted to determine whether the religious renaissance reported amongst NCSY alumni was a direct product of NCSY involvement or a result of other factors. Without investigating this issue, critics could claim that the effect of youth groups is inconclusive. NCSY alumni may have received their inspiration from other areas that should be explored instead of youth groups.

The Lilly study determined, however, that their involvement in NCSY was a significant motivation to increased religious growth. Overall, NCSY had a "positive influence" on the religious level of 64% of its alumni, with 87% of NCSYers from earlier years (15-20 years ago) citing

moving away from Jewish tradition. More than half of the respondents to the NJPS had intermarried, and less than 30% of the children from these marriages were being brought up as Jews. Less than half of the respondents observed a fast day on Yom Kippur, and 69% reported that they had never been to Israel. Only 30% of North American Jewry who had been brought up Orthodox remained so, and only 1% of those Jews raised Conservative, Reform, or Reconstructionist consider themselves Orthodox today.

In contrast to the American Jewish population, NCSY alumni reported an intermarriage rate of 2%, with the majority of children from alumni marriages being raised with a yeshiva or coed day school education. Nearly all respondents to the Lilly Foundation survey said that they fast on Yom Kippur, and 75% of NCSY alumni have visited Israel. Although most American Jews raised Orthodox left the fold, 94% of NCSY alumni who were raised Orthodox said that they are still Orthodox today, with 74% of all NCSY respondents identifying themselves as Orthodox. The Lilly study reported that regardless of background, most NCSY alumni were becoming more observant as time progressed. The Executive Summary reminds the reader that "NCSY is seen as a significant factor (second only to parents' influence) responsible for this trend."

Although the NCSY statistics seem impressive, they bring up questions about the veracity of its study. The NJPS took respondents from a broad base of American Jewry. Did the Lilly study poll mainly Orthodox Jews? In that case, the

Many People, Many Roads, One Heart

Aviva Laufer
News Editor

Many roads converged as 5,000 delegates gathered in Jerusalem November 16-19 for the General Assembly, organized by the United Jewish Appeal Federation of North America. With a combination of its record-breaking turnout and its being held in Israel for the first time, this year's assembly presented the opportunity to explore Jewish roots and heritage, as well as ties to our homeland and to one another. With an attempt to ignite a sense of awareness and appreciation for Jews of all backgrounds and degrees of observance, "one heart" was to be felt beating among us.

As a member of "Do the Write Thing," I was privileged to attend the conference as one of 50 Jewish student journalists from the United States chosen to represent our schools and communities. Many of the meetings and press conferences I attended throughout the week shed light on my awareness and perception of pressing political, economic and religious issues. It was an element that arose on the sidelines of all the formal programming, however, that struck me most deeply. It triggered emotions within me that put all I had learned during the conference as well as my 15 years of Jewish education into perspective.

After a week of programs that placed emphasis on pluralism and vast divisions within the Jewish community, my longing for Jewish unity had intensified to a degree at which I had never felt it before. Woven throughout these events though, was a multi-faceted element, reflective of different experiences I shared. One in particular stands out in my mind. It introduced me to the true and quintessential essence of Jewish identity.

In enabling me to experience the ideal unity I yearned for, it gave me new confidence that this fantasy may indeed be sought, and thereby translated into a reality.

It was Friday, 3:25 p.m., and I, along with the rest of the "Do The Write Thing" delegates, was en route to the Kotel (Western Wall) for Kabbalat Shabbat (Friday night Sabbath services). It may be important to note at this point that I was one of three Orthodox Jews on the program. It's probably also significant to mention that for the entire week, I was part of a very small minority. While the key word of the week was "pluralism" and a greater emphasis could not have been placed on recognizing the various streams within Judaism, to many that I personally encountered, my life as a Modern Orthodox Jew was a concept almost foreign and entirely new.

As we walked toward the Kotel, a friend turned to me and asked if we could pray together. I was touched that she asked me, and together, we made our way through the crowd. On our way, another friend approached us, and asked if she could join us. She said that she couldn't really read Hebrew, but that if I sang aloud, she could follow.

At this point, there were three things going through my head. For one, I can't sing. In addition to that, I didn't know any tunes for the first few paragraphs. Above all though, tons of people standing around us were enraptured in silent prayer. How could I start singing out loud?

This question crossed my mind, not only in this instance, but in many

throughout the week. For the first time in my life, I found myself amongst a wider spectrum of Jews than I ever imagined. My entire life has included a world of Modern Orthodoxy, in which I was raised and educated. Suddenly, I discovered that my life as such, is not as all-encompassing as I had always thought it was.

Finding myself perceived as "a minority" among Jews was frightening. Frightening not because not everyone was the same, but because I felt tremendous bitterness and resentment coupled with that perception, and toward Orthodoxy as a whole. I got the sense that "Orthodox," to

There is so much more that unites us than there is that divides us. It's the heritage we've been born to, the history we've lived, and the ages and ages of threats and opposition that we've survived with G-d as our guide and redeemer. It is such elements as these that bind us to one another and pave solid ground for our future growth and continuity.

My intense longing for Jewish unity continued to grow with each day of the conference. Never had I felt the utter desperation for it, as I did during my week at the GA.

And there I was; there we were,



Aviva Laufer, planting a "seed of the future" in the Binyanei Haumah at the GA.

many, was synonymous with "Ultra-Orthodox," and could be justly personified with images of Hasidim in Me'ah Shearim or B'nei B'rak. Yes, they are Orthodox, and no, the resentment felt toward them is not justified. However, there are two major points that must be made.

First, the notion of "pluralism," when properly applied, demands recognition of all streams of Judaism. "All" streams does not solely include Secular, Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Orthodox, with Orthodoxy including only extreme views. Various streams within Orthodoxy must be recognized as well.

This is crucial for two reasons. First, for Jews seeking to further develop their Jewish identity, observance of Torah and its commandments shouldn't be seen as only associated with a community that they cannot relate to. In addition, any feelings held toward particular views within the Orthodox community, should not be generalized and subsequently applied to the whole of Orthodox Jewry. While we are indeed responsible for one another, recognition of various approaches and lifestyles within Orthodoxy is extremely significant.

Furthermore, defining the dynamics of the Jewish people using rigid terminology, is not only limiting, but unfair. Each individual is unique, as is each community within each stream. Yes, we are all different, and that is what makes us such a dynamically sound whole. We are members of a symphony; each one of us playing a different instrument; playing the same song at different rhythms, and taking our lead from one conductor.

The bottom line though, is that we are all Jews. The idea of "Many People, Many Roads, One Heart," is powerful and perhaps even ideal, yet I think that the word pluralism is completely antithetical to that notion. With all focus and concentration placed on that which differentiates us from one another, how will we ever develop the sense of having "one heart?"

Friday night at the Kotel, as the sun set over Jerusalem. The three of us, as completely unique individuals, joined together, each playing our own instrument. We formed our own little symphony, and we sang together to G-d.

I sang despite my reservations and despite the silence that prevailed around us, and no one seemed to mind. In fact, many joined in too. It was a Kabbalat Shabbat to remember; with each word soaring to unknown heights, as each of our eyes welled with tears as we sang. I shouldn't even say "each word," because some just hummed. Each element combined, each factor that we individually contributed, made our prayer such a special one.

As we backed away from the Kotel afterward, I reflected on the past week and tried to put it all into perspective. I attended sessions on Israeli politics and economic issues, that were interesting. I also had time to walk around the huge auditoriums of Binyanei Ha'Umah (Israeli Culture Center), and meet various government officials, journalists, philanthropists, educators and thousands of other Jews with various backgrounds and goals.

Yet through it all, I yearned for an ideal state in which we could uproot all tensions among us. If only we could recognize the diversity existing among us, in a light that illuminates the power of our combined strengths and talents. While our role as a people is to serve as an "Ohr L'Goyim" (a light unto all nations), first, we must search inside of ourselves and determine ways in which we can benefit, grow, enlighten and become enlightened from one another. I now believe that it can happen because it did.

As one of the friends who I had prayed with cried on my shoulder later that evening, and told me how much her first Kabbalat Shabbat had meant to her, my motivation to convey what I had just experienced, to you, became overwhelming.

From the moment I arrived at

Newark airport at the outset of my trip to Israel, I realized that my role as a journalist would be a minor facet of my purpose in the Assembly. I did not know in advance what the extent of my responsibilities would be, not only as a Jewish student journalist and YU representative, but as a persona of Modern Orthodox Jewry. I was propelled to delve into my Jewish identity and simultaneously given the very challenging opportunity to express and articulate my perception of its depth and relation to my life as a Modern Orthodox Jew.

While one's sense of Jewish identity exceeds articulation, I was encouraged to place it into context for the first time as a participant in a workshop with members of The Israel Experience. I sat in a circle with about 50 other GA delegates and about 50 students from England, training to become leaders for Jewish youth programs back home. We took turns receiving assignments from their leader, who sought to demonstrate their training methods and philosophies. One girl's assignment was to lead a session in Jewish identity.

She sat down, and without any of us knowing what her assignment entailed, she started to speak. "My Jewish identity is a tree," she said, "and I'm in the middle of climbing." She continued to describe the various branches she found herself swinging between and her efforts to find that branch which would hold her most securely. We then went around the circle and each of us was to describe our own Jewish identity in those terms.

When my turn came, I was nervous to speak. As the only Orthodox Jew present, many were anxious to hear what I had to say with very mixed feelings. I proceeded to describe my Jewish identity as a tree with many branches. "While I've found the branch at which I feel most secure," I said, "as I continue to climb, I see more and more branches extending on all sides. Some that I attempt to grasp exceed my reach, and so I seek the hands of those who are already at those stages, to help lift me. At the same time, my other hand is extended beneath me, to assist whoever I can help to lift."

I don't think it's by chance that there is no word for pluralism in the Hebrew language. The notion of "Many People, Many Roads, One Heart" itself though, is a concept firmly rooted in the Torah and in Jewish faith. The Torah's personification of this concept however, is through a slightly different phrase: "K'ish Echad B'Lev Echad" (As one person with one heart). While recognizing various streams of thought and different strengths and abilities among us, the Torah's focus remains steadily on that which unifies us to form a complete and balanced whole.

After spending a week at the GA, my goals as a Jew, and specifically as a Modern Orthodox Jew, have become even more idealistic than ever before. I feel confident though that they can be accomplished.

Our Kabbalat Shabbat at the Kotel that Friday night, ushered in not only Shabbat, but a renewed sense of motivation to spend our lives striving to again attain such a binding sense of unity and spirituality. We helped lift each other to levels that alone, we could never have attained.

Stephanie and Mandy, I just want to say thank you. Thank you for an experience that I will never forget.

The Progress of Peace

A Reasonable Peace Careful Optimism for the Peace Process

DEBORAH ROTH

I am not passionately for nor against the peace process (although I am slightly more for it than against it), so I suppose that I am not the best person to write this column. The reason I am doing so is twofold. First, I have given the question of what I believe regarding the current peace process a lot of thought, and second, I am very vexed by the common notion that a religious Jew must hold certain political beliefs (namely, in this case, to be strongly against the current peace process, which I am not). Perhaps that is part of the reason that Susan Jacobs (Editor of The Observer and close friend of mine) could not find a Stern student, out of the 10 to 15 she asked, who was strongly for the peace process and willing to write about it.

My ambivalence about this important issue might not be a bad thing. According to political scientist Dr. David Luchins, Americans should not be quick to make judgments about what the government of Israel should do. After all, Luchins reasons, although Israel is close by in all of our hearts, it is physically 6000 miles away, and the physical threats that face Israeli citizens on a daily basis do not pose the same type of immediate threat to us in America. Therefore, he reasons, who are we to judge what is best for them? I agree that that job should ultimately belong to Israeli governmental officials, who are elected by Israeli residents. I personally trust that the Israeli government is concerned with protecting Jewish life as much as it can.

While I subscribe to Dr. Luchins' recommendation to maintain an objective stance, I also must admit that my ambivalence is partly due to the fact that I am confused about what to believe. I think that both sides of the issue offer strong points to support their arguments. I can say that I do believe, as do many supporters of either side of the argument, that saving as many Jewish lives as possible should be our foremost concern in evaluating the situation in the Middle East. I cannot judge which alternative, to stick with the peace process or to abandon it, is best for the future of Israel and the Jewish people as a whole, not only because I do not feel knowledgeable enough about the complex issues involved, but also because I cannot predict the future. No one but G-d can know which alternative will result in less Jewish bloodshed.

There are some things regarding this debate, however, that at this time I can say with conviction. I do not have qualms about trading land for peace (many say that, to save Jewish lives, it is *halachically* permissible, if not imperative, to do so). Of course, it goes without saying that I would prefer an alternative of peace without giving up land (*Moshiach*, for example, would be nice). I would wholeheartedly be for the peace process if it could guarantee peace. However, I am concerned, as are many who would otherwise support the peace process, that giving up land might not lead to peace. I do not have an easy time trusting Arafat's word.

However, I have not dismissed

the peace process. I think that, although there are no guarantees that peace will come about as a result of giving back land, following through with the peace process, as opposed to stalling indefinitely, might be the best alternative. Firstly, Israel has already given its word to pull back out of another 13% of the West Bank. If Israel were to indefinitely stall the peace process, it could lose any potential trust and support among Palestinians as well as America and other nations. Secondly, making genuine efforts to acknowledge the Palestinians' needs for autonomy could result in more peaceful relations between Israelis and Palestinians.

Contrary to some popular stereotypes, the average Palestinian is not a terrorist; he or she simply wants to live his/her life with economic security and political freedom, as do most people. The Palestinians are extremely politically and economically disadvantaged, and Israel has not effectively dealt with their plight. Although I would not bet on the likelihood of a future "Palestine" becoming the second democracy in the Middle East, I do think that the Palestinians might need a chance at some type of autonomy to feel that they have some power over their lives and fates. It is possible that, as a result, they would stop scapegoating Israel — at least, to a significant extent — for what they lack.

Admittedly, my views regarding the benefits of autonomy of Palestinian settlements from Israeli control might be naive. However, I do think that forcing the Palestinians to stew in frustration presents no fine alternative. This point cannot be underscored enough. The Palestinians are frustrated, and rightly so. The world has effectively given them a "slap in the face" by giving land which they feel should have been theirs to the Jews, who they now see prospering economically while proportionately more Palestinians than Jews live in poverty.

Along these lines, I do not think that Israel should construct any more Jewish homes and settlements on the West Bank. I think that this instigates more frustration, which leads to violence, among the Palestinian population. Israel does have a case when it claims that Arafat and the Palestinians have not done enough to combat terrorism. However, building homes on the West Bank not only goes against our promises in the Peace Accords, but also reflects Jewish insensitivity for the needs of our Palestinian neighbors. We cannot expect the Palestinians to submit to our wishes for peaceful autonomy and ignore their own. Therefore, we should do what we can — cautiously, to be sure — to acknowledge the Palestinians' desire for self-government on some level (I do not think it is necessary to get into my beliefs on Palestinian statehood here).

Establishing peace takes effort on both sides. We must be responsible for our own side. If Israel neglects the Palestinian perspective, the Palestinians, through violence (which has been shown to be effective), could, G-d forbid, remind us that they too have needs. The current peace process could be our best bet for a more peaceful Israel. It might be wise to grab the chance to compromise while we have it.

Land for Peace or Land for Free?

Israel and the Peace Accords: Asking for Disaster

CHANA ROSENBLATT

Given the results of the Oslo Accords, the Wye Agreement between Netanyahu, Arafat, and Clinton will be another display of an agreement signed on paper, devoid of meaning. Promises of ending violence, prosecuting terrorists, and amending the Charter of the Palestine Liberation Organization are just some of Arafat's promises. In return for these empty words, first Yitzhak Rabin, and now Netanyahu have relinquished control of areas in Gaza and the West Bank in addition to putting the lives of many at risk.

Israel, the land G-d promised our forefathers, is being handed over on a silver platter to those people who wish to destroy us. I cannot fathom anything more ironic and tragic. Had Arafat made a genuine effort to curtail the scheming of Palestinian terrorists, those who claim to support the peace process would have something under their belt with which to argue. He didn't, and therefore they don't. The number of bombings, killings, and attacks are ever-increasing, and the toll on Jewish life has reached an unreasonable

and inexcusable peak. Arafat claims to have taken an active stance to stop the assaults, yet the bombings continue. Arafat purports to arrest the perpetrators of these evil crimes and expropriate illegal weapons, yet days later they are found, once again, in their homes and on the streets. Arafat declares that he is working to bring down Hamas, and is taking active steps to halt their brutality, yet he embraces Yassin, the terrorist group's leader.

In exchange for these lies and promises of deception, Israel's Prime Minister signs an agreement to which only he will be held accountable. Withdrawal from 13% more of the West Bank and Gaza, and the possibility for the declaration of an independent Palestinian

state in the near future are only two of the pledges made by Netanyahu. Further endangering the state and its victimized inhabitants, is the release of 750 Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails. Allowing for the return of terrorists to the streets of Israel places an immediate threat to Israeli security. Lives of countless people will be jeopardized, many of which already are, with the current release of 250 such men.

An integral part of the agreements signed in Wye and Oslo, promises for Arafat's removal of the infamous statement in the PLO Charter, which holds as essential to Palestinian principles and belief, the necessity and urgency of destroying Israel. The revision of the charter has not yet occurred, and most probably never will. It is part of the Palestinian mentality and a core of their nationhood that Israel be summarily destroyed. Palestinian children are taught this from infancy, and are trained to grow up with a deep-seated hatred for Jews rooted firmly in their hearts. This being the case, how can one expect peace from a people so strongly committed to our destruction and annihilation?

All of us wish for peace in Israel. Some would even exchange land for peace in a situation where achievement of harmony between the opposing factions is probable to definite. In our situation, however, Arafat has consistently promised and not delivered. He shakes Netanyahu's hand and then smiles at Yassin. He is known for breaking his word, and for his allegiance to terrorist groups. This combination, coupled with the potential for the arousal of circumstances beyond his control, make salient the fact that even if he so desired to prevent violence aimed at Israelis, he has neither the power nor the control to do so. If so, why are we giving our precious land away to a man who cares not to help us but rather to a people who want only to destroy us?

**Planning to be in Israel over winter vacation?
Interested in touring the land?**

**Contact Nechama Rosenberg
(410) 358-5369 for information about
3 1/2 day tours, covering the country
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TURN

Nikki Paley

Diagnosis: It's All in Your HEAD

(Note: How many allusions can you recognize?)

Five more Liberal Arts courses offered next semester: Theater! Film! Photography! Jazz and Blues! Accounting! (screeeech!) What? Accounting?

Beneath the Finance and Biology majors, deep into the population of Stern, past Education and Psychology majors, there exists a subculture of students at Stern. These students are buried alive six feet under the Offered Majors. This small band of frustrated students expends its everyday energies attempting to prevent Stern from becoming a Trade School. You know some of them, you watch them walk across the caf. But you may not be aware that you might be one of them—one of the possible Liberal Arts majors at Stern College.

But ah-ha! you notice the problem: WHERE IS THE LIBERAL ARTS MAJOR AT STERN?

For those who are unaware, a Liberal Arts major provides students with an overview of scientific and humane thought that has shaped civilizations. The Liberal Arts can be divided into three departments, Humanities, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences. It includes courses in Biology, Communication, Literature, Philosophy and Religion, History, Sociology/Anthropology. It is an inter-disciplinary experience, encompassing diverse forms of expression, from the logical to the passionate. The study of the Liberal Arts provides for expansion of interests, more profound self-knowledge, and a deepened appreciation of artistic achievements and philosophical methods.

Now, if your future was a piece of graph paper, would you fit into just one box? Are you a freshman or sophomore or junior who marked "Undecided" on your Declaration of Major sheet at the begin-

ning of the semester? Don't tell me you're 19, and you know exactly what you want to do for the rest of your life. THE REST OF YOUR LIFE. Interested in options? More than Stern offered in the Fall 1998 Course Booklet? You could be one of the hundreds of students in Stern who would be a Liberal Arts major.

Stern is a small school and the students are all relatively close (or close relatives), so let's be completely honest. We are vibrant, intellectually-capable young women infected with the Humanities-Education-Awareness-Draught (hereinafter to be referred to as HEAD). We are young, but we know we are in love with the bits of knowledge so gingerly rationed to us during these college years. But wherefore art thou? Where is the wealth of humanities knowledge with which we are supposed to graduate?

Check your HEAD. What fills it? When we were younger, we threw color into the magician's empty book, and the power of our belief and action actually filled the pages with color. Where did that belief go? Is it trapped in our HEAD? Forget about dreaming, do you live in color? Did you "settle" on a major for lack of options, because you felt time was running out?

Raise your hand if this sounds familiar: Quick! Transfer all your AP and Israel credits, and enter Stern as a junior! Jam all your classes into three, at absolute most four semesters, and sprint out of college before your 21st birthday. How many hands raised? Is yours?

So someday you'll be 42, and you'll take your daughter to Brookdale Hall and wait in the registration line again, this time as a concerned parent. Your beautiful daughter is going to college. You hope so much that she will study all that you never had the time to learn—because you

rushed through college for no apparent reason! How many of you out there want to be 42 years old and realize HEY! I never went to the met for the afternoon to check out what all the hubbub was about that Lotto guy!³ What was his significance? What is yours? We'll never know if we have a knack for something until we dab a brush in a blob of purple paint and put the bristles to the canvas.

Let's not kid ourselves or anyone else. We are infected in the HEAD; it is a debilitating disease, slowly sucking the allotted time for our education out of our lives. I offer an over-the-counter prescription.

Knock on the deans' doors. They have an Open-Door Policy⁴ for a reason: you! Tell them you want options! You want to learn new things, old things! We don't even know what we don't know! We need a Liberal Arts major at Stern, and YOU are the one who can change everything, even if not for yourself, but for the incoming freshmen and sophomores. For the future classes at Stern. For the possibility of your daughter attending Stern.

Some interesting statistics, as of November 30, 1998:

- * There are nine chemistry majors in Stern; last semester, Stern offered two chemistry courses. (Pretty good!)

- * There are five philosophy majors in Stern; last semester, Stern offered four philosophy courses. (Even better!)

- * There are at least six students in Stern who want to major in the Dramatic Arts. The oldest course booklet on file in the Registrar's office is dated "Spring 1987," and neither in that course booklet nor in any succeeding course booklets has an Acting I or Performing Arts or Film Production course been offered. That's 1987.

Anyone else see a discrepancy here? You could be a part of that handful of Liberal Arts-oriented students and not even know it. As long as the Liberal Arts major does not exist in Stern College (a sad comment after 40 years of existence), I can only offer a bucket-by-bucket watering solution for our HEADS.

Demand that classes such as "Studio Experience" and "Modern Poetry" count toward elective credits! Demand an Acting I class at Stern, and TAKE IT! (Need an incentive? They offer it Uptown!) Who knows the importance of Aristophanes? Ma Rainy? Ernst Lubitch? Here's an easy one, Gershwin? Elizabeth I?

In case I'm the first to tell you, you don't have to know what you want to do with the rest of your life when you enter Stern at 18, even though everyone else seems to. They don't. Take some time to try new things. College is that time! This is your call to action! Storm the deans' and registrar's offices.⁵ You deserve a Liberal Arts education. While you are young and able, cultivate those parts of your education you have the power to till from sun-up to sunset. You are not sick yet. If you are feeling a little under-the-weather, it is probably just in your HEAD. This is a psychosomatic condition. If we as an entire college do not work together to alleviate or cure this disease, then we deserve the desolation with which we will be left.

¹ The Bard's original R&I

² See Pleasantville!

³ Think I'm going to ruin this one for you? Hop the 6 train and go to the MET!

⁴ Remember Woodrow Wilson?

⁵ Storming of the Bastille! Prisoners no longer! Take control of your life!



TURN

Shira Graber, photography editor

Out of Town, and Left Out

As an "out-of-towner", when I first came to Stern, I found myself with the predicament of what to do for Shabbat. As I had heard and soon found to be true, Stern clears out every weekend starting Thursday night. There seemed to be a mad rush to exit the premises as soon as the next mode of transportation could take people out and off the "campus". I found this mass exodus mind-boggling on a few accounts: First, in most colleges, the weekend is the fun time; no classes means time to kick back and relax with friends in the dorm you don't otherwise see during the week. Second, college is a time for people to come into their own, to learn about living independently and enjoy that freedom. I don't consider staying in the dorm from Monday night to Thursday morning, and then rushing home for the weekend to Mommy a way to formulate an independent lifestyle. Sure, if I lived closer to home, it would be nice to see my family more often, but EVERY weekend? Don't these "in-towners" want to get out and see new places and people?

Having noted this prevalent phenomenon occurring every weekend, I also noticed that the school appears not to care one bit, but also encourage this "in-towner" mentality. Granted, steps have been taken to enhance Shabbat on campus with

different Shabbatonim every weekend including guest speakers and the addition of a new Rabbi. I applaud them for their efforts, and the fact that they are finally successful in creating a nice Shabbat atmosphere. However, in regards to certain other aspects of campus life, the school does not consider the out-of-town students at all.

The university just doesn't seem to get it that travel takes time and effort. For the Open House to encourage new and prospective students to view Stern, and to decide whether or not they should come, the program hours ran from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. How convenient for members of the Tri-state area who have but an hour ride at the most. Yet what of those high school seniors from other farther areas on the continent? Does the school perhaps only want these in-town students? It certainly does not seem to encourage out-of-town students to come view the school according to this schedule. A better plan would have been to have made a whole weekend for prospective students, showing off the new enhanced Shabbat program. This might have made a better impression on these students as to a view of campus life, instead of a few hours on Sunday. Additionally, dorm check-in times have a tendency to end at 1:00 p.m., giving the out of town students the all-too-famil-

iar predicament of how to get to New York before registration is over.

Concerning days off surrounding the chagim, the school was not considerate at all; it seems they did not even bother taking the needs of out-of-town students into account. This was appalling in regard to the fact that out-of-town students then faced traveling difficulties, and the fact that this is a Jewish institution, so it should be all the more accommodating and understanding to students traveling needs around the holidays. It boggled my mind as to why the university felt two days of school were necessary before a vacation, in between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Go figure. From the illogical planning, out-of-town students found the arrangement very inconvenient, left with few options. Traveling back and forth is time consuming and costly, so the other option is to go home for all the chagim and miss the two days of school. This might make sense aside from the fact that certain professors then decided to teach material that would appear on the midterm, and only teach it in those two days. How fair to those of us who can't just hop on a train and be home in forty-five minutes for five dollars.

Along the lines of holiday time off, how generous of the school to give off Friday, December 18th as a Chanukah

vacation day, when the university never offers classes on Friday, yet Monday December 21st there are classes, before reading week, a.k.a. no classes week. And let's not forget the best yet: the plan to have finals go right through Shavuot. This is even more accommodating than the Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur schedule in the beginning of the year, because now students will have so much time for travel in the midst of studying and taking finals. Sure, it's real easy for we who live hours away and want to spend a holiday with our families to rush out after a final to make it back before YomTov, to then hurry back as fast as we can for the rest of the finals. Plus, the attitudes of the in-town students are just as encouraging and understanding as the school, as they refuse to sign the petition with their position of "doesn't affect me, so who cares?"

Perhaps in the future, the university and its in-town attendees could be a bit more considerate and accommodating of us out-of-town students who also attend school here and have just as many rights as these in-town students who maintain these in-town attitudes. Unless of course you'd rather not have us contribute to the school and help make up a third of the student body we constitute.

Labs

continued from page 1

and had to be specially removed," said Dobin. "[The labs] have been stripped clean, there are no more benches or cabinets, only the piping sticking out of the floor [remains]. They have yet to break the walls."

The initial plans have been under discussion for two years, explained Blau. "We have visited labs at other schools to see what other people do," said Blau. The Chemistry Department toured laboratories at other schools including Harvard University, New York University, and St. John's University.

Many different plans have been proposed and discarded, according to Dobin. "We had many meetings last April and May and during the summer, but now we're at a lull," she said.

The architectural firm, Schuman, Lichtenstein, Claman, and Florn, developing the Midtown project, has previously designed the labs for the Albert Einstein College of Medicine at Yeshiva University. "I've looked at many sets of plans, each revised and revised," said Dobin.

"I don't think it has really started, there is no real change; the type of change that you usually see when you remodel." Dr. Lea Blau, Chemistry Professor

The physics labs at SCW, unlike the chemistry labs, were completed at a much swifter pace—10 weeks instead of six because the company providing tabletops for the workbenches ran behind schedule, according to Brandwein. According to Orlan, the shorter renovation was due to the fact that the project began with two empty classrooms and not an already existing lab.

"It should be very nice, just the road is difficult," said Blau, accidentally stepping on a piece of the rubble in the Chemistry wing hallway.

Uplink

continued from page 1

The New York Times Business Section. Zuckerman emphasized that much of his success came from his willingness to work hard. Quoting Woody Allen, Zuckerman said that 90% of everything in life is showing up. He added that being energetic and always staying ahead of the game is the way to prove oneself to others. Zuckerman emphasized that "what stops many people [from getting ahead] is assumption. Many feel they can't be journalists because they are not qualified. The truth is, anyone can put pen to paper."

Stephanie Nano, an editor for the newswire service, The Associated Press (AP), described her office "as a huge news factory. It never shuts down here, the AP is like Denny's—we're open 24 hours a day," she said. The AP newswire is a news co-operation, selling its services to many print newspapers that pay a fee to use AP materials. Nano explained that while working as a writer or editor for the Associated Press may be stressful and anything but leisurely, it has a certain sense of recognition that cannot be found anywhere else in the newspaper-reporting field. Those who work for the AP get to see their work sent all over the world. The AP is also often the primary source of news outside of major American cities. Most national newspapers can't afford to hire correspondents in smaller cities. When newsworthy events happen, they turn to the AP.

Each of the journalists described his/her work schedule. Most work long hours for low pay compared to other professional fields. "This is not a glamorous field," said Ascher-Walsh.

Marcella Rosen, president of the Rosen Consulting Group, mediated the session. She discussed the significant impact that journalism has on every aspect of the world today, including marketing, publishing, graphic design, music and sales. "There's really a job for everyone in the communications industry," Rosen said. She is slated to mediate upcoming Uplink events as well.

The session concluded with questions from the audience.

"Although my particular major [of broadcast journalism] wasn't represented on the panel, I still found the session to be beneficial, as I learned first-hand from journalists what the general field is all about," said Dee Lax, SCW '02.

Adam Wieder, YC '00, said he felt the program was "entertaining, yet not too helpful for anyone seriously interested in getting a job in the industry [of communications]."

Leslie Ginsparg, SCW '98, the coordinator of the event and last year's editor-in-chief of The Observer, felt the program was "honest, informative, and very colorful. [All the journalists] were coming from different places; that's what makes for a great panel," she said.

Metropolitan

continued from page 1

Students, explained that the program is exciting because it allows students to get a taste of New York in the company of faculty. Through the informal settings, students and Judaic and secular faculty members will come to know each other on a level other than in class.

The nineteen students attending the first event on Thursday, February 4, will see "The Fantasticks," the world's longest running musical, with Dr. Hadassah Kosak. Later that month, Dr. Joanne Jacobson will join other theatrically-minded students in viewing "The Scarlet Pimpernel," and Dr. Brenda Loewy will escort students to "Les Misérables." Students interested in music will join Dr. Ellen Schrecker at the opera for "Lizzie Borden" or Dr. Pauline Kra and her husband for "Madame Butterfly." Dr. Sidney Langer will accompany students listening to Chinese music at Merkin Concert Hall, and Dr. Charles Raffel and his wife will join students for an afternoon of classical music at the Brooklyn Bridge. Dr. Ruth Bevan will escort jazz fans to the music club, Jazz in the City.

More athletic students will look forward to spending an evening ice skating at Chelsea Piers with Dr. Allen Burdowski and family. Those who enjoy watching the athletics will join Dr. Marcel Perlman and his wife for a Yankees game. Others will join Professor Lana Schwebel on a walking tour of Rockefeller Center or Dr. Marize Pommot-Maia at the Bronx Zoo. Museum-goers will explore the Museum of Jewish Heritage with Dr. Aharon Fried and his wife and the Piermont Morgan Library with Dr. Judith Neaman.

Students interested in exploring different cultures through food will dine with Dr. Joel Hochman at the Japanese Haikara Grill and will join Dr. Ephraim Kanarfogel in sampling Italian cuisine at Va Bene.

The professors are excited to participate. "I believe that Stern should be using the city as Barnard always claimed to -- as a laboratory," said English Professor Dr. Judith Neaman. "I love New York and would like to see the girls take more advantage of the city...there are wonderful things in this neighborhood architecturally and culturally."

She explained that she looks forward to exploring the Morgan Library with students both as a Medievalist, who has used the library facilities, and as an artist. She said that the library is an extremely exciting place and has hired interesting curators in the past.

Dr. Charles Raffel, Professor of Jewish Philosophy, said he looks forward to experiencing "Barge music at the Brooklyn Bridge." He explained that his wife loves classical music, and said he wants to enjoy this "cultural aspect of New York, in this case, Brooklyn." He added, "It's nice to see students outside the classroom setting and share a cultural experience together."

Dr. Marize Pommot-Maia, Professor of Physics and Computer Science, says she thinks this program is a good opportunity to get involved with students and have something outside the classroom. She says she looks forward to showing students the Bronx Zoo. Since Pommot-Maia grew up near a bird sanctuary in Brazil, where there was a lot of wildlife, she wants to point out the various Brazilian animals to students. "This will be a rich experience. There should be more than homework, midterms and finals," she said.

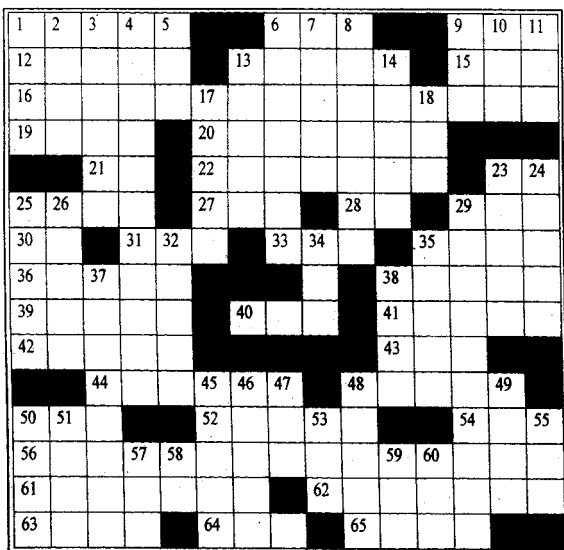
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Mr. Smith, I Presume ?

By: Leah Lubetski and Elana Davis



ACROSS

1. Territories
6. Delivery drs.
9. Scientist's workplace
12. Mean stare
13. Hand lotions
15. French water
16. Smith and Goldblum movie
19. Trends
20. Nor's partner
21. Hesitant sound
22. Eighth planet
23. Sun god
24. "The World According to ____"
26. Knife
27. Spanish tea
28. New York baseball player
29. Nurse
30. Baseball stat
32. Help
34. Prison
35. Asian country
37. Craze
38. Auras
39. What is Madrid
40. Leaves out
41. Thank you in Nice
42. Nickname for Lenny
43. Recount
47. Dried clay
49. 1002
51. Protect
53. Tarry
55. Smith and Hackman movie

60. Circus performer
61. ____ illusion
62. Not us
63. Shame on you
64. Friar ____

DOWN

1. Friday's
2. Arm bone
3. More Cool
4. Smith sitcom
5. Follows Aug.
6. Antigone's father
7. Butler commedienne
8. Confession booths?
9. Ushers
10. Triptik printer
11. Purchase
13. Genuflect
14. Act division
17. Boredom
18. Before in poetry
23. Illuminated again
24. Holds world on his shoulders
25. The Brothers ____
26. Orphan Girl
29. Smith and Jones movie
32. Spice
34. Spanish cheer
35. Brooch
37. Behind
38. Shape
45. Have ____; try
46. Clumps

See answers on page 14

Exploring the City: In and Around Union Square

SHLOMIT ZAUDERER
Staff Writer

While many choose to slumber on Sunday mornings, this student is up and about at 6:30 a.m. in time to teach Sunday Hebrew School classes in the Village. Although I'm half-asleep when I arrive, I often notice the sights and sounds that dot the landscape in my harried rush to work. A few weeks ago I decided to find out exactly what goes on in and around my Hebrew School when the *aleph bet* and *tefilla* quieted down.

Over 170 years ago, the union of Bovey Road (4th Avenue) and Bloomingdale Road (Broadway Avenue) become known as Union Square. Acquired by New York City in 1833, the park opened to the public on July 19, 1834. The square was used as a recreation area, commercial site and forum for political meetings. For the next 100 years or so, the park was refurbished and remodeled to make way for the changes of the emerging city.

In the 1920's the park was demolished to make room for the subway system New York is so famous for. Two kiosks still do remain in vintage 1920's style, as are statues of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Mohandas Ghandhi (erected in 1986). Playgrounds were added in the 1980's and in 1997 Union Square was declared a national landmark by the US government. Besides all the cool things there are to do around Union Square, just sitting with a good book on one of the many benches can be an exciting afternoon in and of itself.

I found two great bookstores just around the corner from each other. On 4th Avenue between 12th and 13th Streets is Alabaster's Book Shop specializing in rare and hard to find titles. On the two dollar clearance rack I found a copy of Cornelius Rayns's *The Longest Day* and Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur*. New York City's famous Strand Book Shop is located at 828 Broadway between 12th and 13th where you can find every book under the sun. In addition, you never know what you can find on the \$.48, \$1, and \$2 carts outside.

If reading isn't your thing, there are half a dozen antique stores right next to Strand (going towards 13th Street) which are filled with pictures, furniture, clothes and knick-knacks.

Nearby, Beth Israel Hospital has an Ambulatory Care Center on the East side of Union Square at 14th street. After January it will seek volunteers to commit for only two hours a week for a minimum of 6 months. It has a wide range of services in Cancer, Dermatology, ENT, Ophthalmology, Pediatrics and a Women's Health Center. Anyone interested in volunteering should call 212-420-2733 and arrange an interview.

My journey landed me right in front of CRUNCH! At first I thought it was a modern hip hop clothing store but upon further investigation I found an exercise facility that wanted me to workout right then and there. Although the gym does not have separate classes for women, they have many bikes and treadmills. With monthly fees of \$79 or a one to two year membership you won't be sorry. Among the classes offered are kickboxing, sculpting, cardio and African dance.

Bowlmar Lanes is just a hop, skip and a jump away from the train station. Located on University between 12th and 13th, Bowlmar is open from 10 a.m. until 4 a.m. on weekends and until 1 a.m. on weekdays. Games cost \$3.95 before 5 p.m. and \$4.95 later in the evening. Shoe rental is \$3.00. Every Monday night it has Night Strike featuring unlimited games from 10 p.m. until 4 p.m. for only \$12.

On the southeast corner of the square is the entertainment superstore, Virgin Megastore. Imported from England, Virgin boasts thousands of movie titles, CD's, tapes and books. My favorite is the selection of classical music for less than \$7. It also has Andrea Bocelli's *Night in Tuscany* for \$30. For the same price you can buy the 3 Tenors. On one wall alone it has 30 listening stations for each section. The store sells Latin, Rap, Blues, Jazz, Rock and movie soundtracks. A coffee and espresso bar is located on the upper level.

Forbidden Planet, located at 840 Broadway, sells comics, books, magazines, posters and anything related to science fiction. If by chance you do get lost trying to find Forbidden Planet, just look for the Darth Vader model in the store window.

If you are looking for a great place to eat, Village Crown offers both milk and meat at reasonable prices. The dairy restaurant at 94 3rd Avenue (between 12th and 13th Streets) serves Italian-style food with salads and fish options. Strictly Cholor Yisroel, the outdoor garden for both the winter and summer is an added touch. The meat restaurant next door serves falafel (100% parve) as well as shish kabobs, off the grill and many forms of chicken. For other varieties of chicken, try Chik Chuk Chicken, located on University place between 13th and 14th. For reservations call 228-3100.

I left Union Square feeling like I had a much better bearing of where I worked. When I finally get a walkman I'm making a beeline for Virgin Megastore to buy Chopin's *Impromptu*. I also have my eye on a purse, circa 1920, at Cheap Jack's Vintage Clothing Store on Broadway, between 12th and 13th. If you do end up down around Union Square just wander around, you never know what you'll find.

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(WEEKDAY CLASSES MEET FOR ONE 100 MINUTE SESSION PER WEEK)

| | | |
|-----------|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SUNDAY | 9:30 a.m. | JEWISH SPECIAL EDUCATION Rabbi Eliezer Vilinsky |
| | 11:30 a.m. | TEACHING BIBLE: PENTATEUCH Rabbi Nachum Muschel |
| MONDAY | 6:00 p.m. | MORAL DEVELOPMENT Dr. Yitzhak S. Handel |
| | 7:50 p.m. | CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT Dr. Chaim Feuerman |
| TUESDAY | 6:00 p.m. | SEMINAR IN CONTEMPORARY JEWISH EDUCATION Dr. Alvin I. Schiff |
| | 7:50 p.m. | LEADERSHIP AND SUPERVISION Dr. Chaim Feuerman |
| WEDNESDAY | 6:00 p.m. | COGNITIVE PROCESSES AND METHODS IN JEWISH EDUCATION Dr. Aharon H. Fried |
| | 7:50 p.m. | TEACHING HEBREW LANGUAGE ARTS Prof. Ruth Adler |
| THURSDAY | 6:00 p.m. | TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST Dr. Robert M. Shapiro |
| | 7:50 p.m. | TEACHING BIBLICAL EXEGESIS Dr. Moshe Sokolow |

ARTS

Retribution Fails to Deliver

DASSI ZEIDEL
Cultural Arts Editor

"Retribution" is a tale of vengeance and memory. Jud (nee Judah) Kramer, a Holocaust survivor, is now a Broadway director living the high life with his American actress wife, Marianne, in New York City circa 1965. When he starts directing a play about Auschwitz, he is visited by nightmares and Carl Walkowitz, a mysterious acquaintance from the past. Carl has a powerful secret that threatens to destroy the new life Jud has built with his "naïve shiksa wife," a woman who has never known the sting of anti-Semitism or the torture of a concentration camp.

Before long, Carl becomes Jud's assistant and integrates himself into Jud's life and his small circle of friends. Marianne is uncomfortable around Carl, whose obvious physical and emotional scars remind her of her husband's former life, a life she was not a part of and feels shut out of. Carl continually seeps into the Kramers' lives, asking questions and bringing Jud's past to the forefront in a world where such topics become embarrassing. Carl accuses Jud of being an impostor; a man who sleepwalks through reality and who has escaped his past by becoming an American complete with a new accent, a new name and a trophy wife. Carl forces the Kramers to see that the play they are

putting on is about real events which Jud has experienced firsthand. Carl bridges two worlds and pushes Jud and Marianne over the brink from fantasy to reality.

Mark's Shapiro's adaptation of Daniel Stern's award-winning novel, *Who Shall Live, Who Shall Die*, has promise, but fails to deliver. The dialogue is stilted, the acting (for the most part) is awkward and the set design is a mess. The set consists mostly of sliding boards used to indicate location. However, during the scenes in the Kramers' apartment, the actors randomly use different sides of the stage as an exit, creating much confusion and disrupting the flow of the scene.

The subject of "Retribution" has been executed more effectively in numerous genres. Books adapted into movies such as "Sophie's Choice" and "Schindler's List" develop similar themes more deeply and with supreme acting. Shapiro's characters are overly dramatic with lines that sometimes seemed more suited to a daytime soap opera.

Dennis Christopher, however, plays Carl Walkowitz with intensity and believability.

It's not until the very end of the play that Carl's secret is revealed to the Kramers and the audience. Clues are given to the audience at several intervals. By the time it is revealed, it is not astonishing or



photo credit: Carol Rosegg

(Left to Right) Dennis Christopher, Jenna Stern & Jack Laufer in the new Mark R. Shapiro drama "Retribution." The story of two Holocaust survivors who meet twenty years after WWII and share a chilling secret.

even gasp worthy. The characters react with almost overbearing melodrama and the audience wonders if this is the most effective way a play can portray the impact of the Holocaust.

"Retribution" is playing at Lambs Theatre, 130 West 44th Street between Broadway and Sixth Avenue. Show times

are Monday through Saturday at 8 p.m. with matinees on Wednesday and Saturday at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$40 and \$45 and are available through Tele-charge (212) 239-6200, or at the Lambs Box Office (open 12 noon to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday). Rush tickets at \$20 are on sale daily beginning two hours before curtain time.

Some Good Clean Fun

DINA GIELCHINSKY
Cultural Arts Editor

It's Lollapalooza sans the depravity. Well, maybe with just a little bit of depravity. Yeshiva College, under the direction of Benjamin Joffe, YC '00, is presenting the YC Arts Festival on February 7-18. The festival is sponsored by the Office of the Dean. It will feature four genres of creative expression, namely literature, visual arts, music, and performance arts, all composed by YC and SCW students. Consider it a chance for the liberal arts majors to laugh at the business majors, or on a less vengeful note, a chance for the students of Yeshiva University to express themselves and appreciate the creativity of their peers. "The most important thing is to create a forum for anyone and everyone to participate," says Joffe. "[The fes-

tival promises be an overarching venue for everyone on campus."

This year's festival will be larger than those held in previous years, when the festivities lasted for only four days. Arts Festival '99 will be held for just under two weeks, replete with jazz ensembles, sculpture exhibitions and fashion designs, to name a few of the attractions. Performing the opening concert is a band comprised of YC students David Rappaport and Elan Rubinstein, rumored to rival Portishead. Most of the events will take place in the YU Museum in the Uptown library, with piano performances being held at Schottenstein. Be on the lookout for more information for what promises to be the event of the year. Guests and relatives are encouraged to attend.

Psychology and Religion Class Provokes Questions

NINA FREEMAN

Course number 3845, Psychology and Religion. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00a.m.-10:15a.m.

Hmmm.... What an eye catcher. As I perused my green course book for the Fall 1998 semester last May, that one definitely caught my eye. Is it a psych class? Limudei kodesh? Another addition to the "Torah U'madda" curriculum here at Stern College?

To be honest, I had absolutely no idea what this intriguing option had to offer until I spoke at length with both the professor, Isaac Schechter, and several of his students.

This is indeed, a class designed for psychology majors. While it isn't a class on any particular theory, it instead explores the concept of religion within the

realm of psychology. One who plans to pursue a career in the field has to confront major issues which have an impact on, and might possibly conflict with, her own faith. Often the psychologist will find herself in a multicultural sphere, where she must confront psychology within a foreign cultural context. Schechter begins the class with an overview of what the major theorists had to say about religion. For example, the class explores the Freudian concept of religion, an immature illusion which expresses fears and needs, as well as Jung's view of religion as a healthy component of basic human development.

While the course is designed mostly for professional development, there is certainly an aspect of it which involves more personal growth, both in and out of a professional sphere. Professor Schechter sees the field of clinical psychology as being one which lacks concrete elements

which are sometimes helpful, and often reassuring, when evaluating clients. Very often you use yourself as the partner in the client's treatment. It is therefore fundamental for all psychologists to truly know themselves, and as students of Yeshiva University, I think we can all agree that religion plays a fundamental role in self-knowledge. According to Professor Schechter, a person must be psychologically mature in order to integrate religion into a personality, for "true religious development requires psychological maturity." For example, the Nevi'im or Chazal, were psychologically developed on a cognitive and intellectual level which led them to their religious insights. Only after achieving a functional relationship with other people can we begin to tackle a complete relationship with our Creator.

The final component of the class is a social one. Religion and psychology

both confront issues which are relevant to our society. The question becomes do you seek guidance from a religious figure or a psychological one? What this class is saying is that the two aren't mutually exclusive, rather each is a prerequisite for the other. Only through a fully developed psychological background, and a fine understanding of one's own personality can a student of psychology help mankind explore the human mind and behavior. Students view the class as both dynamic and thought-provoking, with a lot of philosophy mixed in with the psychology. The class is discussion-based, and places a large emphasis on outside readings. Professor Schechter forces his students to think. So, how does all this play into our conception of "Torah U'madda"? It would seem to be that the two cannot be separated. Only through thinking and understanding, learning and contemplating, using the intellect and exploring the spirituality, can one begin to grasp human behavior within a religious sphere.

Answers to Crossword Puzzle from page 12

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | U | R | F | S | | O | B | S | | L | A | B |
| G | L | A | R | E | | K | E | R | I | S | | E |
| I | N | D | E | P | | E | N | D | E | N | C | E |
| F | A | D | S | | | N | E | I | T | H | E | R |
| | | E | H | | | N | E | P | T | U | N | E |
| G | A | R | P | | | U | L | U | | T | E | |
| R | N | | R | B | I | | S | O | S | | C | E |
| I | N | D | I | A | | | L | | M | A | N | I |
| M | I | E | N | S | | | Q | U | E | | O | M |
| M | E | R | C | I | | | | | | L | E | N |
| | | R | E | L | A | T | E | | A | D | O | B |
| M | I | I | | | G | U | A | R | D | | L | A |
| E | N | E | M | Y | O | F | T | H | E | S | T | A |
| A | C | R | O | B | A | T | | O | P | T | I | C |
| T | H | E | M | | T | S | K | | T | U | C | K |

ARTS

"A Bug's Life": Disney Does it Again

SARAH CATE
Writer's Position

"A Bug's Life," the latest in the collaborative efforts of Apple founder, Steve Jobs, and Disney, is definitely not a movie exclusively for children. Disney, with its characteristic regularity, has produced a film that combines the best of classic humor and creative talents with the superior animation techniques of Pixar.

The film focuses on an ant colony located on an isolated land mass threatened by a horde of grasshoppers. Flik, the lead ant of the film, evokes the grasshoppers' anger when he accidentally overturns their food offering. In an effort to defend his fellow ants from the angry grasshoppers, he goes to the city to find warrior bugs to combat the grasshopper threat. Due to a series of errors, he ends up bringing home a group of circus insects. The ensuing solution to the grasshopper threat, and the development of the circus bugs and the ants' relationship, provide ample moral lessons and laughs at the same time.

"A Bug's Life" utilizes a variety of vocal talent that contribute to the depth of the

bug's characters. These include Kevin Spacey, who brings an evil brutality to Hopper, the grasshopper ringleader; Julia Louis-Dreyfus, as the ant princess; Denis Hyde-Pierce as the walking stick bug; Denis Leary, as Francis the ladybug; and Roddy McDowall, as Mr. Soil, the ant queen's assistant. Leary surpasses his usual comic antics in his role as Francis, a ladybug with an attitude who scares even the most brazen.

The animation in "A Bug's Life" is unbelievably realistic. Pixar utilizes computer-generated animation, which contributes to the seamless effect of the movie. From the landscape, with its detailed leaves waving in the wind, to the scenes of New York City, the film's animation is flawless and indescribably amazing.

The film, although targeted at a very young audience, contains Disney's usual stock of jokes intended for the mature members of the audience. "A Bug's Life" is a wonderful film for adults as well as children, both of whom will appreciate the humor and the lessons to be learned from this colony of extraordinary ants.

"Enemy of the State," Unexpectedly Thrilling

BATYA FRIEDMAN
Staff Writer

At first glance, "Enemy of the State" looks like another "Will Smith saves the world" drama. Pleasantly, the film has an intricate plot, well-written dialogue and edge-of-your-seat action. This political drama begins with the murder of an important government figure caught on tape. When the murderer, played by Jon Voight, discovers there is a tape of the crime, he knows he must find it or his own political career will be ruined. Unknown to young lawyer Robert Dean, played by Will Smith, the tape is dropped into his shopping bag. He is catapulted into a chase, running from the government where his every move is anticipated and

recorded.

The movie raises an interesting ethical question of national security versus citizen rights.

The movie's director, Tony Scott captures appropriate intensity from his cast to keep the audience captivated. It is delightful to see Gene Hackman in a softer role, as an aid to Will Smith, rather than the Lex Luther villainous characters he so often plays. The always-charming Will Smith lives up to his previous blockbuster hits, "Men in Black" and "Independence Day." A surprise addition to the cast, Lisa Bonet, resurfaces from her "Cosby Show" days in this film, and does a commendable job. "Enemy of the State" is unexpectedly thrilling, even if you don't like Will Smith (and who doesn't?). Like Siskel and Ebert, this movie gets two thumbs up.



photo credits: Touchstone Pictures and Jerry Bruckheimer, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Attorney Robert Clayton Dean (Will Smith) unwittingly possesses information about the death of a U.S. Congressman and becomes a target of high-tech pursuit by a rogue government agent in "Enemy of the State."

Dramatics Society Update-SCDS Holds Tryouts

EILEEN CHUDOW
News Editor

The Stern College Dramatics Society has announced the dates of its first dramatic production for the 1998-99 school year. Nearly 40 aspiring SCW and SSSB actresses auditioned for 12 roles in the SCDS spring semester production. The December 8 audition was for "Nobody's Gilgul," a comedy written by Lois Roisman. SCDS plans to stage the play March 14-18.

Devora Cenko, SCW '99, SCDS president, explained that the auditions were delayed due to difficulty choosing a play. Having decided on "Nobody's Gilgul," the society is working with the playwright to adapt the play, since it originally contained some inappropriate aspects.

Earlier this semester, SCDS held a play-writing contest for SCW and SSSB students in the Midtown campus. Only two students, however, expressed interest in writing a play. Cenko said that the society is looking into the possibility of performing these

student plays in the future.

Interest and enthusiasm in SCDS activities is growing. Recently, SCDS co-sponsored a Shabbaton with the Student Alliance for Global Awareness, SCWSC's environmental club. According to Cenko, more students attended than she had expected. "We had phenomenal turnout, the speakers were enthusiastically received," she said. "Nothing could have prepared me for how amazing it was."

"I'm excited about what we're doing this year," said Cenko. She added that in past years the student productions were very well received, with high attendance rates. "We're trying to make people aware of the performances and build up interest." The society's efforts have been successful. Interest is growing and the auditions had a good turnout. Students often approach Cenko wanting to become involved with SCDS.

Cenko encourages students to "keep their eyes open for our flyers for tryouts and performances."

Gravity, Shmavity

DINA GIELCHINSKY
Cultural Arts Editor

Bluntly put, "Villa Villa" has no plot, no dialogue, and basically no intellectual merit as a theatrical production. It's also the best 65 minutes you'll experience in what you'll come to conclude is your ordinary, dull, humdrum life. At least

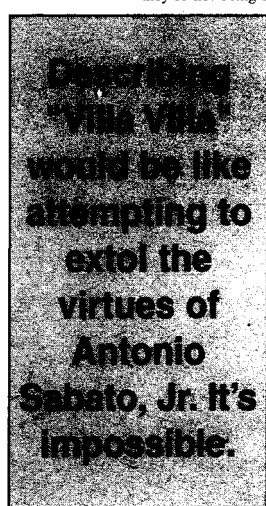
Leonardo DiCaprio, Madonna and Drew Barrymore seem to think so. They've all gone.

I'll backtrack. You know those fuzzy dreams you wake up from and can't clearly recollect? Where it's dark and you're flying and all these people are around? Well, those dreams are aspirin to "Villa Villa's" speed. Jewel to "Villa Villa's" Liz Phair. Jennifer Love Hewitt to "Villa Villa's" Sharon Stone. Describing "Villa Villa" would be like attempting to extol the virtues of Antonio

Sabato, Jr. It's impossible. It's just thrill, thrill, thrill. Hot-blooded Latinos from the Argentinean De La Guarda troupe trapeze across the ceiling, propel down the walls and snatch up audience members, all to the beat of something akin to jungle music. It pauses for about 10 minutes to give occasion to a party, comparable only to what I can conjecture as to that which will take place in Times Square at 12:00 a.m. on January 1, 2000. (I know, it's Friday night, stop whining.) The antics then continue, including my personal favorite, which

brought out the sadist in me, a woman slamming spread-eagled onto a canvas wall. Repeatedly. Bless the souls of those wacky producers, Jeffrey Seller, Kevin McCollum, David Binder, Arielle Tepper and Daryl Roth.

The point of the show is that there is no point. The audience members, who stand the whole time when they're not being lifted into the air by



some screaming banshee, do not, rather cannot, analyze, surmise, or even think, for that matter. It's just non-reality, where surrealism abounds and excites, all in a misty haze. And I do mean misty. My only warning - don't bother blow-drying your hair before going to this shindig. This is not a production for the prissy. Forgo the play with the fake pouncy cats or singing nuns and repressed heroine and blow your wad on this.

De La Guarda performs at the Daryl Roth Theatre, 20 Union Square East (at 15th Street). The performance schedule is as follows: Tuesday through Thursday at 8:00 p.m., Friday and Saturday at 7:00 and 10:00 p.m., and Sunday at 7:00 p.m. Ticket prices range from \$20-\$45. They may be purchased through Telecharge at (212) 239-6200.

ARTS

The Scarlet Pimpernel Provides Intrigue, Romance

SIMA GOLDEN
Staff Writer

Originally debuted a year ago and already revised, the 1998 Tony-nominated Best Musical "The Scarlet Pimpernel," is attracting a fresh, new wave of audiences from around the world. Directed and choreographed by Robert Longbottom, this musical romance-adventure is bound for a successful, long-running future among New York's greatest performances on Broadway.

Though the musical centers around a romantic, true-love discovery, the Pimpernel's activities focus on challenge, bravery, and the ultimate revenge for justice. Its opening scene is a brilliant performance with Marguerite (Rachel York) singing her last exhibition before she is to marry London-bred Sir Percy Blakeney (Douglas Sills).

Like many Broadway plays, the

beginning is somewhat confusing, rushing to introduce the background of the plot. However, once the scenario unfolds, audience members become entranced and wrapped up in the lives of the characters. Leads Sills, Rex Smith, and York, as well as the rest of the gifted cast, create a perfect balance which enhances the story line and makes it more believable.

Adapted from Baroness Orczy's book of the same title, the story is set during the French regime's Reign of Terror. Innocent aristocrats and other virtuous members of society are being maimed by the infamous Madame Guillotine. Our hero is an English aristocrat who leads a band of 11 of his friends who plan to overthrow the bloodthirsty French government through clandestine activity. Lead by the villainous commander Chauvelin and thousands of other French conspirators, the troupe sets out to battle with their small army.

The majestic score serves as a

perfect transition between the two worlds of the grand palace in London and the tumultuous, guillotine-ravaged Paris. Percy conceals his true persona by identifying with a ring whose insignia is a scarlet pimpernel. Unfortunately for his newlywed, French-bred wife, Madame Marguerite, his partisan efforts are hidden and compensated with a masquerade of complete idiocy which she interprets as a marriage gone terribly accursed. Her knight in shining armor transforms overnight into an estranged husband whose effeminate remarks are emphasized solely by the latest fashion trends of lace.

Meanwhile, Chauvelin attempts to blackmail Marguerite, who acts as a revolutionary sympathizer to Chauvelin, aiding him in revealing the identity of the Scarlet Pimpernel. The musical climaxes when Marguerite's younger brother, Armand -- who is also a pimp/accomplice -- is taken captive by Chauvelin. Marguerite desperately tries to rescue him, unknow-

ingly at the expense of betraying her own husband's concealed identity.

The genuine humor laced throughout the play will have you rolling in your seat. Percy's undercover impersonation of an exaggerated, dandily-dressed, and gleeful fop illuminates an otherwise nail-biting and maddening plight created by the barbaric French regime. The thematic song of the Scarlet Pimpernel and company, "Into the Fire We Go!", is as cheerfully uplifting as it is heartfelt, both in melody and lyrics. Conveyed through the music, it is clear to the audience that the 11 young men, armed with only their guts and lace, face great risk with nobility and heroism. While the songs are aimed at the audience's emotions, they are not tear-producing. Instead, the audience goes home satisfied and uplifted, having enjoyed quality entertainment.



photos credit: Joan Marcus

Douglas Sills (center) as 'Percy'/'The Scarlet Pimpernel'



photo credit: Joan Marcus

Rachel York, as 'Marguerite' in The Scarlet Pimpernel

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