



# The Yeshiva University Observer

The Official Newspaper of Stern College for Women

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## Sharon Wins Israeli Elections

By: Ariela Dworetzky



When comparing the difference between American and Israeli politics, one is forced to notice how American politics is based on issues - such as whether abortion should be allowed and whether television should be regulated - while Israeli politics affects the lives of Israelis everyday.

Some of the issues that were being discussed in this last Israeli Prime Ministerial elections expressed this point. These issues affect whether certain Israelis will get to keep their homes, whether their children will be able to walk in the streets safely without the threat of an Arab attack, and whether Yerushalayim will remain in Israeli hands. Neither of the candidates who ran in this election are beloved by the Israeli populace, and neither has certain answers regarding these issues.

Ariel Sharon is the head of the hawkish Likud party and has been the leading contender in this election since it began. Sharon has been a controversial figure in Israeli politics since the early 1980's when he was found guilty by the Kahan Commission for being indirectly responsible for the death of a large number of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatilla camps. He has become even more controversial recently when, in September, he toured the Har HaBayit site, inciting Palestinians to begin their most recent Intifada. Yet despite his notoriety and his advancing age, throughout the campaign Ariel Sharon maintained a lead of twenty points against Ehud Barak, Labor's candidate and -- till the election -- Prime Minister, in all polling samples.

When one considers that in 1999, Ehud Barak was elected by one of the greatest margins in Israeli history, so much so that Binyamin Netanyahu quit not only the race but Israeli politics as well, it compels one to ponder what could Barak have done to lose the people's trust in such a drastic way. Even more interesting is that, according to most newspaper polling samples, if Shimon Peres, the dovish figure who will

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## Controversy Arises Over Expected Tuition Increase

By: Adina Levine

For the second year in a row, tuition is expected to increase steeply at undergraduate campuses.

"It's a good bet that there will be a tuition increase for undergraduates next year," said John Fischer, Director of Facilities. "Tuition increases every year at YU."

As to the extent of the hike, Fischer asserted, "I have no idea how much it's going to be. I haven't heard any rumblings to the effect that the increase this year would be unusual."

However, Dean Karen Bacon speculated differently. "The impression I get is that [the tuition increase] is going to be significant," she said. "For the past few years, we've kept tuition relatively low for the kind of improvements we've been making. To continue these improvements, somebody has to pay for it."

This past year, tuition increased by 7% and Dean Bacon speculates that the increase this year will be the same if not greater. "The face of the Midtown campus has changed radically over the past few years," observed Dean Bacon, "while our tuition has remained virtually stable. So now we must compensate for that."

The tuition increase would affect SCW, YC, and SSSB alike, as the tuition for all three colleges remain relatively the same, with an additional cost of \$50 at the uptown campus for a student activities fee. The basis for the inflated uptown campus cost is probably due to the difference in athletic facilities, according to Fischer.

While the exact increase will be decided by the Board of Trustees in early spring, students expressed horror at the possibility of the rising rates.

"I think most people are against a tuition increase" said Miriam Colton, SCW sophomore. "You won't find many parents or

students who are eagerly awaiting it"

"SCW already has so expensive," said Chana Rosenblatt, SCW senior. "It's not fair for tuition to increase."

Some students, however, claim to understand that the increasing costs of an

SCW education were well founded. "The SCW campus is very different from what it was only a few years ago," remarked Rosenblatt. "It makes sense that it would cost more."

One parent agreed with the rising tuition costs.

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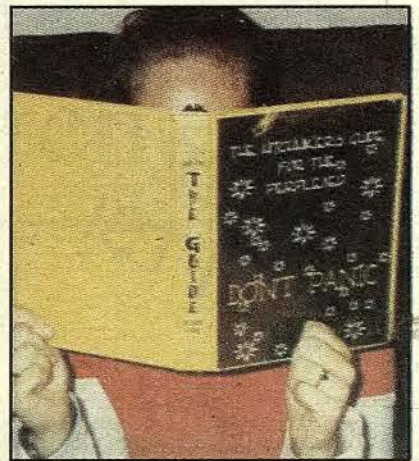
## After Perplexed Semester, Guide Finally Comes Out

By: Sari Moskowitz

Adjusting to hectic, demanding college life after a peaceful, relaxing summer is difficult for most students. Yet perhaps even more difficult for many students is the adjustment to life in New York City. To make this adjustment easier for New Yorkers and out-of-towners alike, several hard-working SCW and YC students have generously volunteered their time to publish The Guide, a handbook that serves to inform students of kosher restaurants, minyanim, book stores, libraries and other places of interest around the Big Apple. When this comprehensive section of The Guide is complete, the editors begin the grueling second part of their project, gathering the phone numbers of nearly 2,000 SCW and YC students and editing them for publication. However this year, The Guide Part II took longer than usual to compile and has just now been published, and - until recently - many SCW and YC students were left wondering how to contact their classmates and friends and what has caused such a lengthy delay.

According to The Guide's editors-in-chief Arona Schneider, an SCW senior, and Avi Soroka, a YC sophomore, the setbacks in the publishing of this year's The Guide stem from three underlying problems. The first quandary, according to Schneider, was Verizon's delay in installing telephone lines throughout the various SCW and YC dorms. This hindrance was caused by the rewiring of the dorms to accommodate the new Restrex system that allows room-to-room calls for a small monthly fee. Nevertheless, Soroka asserts that more problematic than Verizon's delays was the fact that this year, unlike in the past, students had the option of submitting their information for publication either over the Internet or by handwritten applications. In past years, when applications were accepted only via the Internet, the information was already typed and ready for editing. However, the editing process was slowed by the need for applications to be typed before they could be edited.

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## SCWSC Website Finally in Use

By: Michelle Fogel

SCWSC.com, the new official Student Council website for Stern College for Women, was publicly unveiled today after sitting virtually empty for months, with hopes to add a much-needed online link between students and their elected student council and to finally offer a streamlined alternative to the cluttered bulletin boards that exist in SCW. The website, which has its own domain name, differs from past years' Student Council websites as it is the first to not be a page link of the official Yeshiva website network of student clubs and organizations hosted and financially sponsored by YU at www.yu.edu.

Chani Schubert, SCW senior and Student Council President, thought of the idea for an exclusive Student Council website last fall, but says that the whole

executive board put it together. "It's an easy way to access information and we hope students will be able to utilize and



take advantage of it," Schubert stated.

SCWSC.com, while it does not offer an extensive database of all student council-related information, does offer some basic informational features, as well

as contests, a mazel tov page, 'student of the week' section, 'pictures in review' area, and suggestion box. Listings and descriptions of the executive board of Student Council, its clubs and committees are available to browse, as well as a bulletin board of school events and activities which SC Vice-President Esther Vogel, SCW senior, updates "every day."

The domain name, according to Schubert, has been in existence for several months. Elana Soleimani, SCW junior and SC (Student Council) Treasurer explained that the website was supposed to be ready towards the end of last semester, but was a little late in coming out.

The 'student of the week section' is supposed to be an opportunity for "students to nominate their friends or even

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Sudden Switch in Junior Class Presidency

Page 20



Student's Experience on Israel Solidarity Mission

Page 8



New Editor-in-Chief of The Observer Takes Over

Page 20

# NEWS BRIEFS

**Earthquake Shatters Indian Villages:** On January 26, a devastating earthquake destroyed approximately 450 villages in India and killed over 7,000. Volunteers continue to sift through the rubble and feed the thousands of homeless victims. Regulations and taxes are now being passed in India to help raise money to aid the families who have been affected by this calamity.

**Senate confirmed John Ashcroft** as attorney general: John Ashcroft, a former Missouri senator, was confirmed in a 58 to 42 vote by Senate members. Mr. Ashcroft anticipates appointing Theodore Olson as solicitor general and Larry Thompson as deputy attorney general, and has already begun interviewing people for other top Justice Department positions.

**Libyan Terrorist Convicted in Lockerbie Bombing:** Libyan terrorist Ali Mohamed al-Megrahi was convicted of bombing the Pan Am jumbo jet over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988, that killed 270 people. Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah, another Libyan man accused of the bombing, was released.

**The Port Authority** of New York and New Jersey raised fare prices from \$4 to \$6 and on the PATH trains from \$1 to \$1.50 on its bridges and tollbooths connecting the two states. The plan, which allows discounts for EZ-Pass users and off-peak drivers, hopes to fund a \$9 billion improvement plan and is intended to reduce congestion.

**The Observer welcomes  
all Comments  
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or write to us at  
observer@ymail.yu.edu**

## The Observer

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# Message from the Editors



Adina Levine  
Executive Editor

"Meet me in the caf at 6," says a random SCW student. Frequent words at Stern. Two friends passing each other in the hall, a group of soulmates who otherwise don't have time for each other, or a bunch of classmates who want to share more than class - all planning their dinner schedules around each other. With a \$750 must-spend budget, students are forced to congregate at meal times to enjoy the dubiously delectable

dining offered at the SCW cafeteria. And with whom will they dine? Within a school of less than 1000 students - all who have a common religious ideology and more often than not, a common upbringing - these students must still make cafeteria "dates," appointments to eat regardless of whether they are hungry at that particular time.

I respect those students who make an effort to keep in touch with their long lost friends from camp, high school, or the year in Israel by meeting them for supper once in a while. I understand those soul mates whose schedules vary enough that without a dinner date once a week, they wouldn't otherwise see each other. I comprehend those lucky individuals who have been upgraded to Schottenstien who must make appointments to see their lower class Brookdale counterparts. But what I can't understand is the regular dinner dates, the I-eat-only-with-you-every-night mentality that plagues the cliques of Stern. These students may be afraid of the social awkwardness of arriving at the cafe without having anyone to sit with. They may be afraid of being labeled a "loner," or "loser" to sit alone in the cafeteria. There may not be a book handy to pretend to read while really scouting out the other cafeteria cliques. But these students are allowing their fears to dominate their schedules, infiltrate their lives and limit their friends. What these students don't realize is by denying themselves that "risk," they are also denying themselves an opportunity.

Picture the scene: First day at Stern College, overwhelmed by the sheer number of sweater sets that crowd the cafeteria, I stood alone, surrounded by the shrieks of students reunited after an arduous separation of - could it be? - two months. I had my first encounter with the cafeteria food (is macaroni and cheese supposed to look radioactive?) and looked for a place to sit. Out of the sea of animated and friendly faces, I knew no one. But I mustered my courage and picked a table. "Can I sit here?" I asked and they said, "of course." I sat down with girls I did not know and that's how I made my first Stern friends.

In a scenario that has repeated itself many times over my years at SCW, I have come to enjoy the thrill of not knowing with whom I will eat supper when I enter the cafeteria. I eat when I'm hungry or when my schedule allows it. Yes, there are some days when I walk into the cafeteria and don't know anyone, and sometimes these days are just as nice as when I sit with my closest friend, because I am forced to eat with people I barely know. And thus I get to know people. I expand my repertoire of friends only by being open to new faces. It is not a faux pas to walk up to someone you don't know and say "Can I sit here?" Nor is it a sign that you have no friends if you choose instead to sit by yourself and pretend to read.

In a society that associates eating with socializing and equates the number of surrounding friends with popularity, we must learn to divorce ourselves from these false values. A table-full of superficial acquaintances does not mean happiness nor does sitting alone mean lonely. Every student must decide for herself: Am I interested in making new friends in college or will I limit myself exclusively to my previous friend? Do I need the security of a group of friends in order to eat or can I walk in alone without hurting my self-esteem? Can I be secure in my self-worth to be open to new people or do I not have what it takes to make new friends?

The social environment of Stern presents us with a wonderful opportunity. We go to a school where every single one of our classmates is eligible to be a potential friend, and we should make the most of this prospect. We should not feel that we've made all the friends we're going to need at this point in our life. By doing so, we are turning down the soul mate who G-d intended us to meet tomorrow in the cafeteria.



Michelle Fogel  
Editor-in-Chief

In life, it is a commonly held notion that as we get older, we become less interested in cultural events, society, trends, and

the arts in general. For those who are New Yorkers or from some other culturally enriched 'Big City,' that means eventually caring less about seeing the latest Broadway show, museum opening, line of clothing from a favorite designer, or architectural display. For those of us not fortunate enough to be native New Yorkers (myself included,) that means eventually not taking interest in possibly the only art form a 'Small Town' has to offer, such as a lone museum, theater, bookstore, or the discount movie theater.

It would seem that Stern College has all the qualifications of driving the aforementioned notion to its death. Our school's location (you can't get any more heart of New York than Midtown,) schedule (how many schools do you know that never have school on Friday?) and plethora of student-run clubs committed to finding inexpensive ways for us to take advantage of all the artistic and cultural events New York City has to offer make SCW seem successful in its goal of keeping us perpetually interested in the arts. And hey, if we don't like what New York City has to offer in the way of culture, Stern offers its own cultural world, replete with Arts

Festivals, annual plays, literary and artistic journals, and singing and dancing troupes. Yet, despite the best efforts of SCW, many of its students suffer from what is officially known as *Arts Burnout*.

Although *Arts Burnout* is the technical name of the illness afflicting mostly SCW students, the course of the disease goes something like this: Culturally-deprived freshman arrives at SCW from either out-of-town or Long Island and is immediately amazed at the amount of cultural opportunities within a twenty-block radius of school. In excitement, she starts subscribing to *Time Out NY*, buys tickets to Broadway shows at least twice a week (even accepting dates with random YU guys in exchange for orchestra seats), spends her Friday mornings at a museum or art gallery, and has signed up for every culturally-oriented club at Club Fair. By sophomore year, she is still one of the first ten students to sign up at Metropolitan Experience, and although she cannot afford to attend Broadway shows twice a week, she still has solid plans for Thursday and Sunday nights. By junior year, she does not mind if she gets the Metropolitan Experience trip to Dougie's, and frankly, aren't all those Broadway shows the same anyway? By senior year, she has relegated her Friday mornings to sleeping and considers the Brookdale lobby a cultural event. At this point, she has successfully been diagnosed with *Arts Burnout*.

Sadly enough, the objective of taking an active interest in arts and culture that SCW encourages in its students is the very one that results in

burnout, disinterest, ignorance, and apathy towards the arts in general. Like drug burnout, *Arts Burnout* occurs to students who take on too much too soon and become quickly overwhelmed. Perhaps that is the underlying reason to the low turnout last month's Metropolitan Experience received at its sign-up. When Metropolitan Experience was first introduced at Stern a few years ago, lines poured out of Koch Auditorium at the sign-up, and students were incredulous at the idea that Stern would pay for them (at steep prices too) to attend the Lion King, New York City Opera, or a lesson in pottery. A few years and scores of events later, students have lost interest in Metropolitan Experience sign-up, and would almost rather see the latest mind-numbing teen flick at Kips Bay movie theater than the New York City Ballet.

Perhaps the reason why Metropolitan Experience didn't draw the crowds it has in past years is not due to lack of novelty, but cultural overload, and ultimately the *Arts Burnout* I described above. If you are a student suffering from this common illness, don't be ashamed of it. Acknowledge your problem, and try to overcome it by taking on one cultural venture at a time. Metropolitan Experience, like any other cultural opportunity SCW encourages, is only here because of student interest, and if there is no interest in it, what cultural disinterest it usually takes one a lifetime to achieve instead will be acquired in the few short years of one's college career.

## SCW CALENDAR February-March

11	12	13 Speech Club Event-Phil Schneider Speaking, 7:30 p.m.	14 TAC Shiur Details TBA	15 SC Annual Trivia Bowl, Main Campus	16	17 Sy Syms Shabbaton
18	19	20 TAC Event Rav Teller speaking, 8 p.m. Details TBA	21	22	23	24 Sophomore Class Shabbaton
25	26 Purim Chagiga, Midtown Campus Details TBA	27	28 Club Hour- Nishmat speaker Rav Rieti Shiur, 9 p.m. Details TBA	1	2	3 SCDS Shabbaton
4 SCDS "The Odd Couple" Opening Night	5	6	7	8 Purim Chagiga, Main Campus Details TBA	9	10 The Observer -Commentator Shabbaton

# Editorials

## Getting to the Core of the Problem

By: Miriam Colton

Two women graduate college. Jenny has examined Monet in Art History, memorized the parts of the fetal pig in Biology, and studied U.S. history. Michelle designed web pages in computer class, discussed Mideast history in a seminar, and memorized the human muscles in anatomy class. Who is more "well-rounded" and will be able to contribute more to larger society?

Stern's core requirement seems to be designed to exclusively produce women like Jenny. If Michelle were a student at Stern she would land up with a lot of useless credit from her class choices and would not have fulfilled any of the abundant requirements.

While it's logical to have humanities, social science, natural science and Judaic studies requirements, Stern is very specific about what courses qualify; the problem is the rigidity and arbitrariness. Why does Survey English Lit fulfill the B humanities requirement, but Journalism, my most productive and useful class from last semester, doesn't even count as an elective? (The three E slot elective classes intended for classes of choice are themselves limited!) And why does an Art History class make a well-rounded student and enhance art appreciation, but Principles of Drawing or Sculpture doesn't? Why must I take a Jewish

philosophy class if feel that a halacha class is more useful for me?

One can argue that these core requirements teach fundamental knowledge, and that it's more important to know U.S. History than Japanese History. I understand this. I agree with this. However, more than 12 years of schooling has already taught me the basics. If I haven't caught on by now, one more round will not have a huge effect. Most of us have learned Biology at least twice, and requiring another year is unnecessary. College should be a time to take classes that are different than the classes we took in high school.

People learn better when they want to learn the subject matter than when they are forced to. Giving students more leeway in choosing classes will increase their motivation. If a student doesn't want to be sitting in Art History or Intro to Philosophy, she is generally not going to be an overtly motivated student.

At this stage in our lives, we are making important life decisions. We've taken control of our educational route; we choose to come to Stern instead of secular college, and often opted to spend a year (or more) learning in Israel. Many of us are deciding where we want to live, what we want to do career-wise and who we're going to marry; let us decide what classes to take.

## Marijuana and Modern Orthodoxy

By: Observer Staff

At the end of this past summer I made the decision to smoke marijuana. I was curious. Although for the last three years I've been offered marijuana numerous times, I always had a reason not to try it. Depending on who I was with, my excuses would range from moral indignity ('I just don't think it's right'), forward thinking ('I want to be able to tell my kids that I never smoked it'), disinterest ('I just don't have the inclination'), and fear of the law ('I'll try it when I'm in Amsterdam'). I made a joke out of not trying it ('If I was going to do it to impress someone, that certainly wouldn't be you') and a case for how my not trying it would result in the legalization ('How could I argue that objectively it should be legalized if I'm biased since I've tried it'). Reason after reason, I certainly had many good ones. But then I got curious.

I don't know when exactly this curiosity began. A lot of things probably contributed to my suddenly having the *ta'ava* (desire). Perhaps it was because I was meeting more and more 'normal' people who smoked up regularly (or at least had at some point in their lives). Perhaps the classes I took at Stern where rabbis like Saul Berman stressed that in Torah 'everything is permissible until proven otherwise,' led me to believe that I had a right to do almost anything. But that doesn't really matter. The point is that I wanted to smoke some and I had to figure out how to do it.

As readily available as it was to me, it wasn't something that I was just going to do without giving it the proper amount of thought. I needed first to decide if I was allowed to do it. I thought up the usual list of reasons why it might be forbidden. There was the issue of danger to your life. I asked some biology majors the 'real' risks involved in trying marijuana a few times. Was it really that bad for you? The answer I received was that it was no worse to smoke a joint once, than to try a cigarette. I've tried cigarettes so I decided that the health reasons were not a factor. Then there was the issue of *dina de malchute dina*. I looked in a journal of

contemporary *halacha* and found an article discussing what this concept means exactly. It turns out that it may be only referring to matters of taxation where the government is directly affected by the individual's actions. Something like marijuana (which is not a 'criminal' action) would not fall under this, the same way that illegally renting a basement in Boro Park doesn't fall under this law.

But I still wasn't sure. I asked a few of my more religious friends their opinion. One was adamantly for me trying it, a few said that they couldn't really think of any reason why not. I asked my uncle (a religious Jew) what he thought of it. He discouraged me strongly, but said that *halachikly* there really was not a problem in trying it, except for maybe the concept of 'not coming close to sin'.

So I tried it. I'm not going to go into details about the time and place (since this could lead to my arrest), but it probably was neither the best nor worst environment. And that was that. When people asked me about it, I told them the truth. I explained my justifications and the research that I had put into finding out the *halachik* permissibility. I was rewarded with their praise and respect. Respect for smoking marijuana. Friends told me that I was 'intellectually honest' and 'a good Jew' for doing the research first. It certainly is easy to be a good Jew.

In my head, as I'm writing this, I think of all the objections I could raise to smoking marijuana if I had never wanted to do it. I would say that it's a waste of time, taking time away from Torah. I could say that there's a law not to use heady substances and lose control of oneself. I could cite the many Rabbis who have forbidden smoking cigarettes for people that are not yet addicted. But at the same time, since I did want to smoke up, I have many valid answers to these objections. Women are not obligated in studying Torah, so how can it be a sin to waste that time? Jews often drink on Purim and other holidays, and on Pesach we're forced to drink wine, so how could it be a sin to 'lose control'. Also there's a concept that the Gomorra has been closed and that even though it's possible that if they had known back then how harmful cigarettes were they would have forbidden it, the fact is that they didn't and so it's not forbidden. In the same vein no rabbi of Talmudic times forbade marijuana, therefore it's use should be permissible, even if discouraged.

It seems clear to me that smoking up is not forbidden and following the idea that 'everything not forbidden is permissible,' smoking up is cer-

tainly allowed. More so than that there is even the concept that G-d wants us to enjoy the pleasures of his world and we will be held accountable for permissible things we did not take advantage of when we had the chance. If smoking marijuana is a permissible pleasure it is worthy to try it. More so than that, smoking marijuana might provide a member of Israel with a feeling of spiritual empowerment that will encourage further desires to attain a relationship with G-d. There, now I've just made smoking marijuana a mitzvah. But that's where I get frightened. I've just turned drug abuse and experimentation into a mitzvah and it was not that difficult.

By Modern Orthodox standards I probably didn't do anything wrong. The Torah does not forbid smoking marijuana and I found no real evidence for it being forbidden by Rabbinic law either. But that's just the point. I found no evidence. Notice the many uses of 'I' here. I did my research, I examined the issues and I came to my own conclusions. That is the ideal of the Modern Orthodox movement, to come to one's own informed decisions in simple *halachik* matters. Yet maybe that is the problem with Modern Orthodoxy as well.

A few weeks ago I was talking to a friend of mine on the phone and she mentioned to me that one of her friends (a guy in the YU *S'micha* program) had come up with a *heter* for not being *shomer negiah*. She and I both had a good laugh as she explained to me how he came up with his *heter* and I expressed appreciation at the creative logic that he'd used. After I hung up on her though, I was bothered. This friend of hers had a girlfriend, who he obviously wanted to touch. He did his own research and came up with his very own (perhaps valid) reason why it would be permissible to touch his girlfriend. I could come up with many problems in his *heter*, but I could also come up with many solutions to those problem, and if not solutions then examples where a similar use of inference (such as he used to make his *heter*) has been employed. But how can he have made his own *heter*? He went in knowing what he wanted and went out proving that he could do it.

Really, how can one possibly be expected to come to an objective *halachik* decision when on one side of the decision is the fulfillment of one's *ta'avot* (desires) and on the other side is the repression of those desires? No doubt there will be bias. When it all comes down to it, what really happened in my case, too, is that I wanted to do something and I did it. Everything in between

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COMMENCEMENT 2001

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# Letters

## Fed Up With Men

Dear Editor,

The idea behind Mike and Greg's article, "Over the Mechitzah," is very clever and its potential great but fails in its actual execution.

Mike and Greg portray Stern College for Women students as people who obsess over weight, marriage, and YU guys. While I am not so ignorant or naive to think that no Stern girl ever thinks of those things, but to imply that this is the essence and totality of the Stern population is presumptuous. The last thing intelligent, independent, focused women who study at Stern College need is people writing condescending articles propagating offensive and inaccurate stereotypes of them- in their own newspaper no less.

With comments like "women in Stern College are often confused, they can be uncomfortable with their bodies, their thoughts, and their opinions," Mike and Greg falsely label their reading audience and show that they are not as familiar with Stern College as they presume and present themselves to be.

I am aware that the article is meant to be humorous and many will fault me for taking it so seriously, but until Mike and Greg can write for our side of the mechitzah without offending us, perhaps it would be better for them to stay on their side of it.

Sincerely, Racheli Rubin  
SCW Sophomore

*Greg and Mike Respond:*

Dear Ms. Rubin,

Don't fret, denial will be covered in the next issue.

## Ivy League Treatment

To the Editor:

At my summer employment, I had the opportunity to interact with several people in the workplace. When I am first introduced to these people, many ask what school I attend. When I respond that I will begin my college career at an Ivy League college in the fall, their responses are invariably similar. Their facial expressions reveal admiration and respect as they exclaim, "How nice! You must be extremely intelligent," or something equally complimentary. At that point, I thank them and then excuse myself to meet the next unfamiliar face and often proceed with a similar dialogue.

When I first experienced such conversations following my decision to attend an Ivy League college, I gleaned tremendous satisfaction from people's compliments as my self-esteem skyrocketed. 'If so many people think I am someone special, they can't all be wrong. (Or can they?) I must really be someone important.' As such thoughts began to fill my mind, I detected a dissonant note among the harmonious sounds of my intense pride and satisfaction. All of these people labeled me intelligent, special, and important solely on the basis of one fact: my enrollment at an Ivy League university. They had

no knowledge of my prior accomplishments, my personal abilities, or my character. Yet they still felt qualified to make a value judgement regarding my intellectual ability.

I began to wonder how people would react if I were not an incoming freshman at an Ivy League school, and I were attending a community college instead. Undoubtedly, they would not be so quick to classify me as intelligent. Rather, they would withhold judgement regarding my intellectual capability until they saw my work product. Only then would they make an assessment. More importantly, only then would their assessment be meaningful as it would be based on the tangible results of my work.

This latter process is a much fairer method of determining one's abilities. After all, students must consider several factors in deciding which college to attend. Financial constraints may prevent even the brightest student from attending an Ivy League college. Many students may prefer a college that allows them to focus on their religious studies while simultaneously achieving a secular college education, even though they may possess the intelligence of a typical Ivy League student. Still other students may choose a community col-

lege that allows them the time and flexibility to pursue non-academic interests. Yet when these students meet new people, they will not be afforded the instantaneous respect that I received, even though their intellectual ability may surpass mine. They must work to achieve the admiration of their coworkers, while I was granted the fast track to my colleagues' admiration. Is such a system fair?

Currently, the accepted practice is to draw conclusions about a person based on what school she attends. This habit causes the most harm to those who possess the ability to attend an Ivy League college yet choose to attend school elsewhere. The solution is rather simple: not to assume anything about someone's ability based on where she goes to school. Of course, under such a system I would no longer receive instant respect from my colleagues. Yet while I might miss such special treatment, I understand that I am not a better person because I am a student at an Ivy League school, and thus I do not deserve better treatment than other people.

Signed,  
Mindy Levine, undergraduate,  
Columbia University

## Give Us Some Credit

To the Editor:

Every year, the student body looks forward to seeing the play productions put on by the Yeshiva College Dramatic Society (YCDS) and by the Stern College Dramatic Society (SCDS), on their respective campuses. People are always asking, "What play is YC going to put on this time?" or "When is the Stern play opening?" But aside from those usual questions, students also wonder about such things as "Why can't Stern put on as good a play as YC?" or "Why do the guys have such a nice theater but the girls don't?" I would like to answer those questions for you in one simple statement. SCDS and YCDS are just different. It's that simple. YCDS is like an orange and SCDS is like an apple. You can't compare the two.

When one watches the respective plays, one sees that the two clubs have each displayed amazing talent in order to entertain the audience. However, very few students in the audience know what really goes into putting on a production in YU. Even fewer people realize the differences between what goes into putting on a play in Stern and what goes into putting on a play at YC. From my own experiences in SCDS, I can tell you that the two dramatic societies work under very different dynamics. Whereas the women at Stern may focus on X, Y, and Z, and not spend too much time on A, B, and C, the guys uptown might do the exact opposite.

The question, for example, that bothers me most, that many people ask when comparing the two clubs is why can't the girls put on as good a play, or more specifically, as famous a play, as the guys do. If you have ever tried to find a suitable script to be performed in a single-sex school, as my co-SCDS'ers and I have attempted, you will find that it is equally difficult for each of the clubs to find one. There are only a handful of scripts available that have no men in them. Most of the scripts out there have a strong male pres-

ence in them. If a script does not have a majority of male characters, then either the main character is a man, the savior of the story is a man, or some guy who plays a small part has special significance to part of the play and cannot possibly be cut out of the story. Additionally, he can never be changed to a female role because, for one reason or another, that would cause the story to not make sense. By the same token, there are very few scripts out there that either have no women in them at all or that have women in such insignificant roles that they can be changed to male characters. However, the guys do have an advantage because more often than not, a play will have a majority of male characters. In addition, when changing the gender of a character, changing a female to a male will usually create fewer problems than changing a male to a female. This gives YCDS one huge advantage that SCDS doesn't have.

Another major difference between the two societies lies in the technical aspect of running a show. Anyone who has been to a YCDS production has seen their theater.

The Schottenstein center uptown was generously donated specifically for the sole use of their society. It was built fully equipped to function as a real theater complete with its own lighting system and a real sound system. The new Schottenstein cultural center on 34<sup>th</sup> street, which SCDS must share with all of Stern College, also appears

impressive during the run of a show. Yet, if you were to walk in there right now, it would not look like a theater at all. The reason is that during non-performance times, it is totally empty. There is no stage. There are no lights. That doesn't sound like a theater. Every semester, SCDS must start from scratch renting lights, ordering a stage, renting curtains and doing everything we have to do in order to transform the cultural center into a theater for the short week that our show runs.

This is what everyone sees. Most people walk away thinking the guys have an awesome theater and the women got cheated. While it's true that SCDS has to start from scratch working on their poor excuse for a theater, the guys have their share of theater problems too. For example, their theater has a very low ceiling. Therefore, they are very limited in hanging lights from the ceiling without blocking the view of the audience. In addition, because of the low ceiling, they can't allow tall actors to stand, walk or even sit in certain parts of the theater because they would just

not fit. That is one big issue about which the women don't have to worry. So while the girls have to spend time and money on things like lights and a stage, the guys have problems with blocking or with their lighting design.

I am not trying to say that one society has an easier time than the other. The guys work extremely hard. Anyone who has seen their last few plays knows what a phenomenal job they do. I for one am always impressed by their many talents. The women here also work just as hard but focus on different things. We do an amazing job as well. However, my point here is to say that SCDS is not like YCDS. We should not have to live up to their standards or be compared to them or be lessened because of them. The two societies are so vastly different, that there is no way to accurately compare them. Even though in the end, both appear to have accomplished the same goal of entertaining the students, we both take different roads to get there.

Sincerely,  
Arona Schneider, SCW senior  
SCDS President

Please Join Us for our  
Annual Shabbaton  
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THE OBSERVER  
&  
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Presenting the First Ever  
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Second Annual Stern Literary Contest \$100 for the best poem and the best short story. All are invited to submit work.

Winning poem and short story will be published in the Observer.

Deadline: April 3rd, 2001

# on campus

## “I’ll Call You Back, I’m in Class” Student Cell Phone Use Creates Constant Disturbances in Class

By: Adina Levine

One student’s rings to the tune of Yankee Doodle. Another’s plays “Auld Lang Zine.” And it came as no surprise to a music professor when a student was able to recognize Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, claiming “my cell phone plays that song.”

Cell phones have become the paradigm of advances in modern technology. What was once only a luxury for the need-to-be-reached elite has become a necessity for every college student. An exclusive Observer poll found that an amazing 56% of SCW students own a cell phone.

“My cell phone is my only phone,” said Michal Bistricher, SCW sophomore.

“It was either paying exorbitant Verizon bills for a phone to sit in my dorm or getting a cell phone so that I can be reached any time,” said one SCW junior. “The cell phone was cheaper.”

When Verizon wreaked havoc at SCW at the beginning of the year, the only ones pleased with the chaos were owners of the cell phone store located adjacent to SCW.

The cell phone phenomenon has left students wondering whether it is really necessary to be reachable at any time. Of those SCW students surveyed, 72% did not like being reachable always, although 100% liked being able to reach other people at any time.

“I don’t usually leave my phone on that much since it can get distracting,” stated SCW sophomore, Miriam Colton. “I use it more to reach people.”

Other students disagreed, claiming that there was no emergency requiring that college students constantly be accessi-

ble. “I think that there’s no need to have a phone at all,” commented Michal Leah Kanovsky, SCW junior. “In any emergency situation there are at least ten other phones on my floor I can use.”

Some students are against the cell phone craze. “There’s no privacy with the cell phone,” said Ahuva From, SCW senior. “People should use discretion when talking on cell phones. I just want to say to them: I don’t want to know about your date last night.”

“I think cell phones cause brain damage,” commented Sari Moskowitz, SCW sophomore. “With all those radio waves, you’d be better off sticking your head into a microwave.”

How has the cell phone phenomenon affected the classroom decorum? According to Rabbi Oratz, a ringing cell phone that interrupts his lecture is an occurrence that he must get used to. “It’s a sign of the times,” remarked Oratz, “and I just have to get used to it.”

Other professors disagree. “I think a cell phone has no place in the classroom,” argued Professor Evelyn Cohen. “Common courtesy mandates that the students shut off their phones while in class.” Some teachers confiscate any cell phone that rings during class.

Apparently, the abundance of cell phones at SCW is very minute compared to that of YC. SSSB Finance Professor Audratis, who teaches at both colleges, remarks, “Stern cell phones are nothing compared to uptown. There, each guy has two cell phones and eight beepers.”

Who knows? Maybe they’re drug dealers.



## Tuition Increase

continued from front page

“SCW now has a campus,” remarked one mother. “When I went to Stern, it was one classroom building and Brookdale. It’s expanded to include many dorms, two classroom buildings, an Art Annex, and a theater – and there are plans to keep building. SCW women should be appreciative and understanding that a better campus costs more.”

Some YC students were horrified to hear about the alleged across-the-board tuition increases. “It’s not fair that my college tuition should go toward improvements in the Midtown campus,” complained Aryeh Hoenig, YC junior. “I see a lot of improvements for Stern, but the

uptown campus has stayed the same. I want to get my money’s worth.”

Other YC students disagreed. “We’re all part of one University,” commented YC sophomore David Turk. “It’s all one pot.”

The impact that tuition increases would have on financial scholarships has left plaguing questions for those students accepting scholarships. “It’s hard enough to pay for SCW tuition this year,” asserted one SCW junior on scholarship. “I’m afraid to even think about what will happen next year.”

## Where Are Our Evaluation Forms?

continued from back page

Students respond differently to being asked to fill out evaluation forms. Some fill them out, enjoy the ten-minute break from class and don’t think about them further. “I really don’t care about the evaluation forms,” said Devorah Helmus, SCW senior, reflecting a common attitude.

Other students just feel frustrated that the forms are ineffective. Miry Sorkin, an SCW

junior, feels that, “They are probably not looked at, it’s just to give us a feeling that we have some say, although we don’t.” Aviva Davis, a junior, comments on what may be a vicious cycle, “I don’t think that people take them seriously so therefore I don’t think they’re effective.” Some students disagree and think that the forms do provide a way for students to help their teachers improve methods.

“I think people take them seriously and they are a good measure. There’s no reason why people shouldn’t take them seriously, they are anonymous,” said Rhonda Spector, a sophomore.

Dr. Ellen Shrecker of the history department says that she looks at her evaluation forms but “I’m not sure how much they tell.” She relates that for some categories the forms can be helpful,

such as if the student felt the class was well-organized and the lectures were explained clearly. However for other categories the student’s opinion is not so useful, “obviously students have no idea about the intellectual content of the course.”

Stern is not alone in asking students to grade their professors. It is standard practice in most colleges and universities to use

## Dress Code Controversy Continues

By: Ayelet Rivka Jaye

As students’ awareness of the dress code increases, so do the complaints with the dress code. One popular criticism of the dress code is that it is reasonable for a private Jewish high school to have a dress code, but a college?!! “This is college, there shouldn’t be a dress code,” says Jessica Russak, SCW junior.

Many agree with her, feeling strongly that college is a place where one can have maximum freedom and the opportunity to assert one’s individuality. Looking at most other college campuses across the country, there are no dress codes. If Yeshiva University is really what it calls itself—a university—then shouldn’t its students be afforded that same freedom and choice as students enjoy in other universities? However, others approach this question from a different angle; they don’t feel that the so-called “freedom” that other universities have to offer is the real deal. They’re looking for something which doesn’t necessarily bind them to follow the ever-changing whims and notions of society, but rather, a true freedom, one that they feel can only be obtained by answering the question of: “How should I live my life?” with the objective truth of the Torah. Therefore, many women choose to come to Yeshiva University because they feel that as a Torah-observant institution it provides this real freedom. It may not look like the “freedom” that exists on other college campuses, but many question if this is the kind of freedom they really want. Ariel Lubin, SCW sophomore says: “Most of us have grown up with the idea that college is about independence, but we chose to go to Stern College which has different standards.”

Another reason given for anti-dress code feelings is that the dress code does not accurately reflect *halachic* sources. Several women quote famous “modern orthodox” woman figures who wear pants, saying: if they can, why can’t I? Others insisted that they know of orthodox rabbinic authorities, whom they refused to reveal, who will quote sources to prove that wearing pants is acceptable. (HaGaon Rav Eliashiv, shlita, and HaGaon Rav Sheinberg, shlita, both contend that although the prohibition of women wearing pants is not an issue of wearing a man’s garment if the pants were specifically manufactured for women, the prohibition still applies because pants outline the lower half of the body).

The final reason given is that the dress code “creates a rift between students,” as Russak puts it. “The dress code marginalizes those who wear pants,” agrees Ilana Kasten, SCW senior.

## IN YOUR OWN WORDS

By: Alexandra Beard

“Would you ever consider running for SCW Student Council President?”



Deena Katz-

“The reason why I would run is because I love being in charge and organizing things for others.

I like to be able to make things right, and by being SCWSC President, I would have the ability to make decisions to create change. In reality, I wouldn’t run because I feel that now I’m in college, I would rather be the recipient of someone else’s hard work. I was Student Council President in high school and prefer to now sit back and watch others make things happen.”



Ayelet Rivkah Jaye-

“I wouldn’t run for SCWSC President because being President is a major responsibility and I don’t think I would be able to handle the pressure it entails. I like being involved in college, but because I have a lot of schoolwork and other outside responsibilities, giving all my time to SCW would be too much. The SCWSC President should enjoy the role, so whoever considers running needs to know herself and if she can handle the position.”

Michal Sacharin-

“I wouldn’t consider running for SCWSC President because I’ve already been involved in organizations like

NCSY and Bnei Akiva, so I know what it’s like to take on a high-responsibility position. I also don’t feel so attached to Stern that I should have such a responsibility toward the school. I enjoy Stern, but I don’t have the motivation to put so much time and effort into SCW life.”



Pick Up Part II of  
**The Guide**  
in BRH, Room 5D  
or the Main Office

# on campus

## Catfights and Competition Highlight Metropolitan Experience

### Students Sign Up for New Semester's Cultural Events

By: Caryn Litt

On Monday, January 29, more than one hundred SCW women gathered in Schottenstein Residence Hall to sign up for the SCW Metropolitan Experience. The famed program that allows SCW students together with faculty members to attend cultural events and eat at first class restaurants for free has faced several difficulties since its inception.

Co-sponsored by the Office of Student Services and Office of the Academic Dean, the Metropolitan Experience suffers from a low participation rate, with an average this year of only around 125 SCW students signing up for events, even though the program has nearly two hundred reserved spots. SCW Senior Chana Rosenblatt, a program coordinator, speculated that students having class at the time of registering, an indifference to cultural events, and an unawareness of the program itself produced the low turnout.

Another difficulty is making students commit to the events for which they sign up. Conflicts inevitably arise, and every semester a small number of women are forced to give up their reservations. The spaces usually get filled the week before the event through a sign up sheet in the Stern office.

The system for signing up for events, once a major problem for the Metropolitan Experience, was much improved this year by seniors Marla Gras and Yael Hochner. For its first three semesters, the sign up for the Metropolitan Experience was conducted at Koch Auditorium. Students waited for hours in the narrow passageway outside the auditorium, and it was common for students to cut lines, save spaces for friends, and disappear for hours, only to return for the actual signing up. "It was a real *chilul Hashem*," Gras recalled.

Gras, bothered by the conditions and upset by the petty fights that broke out, designed the much more orderly current system. This semester students arrived at Schottenstein Residence Hall, some as early as 2:30 in the afternoon, and submitted their names to a running list. At 6:30 PM, Hochner called out the names one by one and handed out pieces of paper with a number on it. The coordinators then escorted a group of the first ten people to choose their events, and then the following ten people, and so forth.

While waiting for the actual registering to take place, Stern women talked, read,

did work, and partook of the refreshments offered. "I would be doing the same thing back at the dorm," said sophomore Talya Graber, who waited in Schottenstein for three and a half hours. "I might as well get a free show out of it."

Glitches in the system still remain. Because certain members of the student body, such as student council members and Metropolitan Experience coordinators and staff, have the privilege of pre-registering, the numbers given out to lay students are often misleading. The early time for registration means some students skip class to sign up for events.

"A little bit more organization is needed," Gras acknowledged. "There's always room for improvement."

Now in its fifth semester, the Metropolitan Experience was originally designed to fulfill the two major goals of affording students the opportunity to interact with faculty in an informal setting and the chance to experience New York City culturally. Events, which this semester include the popular Broadway musical *Aida* and dinner at the posh Italian restaurant *Va Bene*, are jointly chosen by the Office of Student Services and a student committee. Members of the faculty who attend the events are determined both by student requests and faculty volunteers.

Interestingly, there is no counterpart to the Metropolitan Experience at YC, partly because the Metropolitan Experience was the brainchild of a SCW student and its planning was initiated by members of the SCW student body.

Though some YC students "would ... like to be able to go to shows for free," one YC freshman said, the majority of YC students are apathetic to a Metropolitan Experience being initiated at their college. According to Dean David Himer, no men have approached the Office with ideas on implementing the Metropolitan Experience or a similar program. Dean Himer says, though, that "it's a wonderful program."

Though the Metropolitan Experience is a relatively new program, Stern administrators and students alike are pleased with it. "My impression from the faculty end is that [the Metropolitan Experience] is an enormous success," Dean Bacon commented. Suzanne Goldstone, SCW junior, said that because of the Metropolitan Experience, she "saw stuff in the City [she] never would have seen. [It's] pretty cool."



Participants on a past Metropolitan Experience trip to *The Lion King*

## GRADUATING EARLY: FAD OR FABLE?

By Alexandra Beard

Come spring semester, something hits the Brookdale and Schottenstein residence halls that replaces junior-aged seniors with half-year *shana bet* newcomers. It's called graduating early. Whether your roommate just got married, or the girl down the hall took four summer school classes and crammed in a seven-class-plus-gym-and lab schedule every semester, many SCW students opt to graduate a semester or two early.

While in the past a large number of students pack out of the dorms around January, this last semester was no different.

According to Rachel Kraut, SCW Residence supervisor, 96 students moved out of the residence halls this January. "There is a whole gamut of reasons for why people leave housing," explains Kraut. "Some decide to move out of housing, or transfer to another college, or study in Israel for the semester. Not all leave because they are graduating early."

To graduate from SCW, a student must complete 84 in-house credits. The present residency requirement applies to students who graduated high school since 1998. As long as a student has completed 84 credits at SCW, she is free to graduate as early as she wishes.

Most students who graduate early finish SCW in two and a half years (not including a year in Israel) instead of three. Summer school courses, Advanced Placement and college courses during highschool, and a heavy course load at SCW are the primary enablers for a student to finish in such a short time. Before 1998, students were able to graduate even earlier, totalling two years in Stern and 58 in-house credits.

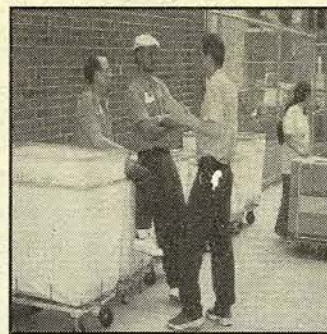
SCW students have various reasons for choosing to graduate early. Some base their decision on financial considerations, as finishing a semester earlier saves a

semester early and save my parents a lot of money."

Nevertheless, leaving SCW early does have its drawbacks. "We envisioned Stern College to be a four year university, with one year in Israel and three years in college," explains Miriam Schechter, SCW Academic Advisor. "We prefer that our students be in Stern for the full three years because we would like [for] them to gain as much as they can out of their college experience."

Because graduating early entails cramming an otherwise three-year college curriculum into two and a half years, student's extra-curricular involvements are limited as a result. "In rushing through college, students cheat themselves of an excellent opportunity to be involved in internships, extra-curricular activities in and out of Stern, and overall college life," says Schechter.

Despite the obvious negatives, some students still choose to graduate early. "Undergrad is the tunnel to getting you to what you want to do in your life," says Estee Kaplan, a SCW junior who plans to graduate in January 2002. "Since Stern offers the ability to graduate a semester early, I've decided that it's a great opportunity to take advantage of."



## Director of Development First in Move To Midtown

### More YU Facility Offices to Follow

By: Observer Staff

In what appears to be the first of many facility offices to be located in the midtown campus, Joan Apple, Director of Development, has moved to Room 904 of the SCW building.

"It gives me an opportunity to be more involved with the students and the faculty," said Apple. "Also, I often work with the Dean - and now I'm closer to her. I feel like I'm more a part of the school."

Apple moved from her uptown location in late December. She is the only one of her department to make the move, and she visits the uptown campus on a weekly basis. So far, she hasn't had much interaction with SCW students, a fact that she hopes will soon change. "I hope I will have the opportunity to interact more with the students in the future," she said.

As to whether Apple's move will set a precedent for other departments moving downtown, Apple expressed uncertainty. "They're likely to remain uptown"

Apple remarked, although she speculated that there may come a time when SCW would house its own Public Relations or Alumni personnel, without relying on facilities located uptown.


"A number of centralized activities at the university are based uptown," lamented Dean Karen Bacon. "I think this is a wonderful first step."

An Admissions office has been built in 215 Lexington, where it remains empty of Admissions employees who continue to reside uptown. According to Dean Bacon, there are plans to eventually locate a Finance Office at SCW.

"It's about time that we started to have the same facilities as the boys," remarked one SCW junior. "We don't want our PR located 150 blocks away, but we need a department located within our college campus. It's time we were treated as equals."



**ATTENTION ALL STERN STUDENTS!!!**



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CERTIFICATE TO EICHLERS**

# ISRAEL FORUM

## Judge Gives YU Protestors Six Months Probation

*Sentence Handed Down in Response to Students' Disruption at UN*

By: Adina Levine

The three YU students who burst into a General Assembly session to protest the antisemitic nature of the organization were only given six months probation in a court hearing on February 5. The verdict was a favorable one for the students, as they otherwise faced a misdemeanor which would remain on their permanent record.

"We had a meeting with our lawyer last week and he had basically told us what was going to happen ahead of time," said Beth Meschel, one of the protesters. "Of all the things we had talked about that was the best option so we were very excited - all three of us."

In awarding the students a sentence of ACD, it allowed them a period of six months probation, after which their record would be erased.

"It's like you never committed the crime," asserted Meschel.

Acting under the auspices of Betar/Tagar, an international right-wing Jewish youth group, the three students - Ezra Levine, Mark Bogaten and Beth Meshel - broke off from a UN-guided tour at about 10:30 AM on December 20, 2000 and jumped over the railing separating the public from the delegates. Waving cloth banners that read "U.N. = Antisemite," Meshel chained herself to the railing with plastic handcuffs while Levine sang Am Yisroel Chai, "The Nation of Israel Lives."

"Kids our age believe that the UN is a legitimate international institution," remarked Levine, "and our goal was to focus world news on the fact that the UN has repeatedly issued one-sided resolutions, often supported by third world countries that have no concept of human rights."

Once arrested, the students were subjected to a three-hour interrogation by UN officers before being turned over to the NYPD seventeenth precinct. After being detained for thirteen hours, the judge released them.

The protest came on the heels of the eleventh anti-Israel resolution in recent months. Levine believes that these anti Israel resolutions may continue the ongoing violence continues to plague the Middle East. "The most dangerous part is that I believe that these resolutions that are not based on reality encourage the Palestinians to continue their violence in the Middle East," he said.

Some delegates expressed concern that the protest demonstrated a breach of security that may have jeopardized their safety. "How is it possible that these people were able to penetrate into the hall of the General Assembly and to threaten the safety of the delegates here?" questioned Hussam-edin A'Ala, the Syrian delegate in an Israeli report. The Palestinian observer to the UN, Dr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa also denounced the protest, claiming it was "a mob kind of action."

"Security is somewhat short staffed," admitted Susan Markham, spokeswoman for the General Assembly.

"They were furious at the fact that we had managed to breach their security at the exact moment of their latest condemnation of our eternal home-

land," asserted Levine.

Having planned this protest about a month beforehand, Betar/Tagar initially expected at least ten students to protest but on the day of the demonstration, only these three students showed up.

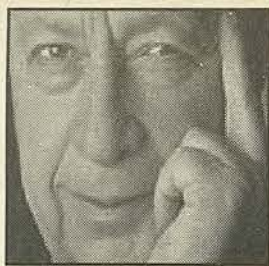
The students were neither surprised nor condemning of those [students] who backed out. "It's one thing to support the concept, it's another to actually do it," Levine said. "Getting arrested is not for everyone."

"Different people want to do different kinds of actions," seconded

## Ten Questions for the New Prime Minister

By: Chana Michels

What will Israel's new prime minister be faced with during his first month of office? Here are some questions Israeli politicians and citizens hope will be answered by the first thirty days in office of new Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.



1. Some blame Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount as prompting the current intifada. Will his election win cause more bloodshed or begin an era of coexistence between Israelis and Arabs?

2. Will the new prime minister take active steps to stop the intifada which began in October? This election can be the key to stop the rising death toll of Israelis and Palestinians due to terrorism.

3. Will details emerge from the new election that will bring Arabs and Israelis closer to negotiating peace? Perhaps the new prime minister will promote more Camp David meetings or explore other venues.

4. How will Egypt and Jordan react to this election? Egypt and Jordan are Israel's border states so it is important for Israel to maintain diplomacy with them.

5. How will the other Arab states react to the new prime minister? This may be their excuse to wage a war with Israel.

6. Will the new prime minister be more effective in holding a government than former Prime Minister Ehud Barak whose coalition folded under him? The collapse of Israeli government is what caused this sudden election.

7. Will the prime minister lead a unity government, one where the Likud and Labor parties will work together?

8. How will the United States' policy change in regard to Israel? The policy created by the new prime minister may cause President George W. Bush to be hostile towards Israel or increase his support.

9. How much did the swing voters --Arabs who make up 20% of the voting population and Russian immigrants who make up 19%--affect the election? Barak felt he could have won the election due to the nearly 40% of votes made up by swing voters.

10. Will Sharon specify his policy stance from the very beginning? This will be the opportunity to immediately take a stand on sovereignty of Jerusalem.

Meschel. "We were just on the active side."

Daniel Stein, representative of Betar/Tagar expected that the three students who protested were all from Yeshiva University, a Jewish Orthodox Talmudic Academy in New York. "Often we find that the people willing to actually do something are more religious," he said. "There's a correlation: The more religious are more dedicated to get up and do something for their country."

Despite Stein's correlation theory, the blatant protest actions sparked controversy within the Yeshiva University community, as some students claimed that these protesters had disgraced the Zionist cause and given a bad name to the Jewish people.

"Protesting is a good way to state your opinions," said an impassioned Sari Moskowitz, SCW sophomore. "But

*continued on next page*

## Solidarity Trip with Bnei Akiva: A Student's Experience

By: Devorah Helmus

I think it wasn't until we got to the Kotel that I realized how much our presence in Israel meant. Standing by the stones of the wall, I surveyed the nearly empty scene around me; just a few people sprinkled about here and there. A hush had fallen over a place which normally would be bustling with hundreds of visitors, noisy and full of vitality.

I was part of the Bnei Akiva solidarity mission, a subsidized weeklong program that enabled students like myself to come to Israel and participate in voluntary activities to help Israeli communities. These activities would let people living in Israel know that even though we currently were unable to live there with them, we are here for them and want to help.

Hashomer. We also heard many lectures by Modern Orthodox leaders in Israel.

While our itinerary was solidly packed for the one week mission, some activities were perhaps more symbolic than necessary. Sometimes I felt that the army was just looking for random tasks to give us to make us feel more useful. For example, I



was given the job of going over previously checked expiration dates on medication. However, although some of the activities that we did may have been emblematic, they enabled us to show our support and connect to the people of the land.

People who we spoke to told us that they really appreciated us coming and that it was encouraging to them to see us at a time when very few Americans would lay themselves on the line. However, one of the things I realized when I came on this trip is that a lot of propaganda exists on both sides of the world. American media paints an image that Israel is a war zone where we have to dodge bullets, grenades and crazed rock-throwing freedom fighters on a regular basis. The Bnei Akiva program had a strong statement that America's fears are ungrounded and that we should all write letters to newspapers telling people that it's perfectly safe to send their children to Israel.

Having been in Israel in the midst of all the chaos and mixed messages, I think the truth is somewhere in the middle. True, nothing happened to directly endanger us on this trip and for the most part we felt safe riding buses, walking around, and just soaking in the atmosphere of Israel. But at the same time, the illusion of safety was very precarious, and we did experience some close calls. I was walking through the Armenian quarter of the old city with some students on the program, towards the Kotel, when we heard a loud explosion and sirens. It turned out to be the result of a bomb that two terrorists were building, but, thank G-d, it defused before they were finished, killing only the people who were making it.

There was a jittery vibe in the country. Some soldiers I spoke to said that they wished they could leave the country immediately. But most of the people seemed very dedicated and determined to just keep on going. A particular idea that stuck in my head was given by a speaker who lectured on the program. He spoke about the Jews in *Parshat Shmot* - even though they were enslaved and miserable because of the Egyptians' rule over them, they continued to have children. He then spoke of how presently, even with the tension Israel, we should continue to exist there and go about everyday life and living. That, I felt, was the basic message of the trip, and what it meant to come there. There may be problems and abundant fear in Israel, but despite all that, life must go on.

It was integral for us to show support, by coming to Israel at a time when a measure of caution had to be taken and with a purpose that was not necessarily all 'fun and games.' We had to fulfill a sense of responsibility that we owe for the people living in Israel and to the land of Israel as well. We needed to involve ourselves, even for a short time, at this difficult juncture for Israel's sake as well as ours.

There were elements of the trip that were difficult for all of us -- concerned parents at home, rising at pre-sunrise hours, and fears of the current danger in Israel -- that we



Participant of Solidarity mission

had to come to terms with. However, despite these issues, we found the program rewarding. In the course of the program we volunteered at an army base in Tel Hashomer for two days, packaging medical supplies. We spent two days pruning trees for the JNF, taught elementary school in the old city, and visited sick kids in a hospital in Tel



# ISRAEL FORUM

## War in Israel is Against Jewish People, Not Just Land

By: Chana Rosenblatt

The increasing manifestations of Palestinian violence and various other challenges Yassir Arafat and the Palestinians are posing toward the State of Israel is indicative of a war that is being waged not just against Israel but against the Jewish community worldwide, according to Malcolm Hoenlein. The Executive Vice Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations asserted Tuesday, December 26, that Palestinian Authority Chairman Arafat never intended to accept any deal with the Israelis and that his plans for himself and the Palestinians have already largely been achieved.

"What we're witnessing today is not new," said Mr. Hoenlein in a lecture delivered at the Talmud Torah of Flatbush in Brooklyn, New York. "What is at stake today is the fate of the Jewish land and the Jewish people."

According to Mr. Hoenlein, the Palestinian strategy is to destroy important Jewish sites throughout Israel, thus severing all Jewish claims of historical connection to the land. Palestinian vandalism and desecration of the Tomb of Joseph, Rachel's Tomb, areas of the Holy Temple, as well as the oldest synagogue in Israel, Hoenlein maintains, point to the subtle yet devastating attack against the Jews.

"The goal is to destroy every vestige of Jewish connection to the Holy Land," said Mr. Hoenlein, "because if you deny us a past, we have no future."

As proof of the Arab leader's disinclination for peace, Mr. Hoenlein raised the issue that Mr. Arafat has never once gone on television to publicly call for an end to the violence. Instead, he continued, Arafat has used his newfound power to unite the once-fractured Islamic world with him at the helm and to raise the level of sympathy for the Palestinian cause.

"Arab leaders held him in the lowest regard," said Mr. Hoenlein. "Today millions of Arabs look up to him. He's put himself in the center of the Arab world and has even received monetary pledges from many of

these Arab leaders."

Mr. Arafat can now expect the international respect that for years eluded him, admitted Hoenlein. Moreover, he continued, Arafat has successfully vilified Israel in the world's eyes through United Nations resolutions and through the assembling of the Geneva Convention for the first time in sixty years. Financially, too, Israel has suffered from decreased investment in their high-tech sector and, thanks to fears of violence, reduced levels of tourism.

"Arafat showed us how you can be corrupt and put your children in the front lines and get sympathy for it," noted Mr. Hoenlein. "He's outsmarted us all."

In response to Palestinian attacks, Israel continues to yield on important issues, says Hoenlein. In particular, he noted that former Prime Minister Ehud Barak no longer set the borders resulting from the Six Day War in 1967 as red lines. Additionally, more Israeli than Arab women have been killed since Oslo and the total number of wounded, relative to the total number of violent attacks has remained surprisingly low. "Every Israeli soldier and general's hands are clean," exclaimed Hoenlein. "They are exercising more restraint than any other army in human history."

"The war today is not against occupation," said Hoenlein. He pointed out that 98 percent of Palestinians live under Palestinian Authority control and that Israel continues to offer them land. It was Arafat's decision, Hoenlein noted, to walk away from a deal that no one expected Barak to offer and that everyone expected Arafat to accept. "This war is about Israel's future."

Each additional issue for which Israel appears willing to settle makes the Palestinians even more likely to resort to violence, believes Mr. Hoenlein. "The more casualties and harassment, the more concessions," he noted. "Violence pays, that's the message they're getting. Israel cannot accept violence."

"Jerusalem is the city that brings us together," said Mr. Hoenlein. "Torah and Israel are given to us in trust for future generations, to secure and enhance them. What will we answer our grandchildren?"



## Sharon Victory

continued from front page

will always be known for losing every Prime Ministerial race in which he was a contender, was a candidate in this election, he would have trailed Sharon by only two points! So what is it about Ehud Barak that the nation dislikes so much?

In an article that was published in the February 2nd issue of the Jewish Week, leftist David Margolis writes why he voted for Sharon in the election: "With [Barak's] concessions, he has exposed the Palestinians' nasty secret: that they will not make peace with Israel even if we divide Yerushalayim, give them three-quarters of the Old City, and surrender the Temple Mount, the Jordan Valley and control of the border crossings... Barak's greatest failure is that he has brought Israel to the point where it needs Ariel Sharon." By chasing Arafat and almost begging him for a peace deal even when it was apparent that the Palestinians did not want peace, Barak humiliated Israelis and basically killed all chances of ever getting re-elected.

From all directions, people are furious at Barak. His former supporters are disgusted by him. In Jerusalem, Mayor Ehud Olmert has repeatedly stated that he feels betrayed and

hurt by Barak. The Bostoner Rebbe stated, "In the past weeks we have seen the true colors of the Barak government more clearly than ever before. He has abandoned the security of the Yishuv and attacked



Barak on Election Day

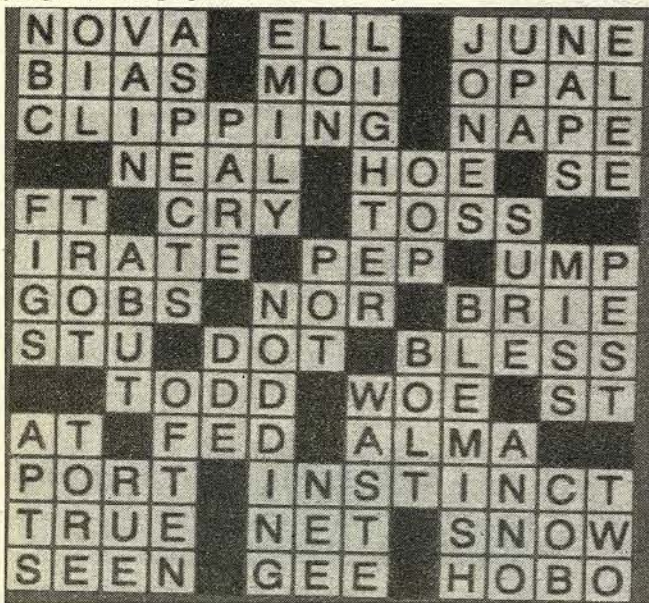
everything holy and precious to Klal Yisrael. Barak has shown total failure of responsible leadership whilst Yidden (Jews) are being maimed and killed by our enemies."

Here, at SCW, many students are furious at Barak. On the other hand, SCW sophomore Michal Bistricher says, "I'm not so thrilled with Sharon either. Basically, I support him because he isn't Barak."

And that seems to be the consensus of most Israelis as reflected by the outcome of the elections.

## P U Z Z L E

for puzzle see page 19



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## Sentence Given

continued from previous page

breaking the law causes a chilul Hashem in giving us a bad name."

Comparing himself to Gandhi and King in his peaceful protest, Levine responds to such accusations by noting, "When a Jew anywhere is being mistreated and other Jews stand by without responding, that is a *chillul Hashem*."

The ethical questions surrounding their actions continue to be debated even within the activists' homes. "At first, my parents said that I used poor judgment," said Meshel. "They love Israel, but it's a question of method."

As the court renders its final decision, the students reflect on their actions and express pleasure at the results. "I'm definitely proud I did it and wouldn't take it back," asserted Meshel. "But I can't really say whether I would do it again. It may have been a once in a life time thing."

But she added that "By doing a protest like that, we show our peers that there are people out there who care and are willing to act for their love of Israel and for their love of *klal Yisroel*."

## The Observer

welcomes all comments and questions.

Contact us at  
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212-683-4943

## SCW Food Committee

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their cards do not run out."

In the future, a second option might be added to the meal plan, one that offers more money for out-of-towners. Mr. Rosengarden, the director of YU food services, said that they are willing to support any change as long as students want it and there are facts to support the change.

"The men and women campuses [of YU] are very different," said Braun. "One cannot compare apples and oranges but students do have power and the administration listens. The changes may not be apparent, but the voices are definitely heard."

The committee meeting brought attention to the fact that there should be better communication to students and parents as to what the meal plan is or is not. Students, and members of the administration such as Braun, have been unaware that Felicia Cohen, a dietician, is employed full-time by YU food services, works on the YC campus, and is available to discuss dietary options and plans with students concerned about health. For example, one YC student who cannot eat yeast, met with Cohen and now YU food services prepare special meals for him every day.

Birchfield, Jr. feels that YU can improve the style of how the food is presented and that there can be a possible change in the types of food that is served. "I want to see them provide more quality," said Birchfield Jr. "It is better to order a veggie burger to go which will take a five minutes to prepare instead of buying one that has been sitting for five hours," said Birchfield Jr.

This meeting will be followed up by another committee meeting which will concentrate on the issue of improving the quality and presentation of the food.

SCDS Presents:  
A Comedy  
by Neil Simon



**The Odd Couple**

Sunday, March 11 -  
Thursday, March 15

Showtimes will follow



Visit or website at  
<http://clubs.yu.org/scds>

SCDS is a  
Division of  
SCWSC



# on campus

## Summer Housing Addressed In Student Life Committee Meeting

By: Chanie Frenkel

On February 2, the SCW Student Life Committee meeting resolved that summer housing will be open for students taking Yeshiva University courses. With regard to those students taking outside courses and internships, Dean Himber said, "We are not a hotel service open for students. We are a residence hall. Those students taking courses elsewhere need to find their own housing."

However, there remains the possibility of housing those students taking F.I.T. classes within the 14 credits paid for by SCW. There will be further discussion as to whether to allow students taking internships for credit to have the availability of summer housing. Mrs. Zelda Braun pointed out that the end date of summer housing needs to be revisited, as it is set for the end of June even though additional courses such as chemistry and physics are being offered past this date.

"I think it's a good thing that they approved summer housing for students taking a YU summer school class," said Shlomit Zauderer, head of the Student Life Committee. "If a boy was taking a class or getting semicha, he gets housing for free, while -- in the past -- a girl who takes a different YU summer school class would have to end up renting an apartment in the Heights, or something like that. That's ridiculous. It's about time that we had equal treatment."

Last year marked the first time that SCW had summer housing, and this benefit was provided at no cost to the students using the dormitory. The cost of summer housing will be reassessed for this year.

The meeting headed by SCW senior, Shlomit Zauderer, opened with a review of old issues and the action (or lack of) taken by the administration since the last meeting. The student committee members were very pleased to learn that an additional overnight patrol van had been set up by the van service. In addition, there was an overwhelming sense of approval from the students when Mr. Jeff Sokel revealed that, "We may look into removing mailboxes from the lobby of Brookdale Hall, into the basement in order to ease the flow of traffic in the lobby."

However, some old issues had not been resolved since the last meeting, and many students expressed dissatisfaction. According to Shlomit Zauderer, "The problem with the train vans remains. Students come down to make a nine forty-five van at nine forty only to discover that the van left at nine thirty-five. If the van schedule says that the vans will leave at a certain time, they should." This point was well taken by Mr. Jeff Sokel who ensured that there would be immediate action taken to rectify the situation. However, he also brought to the attention of the students a new plan to cut out the Port Authority van service during the

week. Because it is only necessary for students to use this service on weekends (Thursday night, Friday, Saturday night and Sunday) the service during week-

from Beth Israel Medical Center who talked about the educational programs for students that could be offered by Beth Israel. He informed the students that, "we

when we, as administration, try arranging these programs it is not as successful as when you, as the students, act as P.R. for these sessions. You as students need to help do this."

One new issue that seemed to provoke heated complaints from the students was the notorious elevator system in the 245 Lexington Building. According to the student committee members, there have been many incidences of elevators stopping between floors as well as doors opening and closing up to five times before actually moving. These problems exasperate students as they create enough of a delay to make the women late to class. According to coordinator of Student Services, Beth Hait, "If you know the elevators are erratic, you need to tell security."

However, Zauderer pointed out a crucial problem that, "students don't know to file a report if something goes wrong with the elevator." The administration and the students in the end agreed that there needs to be a sign posted in the elevator that clearly indicates to the women that if they are experiencing trouble they should press the button which phones the guards to alert them about the problem. A change in the elevator system of quickly bringing students to their classes was agreed upon, and will soon be posted. The outcome of this new plan as well as the others established at the Student Life Committee remains to be seen.



Student Life Committee meeting

days in all probability will be terminated.

Other new issues raised by the student life committee included elevator problems and health services. Present at the meeting was Mr. Paul J. Szklarski

have excellent staff in Beth Israel to run these programs, but the more students who show up the better the programs will be." This seemed to be an important point as it was supported by Braun, who stated that, "We have found that

## Country Western Dancing Highlights Welcome Back Events at SCW

By: Adina Levine

Waltzing Matilda" rang through the halls as approximately 30 SCW students gathered in Koch Auditorium to learn Country Western dancing on January 31.



"I'm really amazed that people can dance like that," remarked Beth Hiatt. "We have very graceful women."

A joint Student Services and Junior Class event, the dancing attracted a diversified student population to enjoy the delectable - but questionably Western - delights of corn, barbecue wings, and franks-in-blanks. While nibbling on the best-of-the-West taco chips, students were also treated to the best of New York's vegetable platters.

"It's a lot of fun with great music," said Rycia Gotlieb, SCW sophomore and member of SCW's Dance Club. "But the most important thing is that everyone's together."

Along with cowboy hats and bandanas, two professional dancers - who had originally worked at the 53rd Street Posse - led SCW students in line and circle dancing.

"The hat kept falling off when I did the cha cha," laughed SCW sophomore Esti.

The turnout, which yielded approximately 30 students, was "very impressive" to Yael Shmuel, the new Junior class president. "People are having fun," asserted Shmuel. "That's what's important."

Many students had not known about the event, as the signs had only been posted the night before. And some students who had wanted to attend the dance were presented by a conflicting Rabbi Hochberg shiur - entitled "Laws of Dating" that surprisingly attracted a large audience. Nevertheless, one of the professional dancers Cookie maintained, "for last minute advertising, this is pretty darn good."



The event further attracted a diversity of students. There were some with previous dancing experience, and some who were built with two left feet. Nevertheless, the students learned quickly and managed to pull off a cohesive dance. "Where else is there an opportunity for frum women to dance?" observed one SCW junior.

And one dancer joked, "I plan to play Waltzing Matilda at my wedding."

Students make their cases in SCW's new Mock Trial Club



## Robert Beren Becomes Chairman of Board

By: Observer Staff

Interview with Robert Beren, new Chairman of the Board of Trustees at YU.

How did you first become interested in Yeshiva University?

Well, the first I recall was a Rabbi who came to Wichita, Kansas. This goes way back. He was a YU/RIETS graduate Rabbi Norman

Bernhart. After that came Rabbi Abraham Mann; Both Rabbis were educated at Y.U. and RIETS and were an excellent example of Modern Orthodoxy. I also had two uncles involved in the Board, and then the Dean of Ferkoff was a very close friend. How long have you been on the Board?

Since 1989. Where did you go to college? I went to Harvard and then straight to Harvard Business School.

Did you always live in Wichita? No, I grew up in Ohio.

What do you do for a living?

I drill and explore for oil and gas.

Is the commute to and from New York difficult?

When I have YU business, I commute, which is about three or four days per month.

Apparently, you're the first out-of-towner to serve as Chairman of the Board. Is it difficult?

As you well know, a fair amount of YU business is done on the telephone. Not every meeting has to be one-on-one. Some

meetings, however, do have to be in person, in which case I come into New York for those. Do you think that you've set the precedent for future chairmen of the Board of Trustees to be from out-of-town?



At the very least, my accomplishment should indicate that it should not be a restriction. It can be done.

Do you have any concrete plans for SCW?

During my years on the Board, I've witnessed - particularly in the last 3-4 years - marvelous changes at the Stern College campus of which I'm a large proponent and in favor of. I can't say that it's finished but that we've done a lot. There are still plans on the agenda, including additional dormitory space..., and we're planning to bring to the midtown campus increased support for academic excellence and scholarships.

To what extent does your job involve contact with the students?

I'm a great believer in contact. I'm not the person for students to refer to - they have the administration for that - but I believe in hands-on education. I visited the two high schools and talked with the students and administration in each. I've been the President of the Board of Education of the Wichitaw school district. I have a background of wanting to make sure things are right and when they're wrong, seeing what we can do to fix them.

# HEALTH BULLETIN: MAD COW DISEASE

By: Ilana Kasten

Two years ago, I had to read this book entitled *Deadly Feasts* by Richard Rhodes, for general bio. It was an interesting book about some random disease in New Guinea, called kuru. To date, and probably for the rest of my life, I can say it was the scariest book I've ever read. This is why: Mad-cow disease is in America. The more I research the subject the more horrifying it gets.

Wait, wait, wait; Mad-cow disease, isn't that some weird thing in England? The answer is an emphatic NO. The disease is in England, but, unlike what the government and the beef industry would have you believe, it is here too.

First, let me give you the most brief, and hopefully coherent, synopsis of the last 20 years of research and public policy on the disease. There is a non-infectious, naturally-occurring disease that is found in all animals (including humans). In humans it is called CJD, Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease. This disease is classified as a spongiform disease because it eats holes into your brain, therefore your brain looks like a sponge, and eventually you die. But it was a sporadic disease that rarely ever occurred to anyone, and was not contagious.

The problem began in the early 1980s, when the dairy industry caused the disease to mutate. The dairy industry wanted to more than triple the output of each cow. In order to produce that much protein, a cow needs to consume tremendous amounts of protein. Hundreds of thousands of cows die each year for whatever reason. The protein from their meat goes unharvested, because it cannot be sold for human consumption. You guessed it, they started feeding cows to cows. They would turn the meat into a powder, through rendering processes, so the cows wouldn't realize they were both omnivores and cannibals. The recycling of cows caused the bovine spongiform disease to mutate into a highly infectious form dubbed by the media as mad-cow disease.

Britain recycled their cows more intensely than most other western countries, resulting in the most noticeable effects on their cattle. Scientists found that the disease was infectious through normal consumption across all species. Since they could not conclusively prove infectivity to humans,

because you obviously can't test on humans, the British government refused to listen. The effects of such a conclusion would cripple the British cattle industry and seriously damage the British economy. Consequently, warnings continued for more than a decade, without heed. Finally, after basically conducting their own experiment on the people of England, the government admitted it had been poisoning its citizens. March 20, 1996, with a full-blown outbreak sweeping the nation, the British parliament addressed the world, and apologized.

Just to state the obvious: Mad-cow disease is the result of feeding practices- *kashrut* only affects the slaughter and cleaning practices of an animal. Mad-cow disease is a neurological disorder, the only part of the body it affects is the brain. There is nothing in standard kosher practices to prevent the feeding of cow remnants to other cows, nor do we check the brains of those animals, in order to certify them kosher.

Cows incubate the disease for 2-8 years. Most cattle are slaughtered before the age of two. A cow with mad-cow disease will be killed, and consumed, before it ever shows any sign of illness. The disease incubates for 25-40 years in humans, so, we ain't seen nothin' yet. Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease is 100% fatal. Infectivity is totally unaffected by washing, bleaching, heating, and even radiation. The number of cases is expected to increase 50% per year. That means 200,000 deaths per year at its peak according to 1997 figures.

Now that we all, hopefully, understand the origins and terminology related to mad-cow disease, I will prove to you that it's here. Mad-cow disease is here because the United States continues to employ many of the same rendering practices that caused the present epidemic in Britain, despite FDA assurances to the contrary. Beyond that, other animals are dying of their version of mad-cow disease throughout the United States. Many believe, this is the result of diets containing beef.

As a result of this indisputable danger of Mad Cow disease in the United States, everyone should give up eating meat. Mad cow disease can kill you. Is the hamburger worth it?

# OVER THE MECHITZAH



By: Mike Berezin and Greg Samuels

Welcome back Stern College! Semester two is now in full swing. During the course of the past few months, most of you have confronted issues for the first time, been exposed to new people, and been asked when you are going to get married all ready. So goes life here in the hallowed halls of...Midtown Manhattan. Luckily for you, Mike and Greg persevere in our pursuit to make your lives richer and more meaningful. If we can't do that, then at least we hope that we continue to give you something to laugh at, namely, us. So without further adieu...

Dear MIKE AND GREG,

I really don't mean to be rude or anything, but do you really think that your column belongs in *The Observer*? Why didn't you put your column in *The Commentator*?

Sincerely,

Person at whom we shoot dirty looks over the mechitza in Lexington

It has been brought to our attention that a few stern girls are upset that we have a column in *The Observer*. What these small groups of highly abnormal and obviously disturbed individuals do not understand is that Yeshiva University is our school and that *The Observer* is the school's paper. Boys and girls alike attend the same university, and a little variety, i.e., one column written by guys in the girls' newspaper only adds panache. Besides that, we're funny. As observers of *The Observer* over the past few years, Mike and I realized that *The Observer* was lacking regular witty satirical pieces that deal with issues confronted on a daily basis by the students. As a former sports editor of *The Commentator*, I can honestly tell you that besides *The Observer* being a better paper, working for *The Observer* is more fun. The people here are nicer from the top down. Besides, we still giggle like small school girls when we tell our friends that we have a column in the girls' newspaper.

Dear MIKE AND GREG,

I have always considered myself a religious, G-D fearing individual, but lately, I have found that I am contemplating breaking free from my *shomeret negiya* ways. I've been *shomeret* for a long time, but now, things have changed. I have been going out with this guy for a few months. In that time, we have become very close, closer than I have ever been with any guy. The more that we see of one another, the more I want to hold his hand and kiss him like the characters do in fairytales. He too, has always been *shomer* and I wouldn't want to be responsible for his doing something that he otherwise wouldn't want to do. How should I handle this delicate and frustrating situation?

Sincerely,

Flames a'burnin and heart a'churnin in Schottenstein

Dear Ms. Flames,

You pose a rather difficult question that does not have an easy answer. Before you make any decisions, we felt that we should share some information with you. Removing the barrier of

*negiah* changes the dynamics of the relationship. As soon as you start touching, the essence of the relationship will no longer be the mentally stimulating conversation that allows the two of you to talk into the wee hours of the morning. Instead, the relationship will become less pure and more directed towards physical attraction.

When confronted with a similar question on this topic by an irate 7<sup>th</sup> grader, a rabbi of ours once answered that of all of the negative mitzvot in the Torah, this was the one for which he best understood the logic. He explained that regardless of the dispute, whether it was a prohibition that came directly from the Torah or was a fence that the Rabbinate created, the prohibition made sense to him because in every relationship, physical touching changes the nature of the relationship. Without physical touching, two people are forced to communicate, because at that point, that's all that the relationship is based on. Contact of any sort makes it exponentially more difficult to make communication the primary concern, and forces those individuals involved in the relationship to question what keeps them with their partner. A *shomer* relationship makes things intense and wonderful. He went on to call it a true gift for which he and his wife thank Hashem each day.

The immediate response of the Ute-filled classroom was one which was best described by the class clown who we shall call "Timmy", who yelled, "that's bull\*\*\*\*".

With that said, we can now turn to the issue of guilt. The power of the guilt that a Jewish woman can provide is known in parts of the world that even the Internet has yet to reach. You will be forced to face this simple fact as you come to know men better. There are very few guys who are capable of just saying no, especially when they are in love. Thus, most often the responsibility of enforcing the laws of *negiah* fall most strongly on the woman. This is why most dating couples who truly connect with one another marry quickly. While this comment may seem a bit sexist, scientific evidence has supported this notion in recent years. While the chemical attraction of a woman to a man becomes strong after they have touched, a man's attraction to a woman is in high gear throughout the process on a purely chemical level.

Given all of these factors, it is our advice that since you have held out for so long until now, it would be a wonderful thing if you could continue to hold out a little longer. Also, if you do, you're less likely to burn in hell. Al, a man with a horrible disease and a charming sailor's attitude once said shortly before his passing, "I know my rear from a hole in the ground; you've got everything going for ya, if you mess it up its your own flipping fault." We now relate Al's words of wisdom to you.

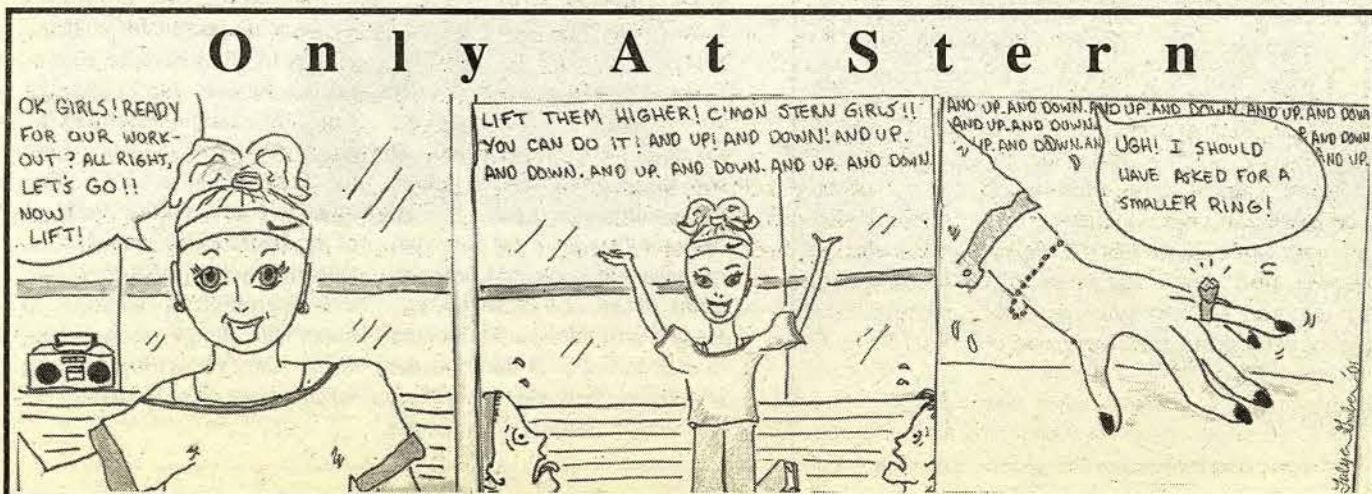
Until next time Stern College, this is Mike and Greg.

## Marijuana Editorial

continued from page 4

(the questions and the research) was my finding a justification to act on my inclinations.

I'm not going to blame Modern Orthodoxy for my actions. I can only blame myself. I will say that one lesson I've learned through this experience is that *halachik* justification is not enough. In *Parshat Kedoshim* one finds the verse "*Kedoshim Tee'yoo*" (you should be holy). The *Ramban* (Nachmanides) explains that this is an all-encompassing requirement that removes the possibility of doing perverse actions which may be 'permitted' by the Torah. Someone who looks at *halacha* alone to provide loopholes for the fulfillment of desires would fall into that category of what the *Ramban* calls a *navol bereshut hatorah*. Perhaps those who would say that *halacha* alone should be the only standard and that one can determine *halacha* for oneself ought to keep this *Ramban* in mind.



# S P O R T S P A G E

## Running the Marathon

By: Sara Lampert

The Stern Observer sits down with Abigail Briskin, runner in the New York City Marathon.

### What made you first think about running the marathon?

Well, the entire year I have run short three to six mile races. My father, who has run the marathon seven times, inspired me to enter the marathon when he suggested it to me.



### So how do you go about applying to run in the marathon?

You can apply to run in the marathon but not everyone gets in. If you run a certain number of races that year,

you are automatically accepted. I didn't have that luxury and I also didn't decide to run until past the deadline for applicants. So my father suggested to me that I run with the Achilles Track Club which is for people with disabilities. I was called a Runner's Guide. I, along with another person, ran with a man who was physically impaired- he wasn't blind but he could only see shadows so we ran with him the whole race. We would help him when there were especially large crowds of people and got him water to drink.

### That sounds very special. Would you want to do that again?

I would definitely want to do it again, running with that man was a great experience. Looking back, I am happy that I had the opportunity to do that my first time running the marathon. I was happy to be there helping out like that.

### Did you meet anyone particularly interesting?

Well, there are all different types of people. You see some strange people, for instance, some people like to run the marathon in costumes. One guy had on a chicken costume! Another guy was wearing bunny ears. As the saying goes, 'Only in New York.'

### What stands out in your mind from that day?

The amazing thing that I will never forget was at the beginning of the race, standing on the Verazano Bridge with thirty thousand other people. It was such an incredible scene, like nothing I have ever seen before.

### What does the New York City Marathon route cover?

It covers the Five Boroughs: New York, Staten Island, Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx. It is very interesting to go through different neighborhoods especially with the crowd cheering you on. Even in Williamsburg there were Chasidish women and young kids watching us.

### How long did it take you to train for the marathon?

It took me two and a half to three months to train for it.

### How long did it take you to run the marathon completely?

It took me three hours and fifty six minutes and seventeen seconds to complete the 26.2 miles of the marathon. You wear a chip on your sneaker so they can calculate your exact time.

## Interview with SCW Fencing Star

The Stern Observer sits down with the captain of the fencing team, Mina Shoshani.

### What inspired you to join the fencing team?

I've always loved competitive sports, and my high school didn't have any teams. So when I got to college and had the opportunity to join the fencing team, I was overjoyed.



### Did you have any fencing experience before you joined the Stern team?

No, I didn't. I knew a little about fencing, because my father used to fence - which is another reason why fencing intrigued me. But I didn't know anything beyond the most basic moves.

### This is your second year as captain. What has being captain meant to you?

It's been a wonderful experience. I tend to be something of a loner, so working for my teammates has really enabled me to develop leadership and communication skills, and to be part of a group of girls that I might not have otherwise known. There are about fifteen of us this year, in three weapons: foil, epee and sabre. It will really be sad to graduate and leave them behind.

### Any particular meet stick out in your mind?

So far this year, we've only had two meets. February is the big fencing month - we'll have about five meets, and most of these are against several teams. Unfortunately, we can't compete in the NCAA Championship, because it takes place on Shabbat. The Stevens Tech Invitational really replaces this for us: we compete individually, and we've won several medals in the past. B'ezrat Hashem, this year too!

### To back up a little, most people probably do not know too much about fencing. How can you describe this sport?

Well, everyone knows something about fencing from the movies! Actually, competitive fencing is really fairly different from theatrical fencing.

Not quite as graceful unless you're at a really high level, because it's not choreographed, and lesser fencers tend to either go at each other like animals, or to freeze up and stand still. Competitive fencing is extremely exciting, and it really gets your adrenaline pumping. Being on a team means that you fence each bout individually, and you alone have to score five touches in four minutes to win the bout. Yet all of your teammates' victories are added together, and the totals tell if your team wins or loses. So it's really an individual and a team sport in one, which is why I like it.

### Describe the coaching staff.

It's impossible to learn proper technique without a coach. Observation alone is not enough, and you definitely can't learn

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## Giants Lose Superbowl

By: Sara Lampert

I sat down several times after Super Bowl 35 to write this article. It was particularly hard for me being that I have been a die-hard New York Giants fan since I was a little girl. But the last time the Giants were in the Super Bowl, I was ten years old and I must admit that I didn't quite understand every aspect of the game as I do now. And so, the Giants' loss to the Baltimore Ravens of 34-7 really hurts. But it



G. Ron Stone of the NY Giants

is quite difficult to put in words just how bad it does. As Giants MLB Mike Barrow said after the game, "You have to give credit where credit is due." The Baltimore defense essentially beat the Giants offense. Their special teams outplayed our special teams. Their offense looked skilled against our defense.

The Giants' offense tried to run the ball effectively but couldn't get anything going. The Giants were held to only 66 yards rushing. Quarterback Kerry Collins attempted at passing, but it ended up falling a few yards short, being tipped or intercepted. Collins' passes were off all day, and he now ties a Super Bowl record with four interceptions. Kerry Collins' passes might have been off, but the Ravens defense is so good that Collins just didn't have the protection or the time to complete them. The Ravens' linebackers are not only huge 300 pound men, they are also quick and agile for their size.

The Ravens' took a 7-0 lead with 6:51 left in the first period when Brandon Stokley beat cornerback Jason Sehorn by about two steps and caught a 38 yard touchdown pass thrown by Trent Dilfer. Stokley caught the ball at

the ten yard line and Sehorn couldn't tackle him before he crossed into the end zone. The Ravens went into the locker room at the half with a 10-0 lead.

In the end, the only seven points the Giants were able to put on the board was from a kickoff return for a touchdown by the rookie Ron Dixon. But the excitement for Giants' fans was short lived, when we needed two more scores to take the lead, on the ensuing kickoff, Jermaine Lewis decided to show the Giants they weren't the only ones who could take it to the house. Lewis then took it all the way and put the Ravens up 24-7.

The Ravens had the second highest payroll in the league for the 2000 season. They are the third wild card team to win the Super Bowl (Oakland, Denver). Ravens' MLB Ray Lewis, who last year at this time was in the process of being arrested for murder (but later acquitted), this year can call himself the Super Bowl's Most Valuable Player. He had also been named Defensive Player of the Year. During the week prior to the Super Bowl, Lewis predicted a Ravens' victory. What many people thought was arrogance, can now be looked at as confidence as well.

Someone commented to me that I should be proud of what the Giants accomplished this year. I will be the first to say that in the preseason I didn't see this team even making the playoffs. As HB Tiki Barber said, "But it's tough to be proud when your season ends like this." On ESPN PrimeTime after the game, it was mentioned that the Giants' defense just showed up and played. There weren't any spectacular plays, except for a touchdown by Jesse Armstead which ended up being called back because of a holding call on Keith Hamilton. The Giants' defense didn't look like they were playing with the same intensity as their counterpart.

What can we learn from Super Bowl 35? Always bring your defense.

## The Dawn of a New Era

By: Sara Lampert

This was going to happen sooner or later. After all, he was the first pick in the NHL draft last June and inevitably, the goaltender of the future for the New York Islanders. But when would the 19-year-old Rick DiPietro put on his Islanders jersey and for the very first time, make an official NHL debut?

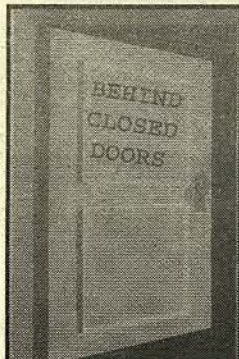
It happened on January 27th against the Buffalo Sabres. I turned on my television to watch the game and could hear the crowd cheering with enthusiasm when DiPietro made his very first save for the Islanders. I was also cheering for him and it brought back memories from this past summer when I interned for the New York Islanders. By far the highlight of my job last summer was the day the Islanders signed DiPietro. I attended the press conference and helped set

up. Afterwards we went over to the Broadway Mall where DiPietro was holding an autograph session. Where I would have normally been the person standing on line amongst the fans, I was now the one organizing the line and handing out bracelets. That day was filled with excitement for everyone in the organization as well as the fans.

And so here I was, almost six months later, watching DiPietro making his first start and sitting on the edge of my seat. He was called up from Chicago (IHL) for the fourth time this season but he hadn't played in his previous three call-ups. He did play for Team USA in the World Junior Championships in Moscow earlier in January. The Islanders starting goaltender, John Vanbiesbrouk has been bothered by back spasms.

DiPietro's debut was as exciting as most imagined it would be. He made several spectacular saves that made you gasp as well as posting an assist on the Islanders' lone goal scored by Dave Scatchard. But it was the Sabres who scored twice on deflections and took the game with a two to one victory on a night where the "Dominant" rested and back-up goalie Martin Biron played. DiPietro finished the game with 29 saves.

After the game, Islanders coach Butch Goringsaid about DiPietro, "There's no doubt that Rick can handle the play up here. He showed it tonight." Maybe the 19-year-old slated as the future for the Islanders will see some more action between the pipes before the season ends. And maybe, the future is now.



## Modern Problems that Lay Hidden in the Orthodox World

### DA MA SHETASHIV



By: Lisa Helprin

It is a typical day at Stern College. Rachel\* has just finished davening Shacharis, and is heading off to her 9 AM class. "How are you, Rachel?", asks her friend on the way to school. "Baruch Hashem, and yourself?" she retorts. Rachel, a typical Stern student, has the same concerns as most of us - classwork, where to go for Shabbos, whether or not to go out a third time with last night's date. She could be any one of us. However, while most of us were graduating high school and trying to pick a seminary, Rachel left her Reform background to become involved in Christianity, and was ready to dedicate her life to being a Christian Missionary.

Shoshana\* and her son Ofir\*, originally from Israel, moved to the United States a few years ago. Ofir, eager to learn, applied to an American university here in New York, and began his search for both knowledge and a girlfriend. What he found surpassed his mother's wildest expectations. Ofir was pursued by and fell in love with a Jew for Jesus. The two have now returned to Israel to recruit and missionize others, and his parents are left heartbroken.

Unfortunately, Shoshana and Rachel are not isolated incidents. It happened to them, and it can happen again. With a Jews for Jesus center practically around the corner from school, and with Messianic Jewish institutions becoming a more common sight nowadays, it is imperative that Klal Yisrael take the precautions necessary to protect ourselves.

occur in their Daled Amot that we are most vulnerable. Therefore, we must take steps in making a conscious effort to guard ourselves and our brothers and sisters from falling prey to missionaries.

These steps include, according to Shoshana, becoming educated as to the difference between Judaism and Christianity. "The only difference my son knew of was that Jews don't believe in Jesus." They showed him portions of the Bible in the English Translation, and, coming, from Israel, his English was not so good. Not wanting to search very far, he accepted what they told him as truth, and his girlfriend made her love for him contingent on his joining the organization, and accepting these beliefs. It is now two years later, and Ofir and his wife are raising a daughter,

Though none of us believe that one of "us" could become one of "them," we still must act. It is when frum Jews think an ill of society can never

Mary\*, to continue their beliefs. There are many resources available nowadays to help educate the public, and one need not go further than his/her computer screen to find the answers for missionary claims. Outreach Judaism, introduced in 1993 by Rav Tovia Singer as a nine-part tape series, has such resources readily available. Founded on the Talmudic dictum that "one who saves a Jewish life is as if he saved an entire world" (Sanhedrin 37a), at [www.outreachjudaism.org](http://www.outreachjudaism.org), one can find the answers to Christian claims. If the answer to a specific question is not listed, one can e-mail Rabbi Singer, who will be happy to respond in a timely fashion.

Another issue at hand, according to Rachel, is that Christianity is a very openly loving religion. Rabbi Singer, at many of his lectures, often points out that when walking into a church, one is greeting with warm and friendly smiles, handshakes, and hellos. However, he notes, that often when a newcomer walks into a shul, his welcome wagon usually consists of the following four words: "You're in my seat." We must make sure that we are not only *makpid* on the laws between man and G-d, but between man and man, as well. As such, we must treat all Jews with the respect and warmth they

deserve, especially when they walk into our places of worship — *Havey makdim b'shlom kol adam.*

After two years involved with Christianity, Rachel listened to Rabbi Singer's tape series, and was convinced to come back to Judaism, this time, as an Orthodox Jew. Ofir, since he was pulled in by a woman's love, was not as easy to convince, and has since himself become a Jew for Jesus. Rachel and her family were fortunate. Shoshana and her's were not as lucky. We must take the necessary precautions now to prevent our families, our friends, and ourselves from becoming a statistic. We must take full advantage of the resources available, to the point that we *Da Ma Shetashiv L'apikores*. Additionally, it is only through showing each other the *emesdik* love deemed necessary by the Torah that we can fully counter the false love shown by missionaries. We must make an effort to welcome all Jews into our homes, our shuls, and our hearts, regardless of religious level or hashkafic beliefs. Hopefully then, we will merit the coming of the TRUE Moshiach, *bimhayrah b'yamaynu* — *Bayom hahu yehiyeh Hashem Eched u'Shmo Ehad.*

\*Names have been changed

## Fencing Interview

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it from a textbook. Getting lessons from my coach, Josie Fusco, is the highlight of each practice. Josie, trains the foil and epee fencers, and Judy Cummins, the assistant coach, trains the sabre fencers. We all appreciate them for their expertise and devotion.

**Swordplay sounds pretty dangerous. Has anyone ever gotten hurt while fencing?**

We don't fence with sharps, so it's really not dangerous as long as we wear our protective gear. No one on our team has ever sustained anything beyond the most basic injury, like a pulled muscle, which could occur in any sport.

Once I was fencing with my friend, and we both lunged at each other. Somehow, we hooked weapons - something that only

seems to happen with the two of us. We were laughing when my friend suddenly cried out, "I'm bleeding, I'm bleeding!" Well, I took a look at her arm, and there was blood on it. Then I looked at my hand and saw that I was the one with the cut, and the blood had run onto her when our foils met. It was only a

scratch, and we began laughing hysterically. More of a farce than a threatening situation.

**Any words of motivation for someone who wants to learn the basics of fencing?**

Oh definitely. It's great exercise!



SCW Fencing Team at a meet

## Not Happy with Shepherd's Pie?

Food Committee Discusses Options for Food Plans

By: Chana Michels

John Birchfield, Jr., SCW food consultant and president of Birchfield Food Systems, met with Jake Lieberman, the associate director of food services at YU, Zelda Braun, assistant dean of students, and ten students on the student life and food committees to discuss the food service at Stern.

In its first meeting of the year, the SCW Food Committee discussed allowing different food plan options for different students. The meeting addressed the issue that SCW students are not informed that the \$750 put on their caf cards in the beginning of the semester is not intended to cover food for every meal eaten in the cafeteria. Colleges cater to their students and Stern's meal plan is geared to the student who generally spends the weekends away.

"By mid-semester, students come to me and tell me that their caf card is used up," Braun, said. "People shouldn't think 'I am a pig because I used up \$750.' Most students don't realize the cost of food and how much kosher food costs."



SCW students in the caf

Birchfield, Jr., said that of all university kosher meal plans, YU charges its students the least amount of money. The national average price for a semester meal plan is \$1300, whereas Stern students pay \$750 per semester for kosher food. The University of Maryland charges

\$1400, Brandeis \$1500-\$1800, and Columbia charges between \$1886-\$2105 per semester. SCW charges half the price because it caters to a student body where many are locals who go home Thursday night and come back Sunday night.

Like SCW, most colleges require that all residents, not just first year students, participate in the meal plan. Apartment-style living generally has reduced rates.

Lieberman explained that on many college campuses, food services try to make money but at YU they try to break even.

"Boston College charges \$1800 a semester and they acknowledge upfront that the meals actually cost them \$1500," said Birchfield Jr. "Those students are charged three hundred dollars in food service fees. At Stern, if you end up leaving money at the end of the semester, and there is not much being left

## The Guide

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As such, claims Soroka, the publishing process was greatly mired.

Yet in the final analysis, both Schneider and Soroka maintain that the most significant reason that *The Guide* was only recently published was because of lack of assistance from other students. "What people fail to realize," noted Soroka, "is that it takes a great deal of work to produce *The Guide*, and that without enough help it is an impossible task." Adds Schneider, "everyone expects to receive *The Guide*, but nobody is willing to do the necessary work. Like with most clubs, several people signed up to work on *The Guide* but when there was work to be done, they were suddenly unavailable." Moreover, the editors-in-chief speculate that while it is irksome that students are not willing to help with the technical aspects of *The Guide's* production, it is also problematic that there is no SCW or YC staff member who is willing to oversee the project. Fortunately for Schneider and Soroka, not all students were unwilling to offer their assistance. Mo-B Singer, a YC senior who worked on *The Guide* in the past, volunteered his time and showed them how to publish *The Guide*. Both editors-in-chief recognize that without Singer's help, this year's *Guide* would not exist at all.

However, several students, including SCW junior Yedida Webberman, have noted that they offered to help with *The Guide* but never received a response to their offers. Furthermore, many other students have stated their desire to assist the staff of *The Guide*, but noted that they did not know who to contact or how to offer their assistance. As such, while most students sympathize with the staff of *The Guide*, they are unwilling to accept any responsibility for delaying *The Guide's* publication.

It is an undisputed fact that every publication, from a simple essay to a newspaper to a novel, requires time, patience and an immeasurable commitment from a dedicated staff. Yet sometimes, the efforts of the few do not satisfy the needs of the many. The devoted staff members of *The Guide* are very sorry that despite their best efforts, *The Guide Part II* was only recently published. Information can be accessed on the Internet by going to <http://guide.yucs.org>, and students can pick up their Guides in Room 5D.

over, know that you are supporting your fellow students."

Birchfield, Jr. explained that food cost is broken up into three parts. The standard in the industry is that thirty percent of the cost is the raw food, forty percent is labor, and twenty percent is a miscellaneous category that includes paper goods, electrical bills, repair of equipment, etc.

Before the meeting, Birchfield, Jr. and Lieberman spent an evening talking to

SCW students about their feelings of food quality and the fairness of prices in order to gauge what improvements need to be made. "One student whom I talked to calculated that based on how many days she spends on campus, she has \$9.50 to spend a day," Birchfield, Jr. commented. "Two seniors told me that they have been here so long that they know exactly what to buy so to

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# on campus

## "I'll Call You Back, I'm in Class"

### Student Cell Phone Use Creates Constant Disturbances in Class

By: Adina Levine

One student's rings to the tune of Yankee Doodle. Another's plays "Auld Lang Zine." And it came as no surprise to a music professor when a student was able to recognize Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, claiming "my cell phone plays that song."

Cell phones have become the paradigm of advances in modern technology. What was once only a luxury for the need-to-be-reached elite has become a necessity for every college student. An exclusive Observer poll found that an amazing 56% of SCW students own a cell phone.

"My cell phone is my only phone," said Michal Bistricher, SCW sophomore.

"It was either paying exorbitant Verizon bills for a phone to sit in my dorm or getting a cell phone so that I can be reached any time," said one SCW junior. "The cell phone was cheaper."

When Verizon wreaked havoc at SCW at the beginning of the year, the only ones pleased with the chaos were owners of the cell phone store located adjacent to SCW.

The cell phone phenomenon has left students wondering whether it is really necessary to be reachable at any time. Of those SCW students surveyed, 72% did not like being reachable always, although 100% liked being able to reach other people at any time.

"I don't usually leave my phone on that much since it can get distracting," stated SCW sophomore, Miriam Colton. "I use it more to reach people."

Other students disagreed, claiming that there was no emergency requiring that college students constantly be accessi-

ble. "I think that there's no need to have a phone at all," commented Michal Leah Kanovsky, SCW junior. "In any emergency situation there are at least ten other phones on my floor I can use."

Some students are against the cell phone craze. "There's no privacy with the cell phone," said Ahuva From, SCW senior. "People should use discretion when talking on cell phones. I just want to say to them: I don't want to know about your date last night."

"I think cell phones cause brain damage," commented Sari Moskowitz, SCW sophomore. "With all those radio waves, you'd be better off sticking your head into a microwave."

How has the cell phone phenomenon affected the classroom decorum? According to Rabbi Oratz, a ringing cell phone that interrupts his lecture is an occurrence that he must get used to. "It's a sign of the times," remarked Oratz, "and I just have to get used to it."

Other professors disagree. "I think a cell phone has no place in the classroom," argued Professor Evelyn Cohen. "Common courtesy mandates that the students shut off their phones while in class." Some teachers confiscate any cell phone that rings during class.

Apparently, the abundance of cell phones at SCW is very minute compared to that of YC. SSSB Finance Professor Audratis, who teaches at both colleges, remarks, "Stern cell phones are nothing compared to uptown. There, each guy has two cell phones and eight beepers."

Who knows? Maybe they're drug dealers.



## Tuition Increase

continued from front page

"SCW now has a campus," remarked one mother. "When I went to Stern, it was one classroom building and Brookdale. It's expanded to include many dorms, two classroom buildings, an Art Annex, and a theater - and there are plans to keep building. SCW women should be appreciative and understanding that a better campus costs more."

Some YC students were horrified to hear about the alleged across-the-board tuition increases. "It's not fair that my college tuition should go toward improvements in the Midtown campus," complained Aryeh Hoening, YC junior. "I see a lot of improvements for Stern, but the

uptown campus has stayed the same. I want to get my money's worth."

Other YC students disagreed. "We're all part of one University," commented YC sophomore David Turk. "It's all one pot."

The impact that tuition increases would have on financial scholarships has left plaguing questions for those students accepting scholarships. "It's hard enough to pay for SCW tuition this year," asserted one SCW junior on scholarship. "I'm afraid to even think about what will happen next year."

## Where Are Our Evaluation Forms?

continued from back page

Students respond differently to being asked to fill out evaluation forms. Some fill them out, enjoy the ten-minute break from class and don't think about them further. "I really don't care about the evaluation forms," said Devorah Helmus, SCW senior, reflecting a common attitude.

Other students just feel frustrated that the forms are ineffective. Miry Sorkin, an SCW

junior, feels that, "They are probably not looked at, it's just to give us a feeling that we have some say, although we don't." Aviva Davis, a junior, comments on what may be a vicious cycle, "I don't think that people take them seriously so therefore I don't think they're effective." Some students disagree and think that the forms do provide a way for students to help their teachers improve methods.

"I think people take them seriously and they are a good measure. There's no reason why people shouldn't take them seriously, they are anonymous," said Rhonda Spector, a sophomore.

Dr. Ellen Shrecker of the history department says that she looks at her evaluation forms but "I'm not sure how much they tell." She relates that for some categories the forms can be helpful,

such as if the student felt the class was well-organized and the lectures were explained clearly. However for other categories the student's opinion is not so useful, "obviously students have no idea about the intellectual content of the course."

Stern is not alone in asking students to grade their professors. It is standard practice in most colleges and universities to use

## Dress Code Controversy Continues

By: Ayelet Rivka Jaye

As students' awareness of the dress code increases, so do the complaints with the dress code. One popular criticism of the dress code is that it is reasonable for a private Jewish high school to have a dress code, but a college?!?! "This is college, there shouldn't be a dress code," says Jessica Russak, SCW junior.

Many agree with her, feeling strongly that college is a place where one can have maximum freedom and the opportunity to assert one's individuality. Looking at most other college campuses across the country, there are no dress codes. If Yeshiva University is really what it calls itself—a university—then shouldn't its students be afforded that same freedom and choice as students enjoy in other universities? However, others approach this question from a different angle; they don't feel that the so-called "freedom" that other universities have to offer is the real deal. They're looking for something which doesn't necessarily bind them to follow the ever-changing whims and notions of society, but rather, a true freedom, one that they feel can only be obtained by answering the question of: "How should I live my life?" with the objective truth of the Torah. Therefore, many women choose to come to Yeshiva University because they feel that as a Torah-observant institution it provides this real freedom. It may not look like the "freedom" that exists on other college campuses, but many question if this is the kind of freedom they really want. Ariel Lubin, SCW sophomore says: "Most of us have grown up with the idea that college is about independence, but we chose to go to Stern College which has different standards."

Another reason given for anti-dress code feelings is that the dress code does not accurately reflect *halachic* sources. Several women quote famous "modern orthodox" woman figures who wear pants, saying: if they can, why can't I? Others insisted that they know of orthodox rabbinic authorities, whom they refused to reveal, who will quote sources to prove that wearing pants is acceptable. (HaGaon Rav Eliashiv, shlita, and HaGaon Rav Sheinberg, shlita, both contend that although the prohibition of women wearing pants is not an issue of wearing a man's garment if the pants were specifically manufactured for women, the prohibition still applies because pants outline the lower half of the body).

The final reason given is that the dress code "creates a rift between students," as Russak puts it. "The dress code marginalizes those who wear pants," agrees Ilana Kasten, SCW senior.

## IN YOUR OWN WORDS

By: Alexandra Beard

### "Would you ever consider running for SCW Student Council President?"



Deena Katz-

"The reason why I would run is because I love being in charge and organizing things for others.

I like to be able to make things right, and by being SCWSC President, I would have the ability to make decisions to create change. In reality, I wouldn't run because I feel that now I'm in college, I would rather be the recipient of someone else's hard work. I was Student Council President in high school and prefer to now sit back and watch others make things happen."



Ayelet Rivka Jaye-

"I wouldn't run for SCWSC President because being President is a major responsibility and I don't think I would be able to handle the pressure it entails. I like being involved in college, but because I have a lot of schoolwork and other outside responsibilities, giving all my time to SCW would be too much. The SCWSC President should enjoy the role, so whoever considers running needs to know herself and if she can handle the position."



Michal Sacharin-

"I wouldn't consider running for SCWSC President because I've already been involved in organizations like NCSY and Bnei Akiva, so I know what it's like to take on a high-responsibility position. I also don't feel so attached to Stern that I should have such a responsibility toward the school. I enjoy Stern, but I don't have the motivation to put so much time and effort into SCW life."

Pick Up Part II of  
**The Guide**  
in BRH, Room 5D  
or the Main Office

# C u l t u r a l A r t s

## Fever Chills the Screening Room

By: Sarah P. Cate

Called "a small gem of paranoia and psychosis" by Filmmaker Magazine, *Fever* shines as a chilling and compelling drama. It is subtly crafted by director Alex Wintner, making it one of the season's best suspense films.

Nick Parker is a quiet, young artist who teaches life drawing at a local studio. The film opens with the chalk drawings of facial muscles and faces broken down into lines and quadrants. This is what Nick tries to impart to his students: stay within the lines. He lives in a dismal and dilapidated apartment building in Brooklyn. His life is a quiet one—his only excitement is generated when a murder occurs in his building. This may prove to be too much excitement for Nick. His life, as he knows it, alters drastically with the murder. He is no longer able to function at work at home. He soon suspects his neighbor of committing the heinous crime and the story escalates from there.

Henry Thomas, who plays the deranged young artist in Wintner's film, is not new to acting. He played Elliot in the classic 1980's movie *E.T.* and the youngest brother in *Legends of the Fall*. His acting prowess, however, has not diminished over the years. He seems to adapt to a variety of roles with ease and without awkwardness. In *Fever*, his facial expressions display a meekness in the role that typifies his character. His only comfortable moments are those with his sister, played by Terri Hatcher. With her, he seems to lose his apologetic nature and gain a boyish spirit.

Their rapport is charmingly like small children. They interact easily and without reservation.

Hatcher, who is most recognizable from the *Lois and Clark* series on television, acts admirably well in movies. She plays her role of the caring older sister, who has climbed the ladder of success to art gallery director. As Nick visits her, he glances enviously at the space. She has attained the position that has eluded him. Her efforts to help him, however, are rebuffed. He clearly feels that he can fend for himself in the art world, as well as real life.



Terri Hatcher and David O'Hara Star in *Fever*

The film is shot in a succession of dark scenes and deserted settings. Eerie music permeates the scenes, and conveys the sense of the depressing atmosphere. The film is also partially shot in flashbacks, which is how audiences see Nick's deceased mother and him as a child. It is with blurring lines and hallucinogenic effects that Wintner brings the viewer back in time. He clearly wishes to create the film as an artistic piece as well as weave a story.

Wintner comments that he made the film in order to "explore the dilemmas of the twenty-something in a serious way." He also wanted to create a film that used "pure cinematic language to drive the narrative, as opposed to dialogue or plot." He spent over five years writing the screenplay and his effort and intensive work shine through the film. Wintner has created a suspenseful piece, without Hollywood special effects and high-technical feats. He is above all a craftsman and film is his medium. His work has paid off in the form of *Fever*.

## Disgrace Captures Reader's Emotion

By: Sarah P. Cate

*Disgrace* is full of moments of just this-situations and feelings of utter shame and debasement. J.M. Coetzee invites us into the world of post-apartheid South Africa, which resonates with the tensions of race relations still. He tells us the story of David Lurie, a professor of communications at Cape Technical University. He disgraces himself by his affair with a student. It is not so much the affair as his treatment of the affair that removes him from the grace of the academic world in which he lives. Seeking respite from the cold glances and silent stares of his former colleagues, Lurie travels to visit his daughter in rural country. Coetzee tells us the story of Lurie's interaction with her, as well as Lurie's attempt to rise from his disgrace.

Coetzee creates strong and familiar characters in his novel. He depicts Lurie as a harsh, egotistical, academic who thinks that he is irresistibly attractive to women. In one encounter

with Bev Shaw, a local veterinarian, he becomes depressed as he realizes he has sunk to her level. He thinks that he deserves better than her plain face and homely appearance. He is so used to getting whatever he desires, that he does not stop to think that his actions have even caused this. His attitude here is the essence of his character. Coetzee lets us see Lurie in a very clear light, but we see his transformation in a nebulous manner. Just how much he actually changes throughout the course of the novel is debatable, but fascinating to watch and read.

Coetzee's writing style is terse and easy to read. He, however, captures male and female emotions remarkably well and succeeds in creating characters with which one can identify. His portrayal of Lucy is somewhat distant, but he does convey her emotions strongly as observed by Lurie. He shows how the land that she owns has become vitally important to her. Perhaps this importance is due to the fact that

her parents are distant. Her mother, for example, cannot even remember her daughter's lover's correct name. Lucy appears to have substituted her relationship with her parents with a strong bond to her farm. It is in showing her attitude towards her land that Coetzee excels. J.M. Coetzee includes in his novel the tension of racial relationships in South Africa. As a former citizen of South Africa, he tells us firsthand of the smoldering tensions between between the Afrikaaner people and their Caucasian neighbors. Lucy more than any other character in the novel faces the repercussions of these tensions. Coetzee details the awkwardness of the entrance of Lurie and Lucy to a party given by a worker on Lucy's land. Everyone stops to look at them, and the party feels slightly amiss after their arrival. Coetzee gives a genuine sense of what it is like to live in South Africa and the fears that a young independent farming woman faces.

## "Kiss Me, Kate" a Hilarious Hit

By: Kayla Klitzkin

Imagine, while watching a Broadway show, that you know what happens backstage before the actors come out.



In the Tony award-winning Broadway revival of Cole Porter's famous musical, "Kiss Me, Kate," the audience experiences just this. Throughout the musical, the audience is taken back and forth between what the actors do backstage during a show in the 1940s, and the actual show, which is a musical version of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*. The result? Hilarity.

Upon entering the Martin Beck Theater, I was struck by what appeared to be a very simple set, especially for a Broadway show. Everything onstage was kept simple, with very few props—a small light, a wooden platform, a piano, and a broom and some ropes hanging near the ceiling. As it turns out this is the stage before the actors set it up for their performance of *Taming of the Shrew*. The first character introduced, Hattie, a backstage worker, begins singing "Another Opening, Another Show" and she is soon joined by a whole chorus of characters, all actors getting ready for the opening night of the *Taming of the Shrew*. As they sing this toe-tapping song, they break out into an energetic dance number. By the end of the song, the audience is all revved up, breaking into enthusiastic applause. Everyone already knows this show is going to be fun.

The set soon becomes much more elaborate, with a backstage corridor in the next scene, and in the scene after, two adjacent dressing rooms, which literally pop out of the back of the stage. In the dressing rooms, we get to know the two main characters, Lilli Vanessi (Marin

Mazzi) and Fred Graham (Brian Stokes Mitchell). The two have had a rocky relationship. When flowers are delivered to Lilli from Fred, she confesses her love for him in the sweet song "So in Love." Only one problem: The flowers were sent there by accident. They were meant to be delivered to another woman. Not reading the note attached to the flowers which say who the flowers are for, she saves it for later, putting it in her costume.

Soon the curtain for the "Taming of the Shrew" is pulled down and the actual show begins. Everything starts off routine, with the lively song "Tom, Dick, or Harry" sung by Bianca, the shrew's younger sister, who has a score of suitors and does not know who to pick. Then suddenly, from inside Katherine's (Lilli's character, the shrew) room, we hear a scream, then "bastard!" She read the note. Soon she sings the hilarious song "I Hate Men" with surprising enthusiasm, angrily throwing another prop to the ground every time she belts out the song's title (which is many times). Petruccio (Fred's character) starts his seemingly hopeless quest of courting Katherine. Lilli is so angry at Fred that she forgets to be Katherine, and starts screaming at Fred for the flower mishap. The two soon start fighting, and the curtain is pulled down. A few members of the chorus sheepishly start doing a little dance routine over and over again in front of the curtain, as if this is the clueless audience the show is being performed to and needs to be distracted. All the while, things can be heard crashing behind the curtains, as well as angry screams. Instead of being shocked and horrified, everyone in the audience is bursting into laughter, because everyone knows what is going on.

There are many other comedic points during the show. Lilli is so angry at Fred that she wants to quit in the middle of the show. There are these two thugs, who believe (though falsely) that Fred owes a gambling debt. Fred tells the thugs he won't be able to pay them unless he can finish the show, so he gets them to wear ridiculous looking costumes so that they can watch over Lilli on stage. These thugs don't know how to act very well, and end up pulling their guns out on her, the chorus, and even the audience, as the actors are trying to perform. Another comedic point is the hilarious song that Petruccio sings after marrying Katherine in the

*continued on next page*

## Website

*continued from front page*

themselves to be "student of the week," Schubert explained. Being nominated does not afford one any special privileges, but does offer recognition in the form of Internet exposure, she added.

SCWSC.com, whose logo on the home page features animated letters that spell out "SCWSC," was designed by Digital Alchemy, a local computer web design company that Schubert worked for. Schubert, whose major is computer animation, explained that she would have liked to build and design SCWSC.com herself, but didn't have the time required for it.

The website, which anonymous sources claim costs at least \$10,000 to create, design, and host, was first brought up as a possible Student Council venture by Schubert, who brought it to the attention of the executive board at the beginning of the school year in fall 2000. Soleimani said the entire executive board (which consists of 5 members) agreed to make the website "a priority according to spending" in the SC budget of 2000-2001, although she "was unsure" whether initial support for the website was unanimous or only majority-based.

Additionally, Schubert claimed that the monetary amount needed to pay for the creation and maintenance of SCWSC.com, which she declined to state specifically, was matched solely by fundraising, such as selling sweatshirts and holding raffles and concerts. Soleimani offered a different answer, stating that the total cost of the site, which she did not remember, was paid for by money Stern College allotted to Student Council for the 2000-2001 school year, as well as money made by fundraising.

SC Corresponding Secretary and SCW senior Suzanne Goldstone noted how the website would hopefully make her executive board position easier to carry out. "If you look at the walls in the school building, fliers are covered by other fliers. No one sees anything posted up there. My job is now 100 times easier because people can go [to the site] daily to find out what is going on. It will take a lot of the clutter off the bulletin boards," she remarked.



# Cultural Arts

## Art Opportunities at SCW

By: Esther Zipris

Contrary to rumor, it's there if you want it. If you are a student with interests in the arts, there are a number of outlets available. Journals, events, bands and clubs are all open and waiting for you the student to get involved.

*Besamim*, *Mima'amakim*, *Sounding Board*- these are just a few of the publications devoted to publishing student writings, art and photography. *Spires* is an intercollegiate journal that is distributed in colleges around the country. Involvement is not limited to submitting work; there is plenty of behind-the-scenes action ready to draw out the critic in you. Why not enquire about being on staff? If your writing strays from the fictional and tends toward the informative, there are a myriad of other journals aimed toward your specific interest.

Take a walk over to the Art Annex. Spend five minutes strolling around the studio (try not to peer over people's shoulders as they work; artists can be edgy at times). Take the time to appreciate what your fellow peers are dabbling in.

If you are a musician, why not find out about the jazz or classical bands on campus? If you are an actress, why not get involved with the play? Keep an eye out for flyers publicizing "brown bag" informal get-togethers with student and faculty, formulated to discuss art-related topics and articles.

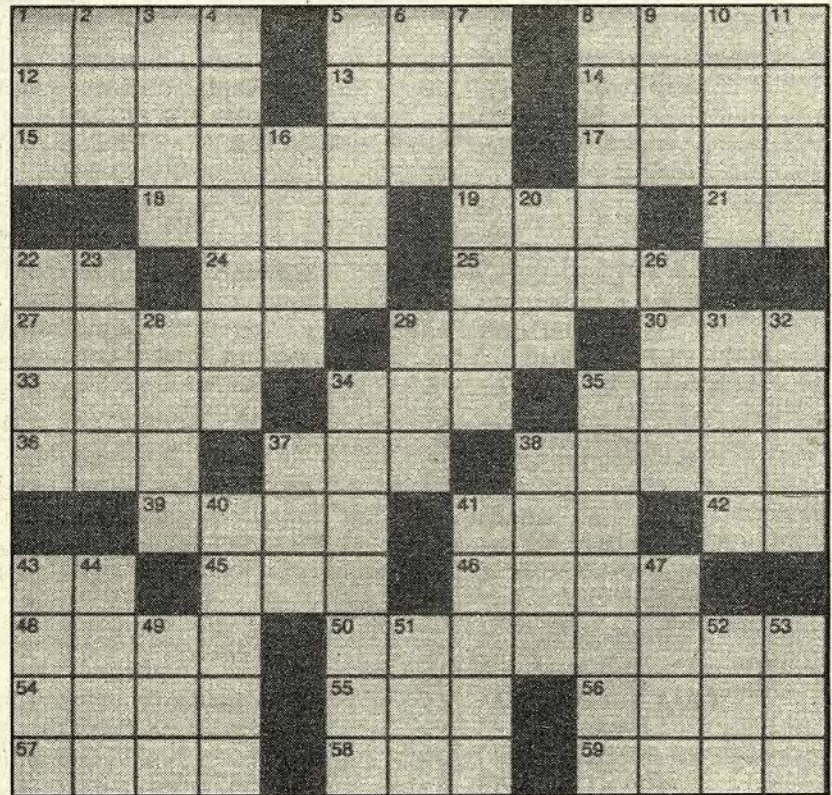
The ultimate on-campus celebration of student art is the two-week long YC/SCW Arts Festival: a series of events that provide a forum for students to display and discuss their music, artwork, poetry and dramatic flair. These events, like all others, are geared toward artists

and admirers, participants and audience alike. (This year's festival hits a campus near you, starting February 25<sup>th</sup>.)

Some of you, no doubt, are thinking "why?" With a full course load, why indulge even as a spectator in something that won't show up on your transcript? For those aspiring towards the lofty title of Renaissance woman or for those who merely enjoy being entertained, college experience is meant to provide students with as complete a foundation as possible. A visible arts on campus presence is as crucial an activity - nay, a requirement - as English Comp. or Biology. Wherever you stand on the issue, arts on campus is here, growing constantly in support and participation. Decide what you want from your college experience, and then do something about it.

Arts on campus. It's there if you want it.

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



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### Across:

1. Bossa \_\_\_\_\_
5. Building wing
8. "\_\_\_\_\_ is Bustin' Out All Over"
12. Partiality
13. "Me," in Paris
14. Iridescent stone
15. Shearing
17. Scruff of the neck
18. Actress Patricia
19. Long-handled tool
21. Vane direction (abbr.)
22. Foot (abbr.)
24. Wail
25. Flip a coin
27. Furious
29. Vigor
30. Ref's kin
33. Sailors
34. And not
35. Soft cheese
36. Trio following R
37. Freckle
38. Make holy
39. Producer Mike \_\_\_\_\_
41. Sadness
42. Easy, Wall, or Main (abbr.)
43. "Lovely to Look \_\_\_\_\_"

### Down:

45. Nourished
46. \_\_\_\_\_ mater
48. Haven
50. Natural impulse
54. Incontestable
55. Snood
56. Winter weather
57. Witnessed
58. Mild exclamation
59. Tramp
1. Competitor of ABC
2. Source of Rockefeller's riches
3. Useless
4. Appearances
5. Poet Dickinson
6. Actor Chaney
7. Not so heavy
8. Tom, Shirley, or Quincy
9. \_\_\_\_\_ creek without a paddle (2 wds.)
10. Siestas
11. Confederate General Robert \_\_\_\_\_ (2 wds.)
16. Diminish gradually
20. "Alley \_\_\_\_\_" (comic strip)
22. Asian trees

23. Horse's pace
26. Okay!
28. Touch upon
29. Geranium holder
31. \_\_\_\_\_ America
32. Nuisance
34. \_\_\_\_\_ acquaintance (slight knowledge)
35. Complexion mishap
37. WWII general initials
38. Lock
40. Frequently
41. Opposite of hoard
43. Rental dwelling (abbr.)
44. Rushed
47. \_\_\_\_\_ Domini
49. Wish undone
51. Word that indicates a maiden name
52. Kernel locale
53. "Tea for \_\_\_\_\_"

Answers on Page 9

## Broadway Play Review

continued from previous page

show, who, at that point, still detests him (she did not have much choice in marrying him). In this song he laments, "Where is the life that late I lead?/Where is it now?/Totally dead!"

It is worth going just to see Brian Stokes Mitchell, who won a Tony for his performance as Fred/Petruchio. Even before his starring role in "Kiss me, Kate" he received a Tony nomination for his portrayal of Coalhouse Walker in Ragtime. With his incredible voice and his great comedic acting, he charms the audience from start to finish. At the end of the show, when he took his bow, the audience rose to its feet almost instantly. Marin Mazzie received a Tony nomination for her performance of Lilli/Katherine, and,

like Mitchell, she also received a Tony nomination for Ragtime. I saw Patty Goble, an understudy, perform the role of Lilli/Katherine instead. She certainly won the audience over and did as good a job, I am sure, as Mazzie.

"Kiss me, Kate" is a real winner. The show is clever and witty, with a great cast, upbeat songs, a terrific score, and well-choreographed dance numbers. This is the first revival of Cole Porter's musical, which came out in 1948. That is part of the period of time often called the Golden Age of the musical. After seeing this show you really feel like you are in that Golden Age once again. "Kiss me, Kate" truly is Broadway at its best.

## Piamenta Band Plays YU

By: Yael Ariel And Devorah Helmus

Jewish music is currently facing the challenge of remaining true to its traditional essence while exploring and experimenting with modern genres. It is hard to combine this core of Jewish folk with the trappings of modern rock inspired technique. Yossi Piamenta is facing such a challenge. On Thursday night, the Chabad clubs of Stern and Yeshiva College sponsored a concert by this "Jewish Jimi Hendrix." This concert was organized in honor of Yud Shevat - the yearzeit of the previous Lubavicher rebbe and the day that the seventh rebbe, R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson took on the mantle of leadership.

The concert opened with the band Remez, an up-and-coming Jewish group that played Carlebach-inspired tunes as well as originals. In particular, we thought that the violinist, was exceptional, playing an intense and fluid set. It is rare to see a

woman musician in Orthodox Jewish circles, and we were pleasantly surprised.

After this warm up, Piamenta came on, playing traditional Chassidic melodies juiced up with hard-core electric guitar, drums, and other staples of rock. Yossi Piamenta, like his music, is a unique mix of tradition and hip. He looks like your average Chassidic flower child who spent his share of time hanging out at Haight Ashbury in the 60's. He has a long beard, large brightly-colored, African inspired kippa, long flowing tzitzit, and brandishes an electric guitar. His set began with instrumental electric guitar, leading Jewish folk tunes into hard rock territory. He loudly experimented with various musical genres in the course of the concert, dabbling in Arabic melodies, Chassidic nigunim, the Carlebach version of Ki ba Mo'ed, and such classic Lubavich hits as "Yechi Adonino, Moreino, v'Rabbeinu Melech h'Mashiach." Less Lubavichly inclined individuals,

such as Yael, were mildly freaked out at this display of messianic fervor, but Devorah really liked it.

The room was divided with a classic fake-plant partition down the middle, females on one side and males on the other, with folding chairs on both sides. We didn't like the folding chairs. We found that it gave the ambiance of



Writers and a friend enjoy the Piamenta concert

a bingo tournament to the performance. Fortunately, as the concert progressed, the chairs were pushed away to make room for dancing.

The atmosphere started out sedate, but ended up as swaying, jumpin' and jivin',

sweaty sex-segregated circles of swinging students. (Pardon the alliteration and hyperbole.) Did Yossi Piamenta successfully achieve Jewish cross-over status?

Devorah feels that Yossi Piamenta skillfully conveys the flavor of Yiddishe soul through the medium of modern technique. She finds him to be very sincere in the emotions he's conveying, and very dexterous on the electric guitar. Plus, the "Yechi Adoninu" song wins her over every time.

Yael enjoyed dancing throughout the concert, taking only one three-minute break from dancing, but found the music to be slightly too loud and mechanical. She is a hippie, and would prefer to sway to the gentle strumming of a banjo and the beat of her own drum. (At this point Yael would like to remind everyone that Devorah is also hippie AND a fine arts major.)

On a more serious note, we were disturbed to see many people sneak into the con-

cert without paying, most of them belonging to Yeshiva University institutions. Disturbing as well was that many took advantage of the break given for maariv to do so. This was a fundraiser for Chabad clubs, not a money-making operation, since the cost of obtaining Yossi Piamenta ate up any profits. While we wanted to address this issue, however, most of the people paid in order to experience and enjoy the concert.

The overall impression of the audience seemed to be quite enthusiastic; everyone appeared to be caught up in the music, and dancing with wild abandon. Yossi Piamenta was very gracious and friendly, posing for photos with students. The concert achieved its goal: it was a Chassidic celebration in a modern world, combining old world Jewish lyrics and soul with contemporary innovation to create a musical reflection of our lives, as we struggle to elevate the modern world into our core of ancient tradition and beliefs.

## College Outreach Program off to Promising Start

By: Observer Staff

As one walks through the YU campus, it is easy to feel isolated from the rest of society. It is quite common to wonder what YU is doing for people outside this campus. But once in a while something happens at YU that reminds one of the institution's unlimited potential. This year, a new college outreach program, Panim, has shown the impact YU students can have on the greater Jewish community.

This program, run by the Max Stern Division of Communal Services, sends our young men and women to college campuses along the East Coast to help augment a Shabbos of learning, davening and singing. With Panim's primary goals to break down existing stereotypes to help create Jewish unity, as well as to rekindle the passion for Judaism on college campuses, these students lead a Friday night Carlebach davening, informal source-based discussion sessions after Friday night dinner, a tisch, and a shiur.

"Panim allows for religious students to reach out those students who are irreligious to make a religious impact them that could change their lives, maybe not now but in many years to come," remarked participant Mimi Sternberg. "It affects us

yeshiva kids going there in a way that inspires us and leaves us with a truly enriching and fulfilling experience."

Panim's members have already made a significant impact for students on campus. They have visited four campuses: George Washington University in Washington, D.C., Rutgers, SUNY Albany and Syracuse University. All four universities were so excited by the program that they immediately requested Panim to return for the second semester. "I want to thank all of you for coming to Rutgers and spending Shabbos with us," wrote Elazar Nudell. "You all contributed to this past Shabbos being the best, most fun, most interesting, and truly the holiest Shabbos I have had since I have been at Rutgers."

The program's astonishing success has surprised even the individuals who created it, RIETS students Josh Strulowitz and Jason Finkelstien and MSDCS Director Ari Rockoff. "What has surprised me the most", remarked Strulowitz, Panim's educational coordinator, "is how excited the people on campus are about having a Shabbos experience. At Syracuse University we expected our Friday night session to go for half an hour, and it ended up going for an hour and a

half....It was unbelievable."

The program's success has been attributed largely to the talented YC and SCW students. "They've been tremendous", said Strulowitz, "many students in college campuses simply have never met anyone like us before. They're usually very surprised at how normal we are."

"It allows for religious students from YU to get an enriching experience," observed Sternberg, "because we get to give over all the Torah that we know and believe in and pass it on to someone else who may not have ever had an experience like this before."

On the other hand, not all participants are as gung-ho about the program's experience. One SCW student claimed that arriving just before Shabbat and leaving right after did not allow enough time to fully make an impact on the college life, and another believed that there was often a small turnout of students at the college. But both students asserted their highest compliments of the program itself.

If you'd like to become involved in some capacity with Panim, you can call Ari Rockoff at 212-960-5266 or e-mail him at Rockoff@ymail.yu.edu or e-mail Jason Finkelstien at Rave613@aol.com.

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# BUSINESS NEWS

By: Aaron Brown, Professor of Finance

For many people, the horror of Nazi genocide is so great that the details are irrelevant. The trouble with this view is you cannot learn from what you won't study. Six million Jews, plus five million non-Jews, were murdered from racial hatred. The German Nazis caused many deaths beyond these, of course, through an expansionist war and murder for political reasons. But terrible as these latter crimes are, they are common in world history. The Holocaust is unique in the scale of systematic murder justified by racism.

Jews were valuable citizens in every part of society, politics, military, commerce and arts. Yet in ten years, Germany went from reasonable tolerance to gas chambers and ovens. The obscenity is that was not some midnight lynching carried out in hot blood or the partly-foreseen consequence of discriminatory laws and economic policies. This was a deliberate, efficient, precisely organized genocide. Educated people had to use their professional expertise to design it, every part of society had to cooperate to achieve it.

Princeton historian Harold James has just published "The Deutsche Bank and the Nazi Economic War Against the Jews." This is a fascinating case study of the role of bankers in the Holocaust. As a finance professor, I feel a professional obligation to understanding how the tools of finance were turned to such a purpose.

Beginning in 1932 and continuing long after the start of the war, German financial institutions were used in a sophisticated economic war against Jews. This was an important step in the road to genocide. The brutal fact is that it's easier to murder poor people than rich people, so impoverishing German Jews removed an obstacle to killing them.

But another aspect of the economic war is more controversial. What happened to all the assets that were stolen? Did Hermann Goring succeed in his plan to use money stolen from the Jews to pay for Germany's rearming? Did corrupt Nazi officials spirit the profits away to numbered Swiss bank accounts, as often happened in occupied countries? Did the German banks keep the money hidden, as has been alleged, and use it to fund their postwar growth and the rebuilding of the German economy?

This issue was first considered in reparation lawsuits in the decade following the war. Expropriations were examined case-by-case and substantial awards were made to surviving victims, also some general reparations were ordered to compensate for injuries that could not be specified and proven to legal standards. The German government,

banks, companies and individual Germans paid many judgements.

In the late 1980's a number of people started questioning the fairness of the postwar judgements. Records became available as participants died and Western governments relaxed secrecy rules. As the Iron Curtain crumbled, other records and witnesses became available. Some of this new information suggested that evidence of profiteering had been suppressed in the service of Cold War politics. This spawned new investigations and lawsuits, which turned up voluminous records that had never been examined, including internal records of the financial institutions themselves. On the basis of this, some people have claimed to identify huge stolen profits still held by Swiss and German banks.

Professor James has sifted through this evidence, particularly internal records from Deutsche Bank, notes of key personnel and recently available German documents captured in 1945 but held for fifty years in the Moscow Special Archive and the Czech Ceska Banka Union. These paint a chilling picture of the role of finance in preparing Germany for Holocaust.

In German business and professional circles, overt anti-Semitism was unacceptable in 1932. Bankers, and upper middle class people in general, were horrified by the anti-Jewish street violence of Ernst Roehm and the crude propaganda of Joseph Goebbels. Hitler made no mention of Jews when addressing these groups, concentrating instead on the threat from communists.

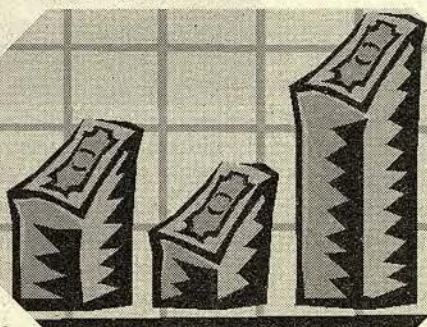
Yet the banks were nervous. Nazism had a lot of anti-bank and anti-big-business elements. Deutsche Bank, as a very big bank with many very big company customers, felt vulnerable. It seemed prudent to quietly reduce the number of Jewish directors and top managers. This had to be done in a way that could be denied later, in case the Nazis fell from power, and also in a way that would not be obvious from outside Germany, because the bank depended on good foreign relations for its business.

As Hitler consolidated his power, the exclusion of Jews accelerated due to formal and informal state pressure. The process also became more overt and was extended to the bank's corporate customers. Lists were drawn up of accounts held by Jews.

This represented the more or less rational phase of Nazi anti-Semitism. Hitler wanted to remove Jewish control of businesses, particularly influential businesses like publishing and strategic businesses like armament manufacturing. The emphasis was on control, not ownership. National Socialism required extensive government manage-

ment of private businesses, and this would be easier with Nazis and fellow-travelers in charge of key companies.

Deutsche Bank was pressed into service as an intermediary in these negotiations. They were able to use their extensive business and personal contacts to persuade many Jews to resign voluntarily. In other cases the bank persuaded non-Jewish directors to remove or fire the Jewish ones. The Nazis kept up external pressure on companies to aryanize, boycotts, physical intimidation (although this declined significantly between 1933 and 1937), denial of public contracts, accusations of vague but serious economic crimes and general official harassment. The bank played the good cop role, cajoling Jews into



resigning "for the good of the company."

The financial expertise of the bank was required as the Nazis moved forward to expropriate assets owned by Jews. The government needed skilled investment bankers to negotiate sound acquisitions. Now Deutsche Bank was able to put its full skills in service of the Reich. Finding economically viable buyers willing to pay high prices was very hard. There was a depression on with excess capacity in all industries. Existing companies were not anxious to take on additional capacity (in fact, they pressured the government to shut down the Jewish-owned concerns, and sometimes succeeded). Talented entrepreneurs had no particular reason to take part in a morally repugnant deal when there were unlimited honest opportunities to take over companies. Forced sales might be reversed later, and would not be respected in foreign countries. Therefore the Nazis found they were attracting ambitious, amoral, incompetent bidders rather than the good managers they needed.

Deutsche Bank, through extensive efforts, was able to overcome these problems. Their contacts with existing companies (they often had representatives on the Boards) allowed them to negotiate a combination with the support of large competitors (they still faced frequent opposition from small and middle-sized businesses, which the Nazis officially favored). Their participation put a veneer of respectability on the deals, and their foreign operations could settle the complex foreign law questions that always came up. They had the analysis skills and information to find the right sort of purchaser. And, of course, they could finance the deal, which

was a major consideration in depression times.

James turns up many examples in which the Jewish owners were grateful for the bank's efforts. Although the purpose was to enrich the Nazi state, a side effect was to increase the money paid to the owners. In those days a few thousand marks literally could mean the difference between life and death. The bank was one of the few institutions in Germany that could arrange for efficient foreign transfer of money, so Jews could leave with their money (after paying heavy additional taxes and fees imposed by the Nazis). Unfortunately, too many of them did not get far enough away, if they settled in Holland or France they gained only a short respite from Nazi murderers. James also cites examples in which the bank was very cooperative in investigating forced sales after the war and making restitution settlements with surviving victims. Cynics will note that these examples all concern families that survived the war with significant wealth and business activities, who could not be cheated with impunity, however James may have selected them as the most prominent examples.

As the war began, Deutsche Bank's activities continued. Negotiations and transactions were pursued as late as 1941. It was the recovery of the German economy caused by the war, rather than the deterioration of the treatment of German Jews, that put an end to bank-intermediated expropriations. It became easy to transfer the assets to existing companies and the brutal occupation methods were reimported to Germany. However before it got out of the aryanization business, the bank progressed from primarily financial negotiations with a veiled government threat behind them, to explicit bargaining of lives for money. Visas became a major part of purchase prices.

What can we learn from this? Most of the top people at the bank appear to have taken anti-Jewish actions reluctantly. We cannot look into their hearts from reading 70 year old bank memora, but we have to consider that they enjoyed the respect and trust of Jewish people before and after the war. Nothing surviving in writing indicates a n t i -

Semitism or general immorality. Considered step by step many of their actions seem defensible. Many of the worst actions were taken by junior staff, anxious to use Nazi brutality for their professional advancement.

What if the top managers had resisted? Suppose in 1932 they had said we will retain our Jewish directors and employees, and fight anti-Semitism in our customer companies, and protect the interests and privacy of all our depositors Jewish and non-Jewish? Maybe that would have sparked a reaction to sweep the Nazis from power, or maybe they would have been pushed aside and later punished.

When assigning responsibility for a murder, we tend to start at the top and bottom: the person who first ordered the killing and the person who pulled the trigger. But it's important to remember the people in the middle. Really massive crimes require talent to organize. Professionals in the middle have to know the details to do a good job, and they are in the best position to impede the process just by using less than their full talent.

The economic war against the Jews was a crucial part of the Holocaust within Germany. The generals in the war, the top Nazis and their economic advisors, were unqualified to fight it. It succeeded only due to the special talents of the field officers, the bankers. From the evidence in James' book, these bankers fought the Nazi economic war not because they believed the cause was right, nor from fear of punishment. For the most part, they organized it because that's what bankers did, it was their job. Aryanization expropriations were just a new kind of deal. Not Nazi deals or non-Nazi deals, just deals to be done. While these bankers cannot be put in the moral category of either a Hitler or a concentration camp guard, they were not evil beyond the pale of common humanity, their is an aspect to their behavior that is very disturbing, disturbing because it can seem almost reasonable.

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# on campus

## Sudden Appointment of Junior Class President

By: Miriam Colton

After the abrupt withdrawal of Junior class president Debbie Michaels from SCW over winter break, the Student Council promoted Yael Shmuel to junior class president.



Shmuel is Appointed Class President Mid-Year

Rather than holding new elections, the SCSC executive board decided that vice-president Shmuel was qualified for the position and would enable an easy mid-year transition.

"The natural thing is for the vice president to take over," explained Chani Schubert, SCWSC president.

While it is unclear when elections will be held for the vacated vice-president position, the executive board has decided after much deliberation to hold reelections. "There's a position open and we want to get as many people involved as possible," explained Schubert. Based on the Constitution of the SCSC, Article XI Section 5, the executive board is given the power to decide whether to hold reelection in the case of a vacancy.

The canvassing committee, which organizes elections, has not yet released any information about the elections and stated that pertinent information will be posted in coming days. Shmuel, who is pleased to have a vice president, warns that the elections must be held soon to enable the class board to move on. "I would prefer to have a vice president, but if they do it, they have to do it now," she said.

Shmuel was informed a few days into the spring semester that she would be promoted to president, after only hearing "rumors in the elevators" that Debbie Michaels, former junior class president, had left SCW. "I was surprised and overwhelmed," said

Shmuel, who in addition to her new position is a Resident Advisor in Brookdale and Chairperson of Orientation. "It entails a lot more, since you have the final responsibility."

As a first event of the semester, the junior class organized and sponsored Western Night, which featured square dancing and Western-style partying, and was the brainchild of Michaels. "I wish I would have known more in advance that I would be taking over so we could have been more prepared," claimed Shmuel. "Before, I was head of decoration, then a few days before the event I suddenly became responsible for the whole event. It was definitely a little overwhelming."

The former class president, Michaels, withdrew from SCW at the end of last semester. Schubert explained that Student Council was informed over winter break that Michaels would not return to SCW, and thus began the new semester not having made any decisions about filling her spot. "We have no details and we found out out of the blue," said Schubert. "But we'll miss her at Stern." In addition to junior class president, Michaels was head of Millner's Market in Brookdale Hall, Shabbat Enhancement Program and volleyball intramurals. "I was surprised that she would leave since she was so involved in Stern," said Shmuel. "I originally didn't run for president because I felt that Debbie was so capable."

For the spring semester Shmuel plans to expand the events run by the junior class and facilitate a more active class board. "We have great leaders and innovators on the junior class board who can get a lot done," said Shmuel. "I want to pick up from last semester and to also have a fresh start." Shmuel, obviously pleased with her promotion, feels that she has many opportunities in Stern as opposed to larger colleges. "Stern offers everyone the opportunity to be involved," she noted. "If you're interested and you want it, you can do it here."

## Students to Debut Work at Arts Festival

By: Sarah P. Cate and Alana Sher

If you flip through the spring Stern Course Catalogue you might notice that the packet has gotten a little skimpier than in previous semesters. To some extent this is due to the fact that the Speech and Drama Department no longer offers drama classes. Students can no longer major in Drama, nor does the school offer theater classes as electives. So how does a budding young thespian channel her talent? She participates in Yeshiva University's annual Arts Festival.

The Arts Festival is a coed program dedicated to melding student-talent in order to contribute to the many facets of art over a two-week span. The Drama Committee has posted signs up on both the Uptown and Midtown campuses' encouraging students to write screenplays, audition for roles and partake in the upcoming events,



including a Night of One Acts. The large turnout and success of last year's event, has proven that the Night of One Acts is a perfect outlet for students interested in the performing arts. This year's lineup will include a Night of One Acts written and performed by Yeshiva students, as well as the viewing of student-produced films.

A two-week festival celebrating arts on campus will begin on February 25<sup>th</sup> of this semester. "It is a forum for students to display and talk about their artistic works," co-coordinator Esther Yehudis Zipris commented.

There are two events scheduled to occur on the Midtown Campus. There will be a Kol Isha event, which was wildly successful during last year's festival. Obviously, no men are allowed to attend. Then, on February 26<sup>th</sup>, the first of two literary events will be held in the Schottenstein Residence Hall, a poetry reading event. There will be other events, as well, but those will occur on the Main Campus. The Opening Concert, which is different every year, will be held on February 25<sup>th</sup>. Old favorites such as Hillel Glaser will perform, as well as a series of "multi-talented individuals," according to Zipris. Carlebach and Klezmer music will also be featured. There is also a jazz and classical music evening.

Two literature events have been scheduled, one the aforementioned poetry reading, as well as a prose reading. There will be a night of short act plays, as well as a gallery evening. The Installation Night has been planned as "an interactive artistic evening, leaving aside the usual observing of art to become a part of the artistic process", as Zipris described it. Stay tuned for more details.

## New Observer Editor-in-Chief Takes Over

By: Sara Trappler

This issue of *The Observer* marks the first time that Michelle Fogel will be acting as Editor-in-Chief for the paper. Debbie Bienenfeld, previous Editor-in-Chief of *The Observer*, originally was assigned the job for the full academic year of 2000-2001.

However, shortly before the conclusion of this past fall semester, Bienenfeld had her "Senior Check." Since she never had a "Junior Check," she was surprised to learn that she only required two more classes in order to graduate.

"I loved my time at Stern," said Bienenfeld. "I loved the classes and professors I took and the extracurricular activities I was involved with, but I couldn't give up the opportunity to have time to travel, work, and figure myself out."

Bienenfeld therefore left SCW to work at Paine Webber's Issue Resolution Department and to travel during the months of March and April. In addition, she will be writing her Senior Thesis and taking the classes that she was missing for graduation.

"I enjoyed working with Debbie," said Miriam Colton, layout editor of *The Observer*. "She was very laid-back, responsible, and was always around for the long hours and all-nighters of layout."

"I think Michelle will be a great editor-in-chief," asserted Adina Levine, Executive Editor of *The Observer*. "Anyway, we only have three more issues left," she joked.

Fogel, previous Executive Editor of *The Observer*, replaced Bienenfeld on short notice. Last month, a dinner was held for *The Observer* staff at Shottenstein Residence Hall, as a farewell to Bienenfeld and a welcoming to Fogel.



Debbie Bienenfeld leaves *The Observer*

## Wasting the Grades How Effective Are Our Evaluation Forms

By: Michal Leah Konovsky

It's the last day of class in the semester, and everyone knows it's time for the old evaluation forms. They are handed out with mock solemnity as the teacher assigns a student to collect them, while he/she leaves the room to grant students the privacy to write freely. Most students fill them out easily, running down the list of questions, reflecting little before assigning checkmarks at the appropriate places. Sometimes students ponder the point of it all. Why fill out these evaluation forms? Why waste time?

When asked what happens to our evaluation forms after they leave the classroom, Dean Orlian explained that they are kept on file for at least three years. She says they are, "primarily helpful to faculty members. They don't have to look at them, but they're welcome to." However she



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admits that although some teachers do, "most don't look at the evaluation forms."

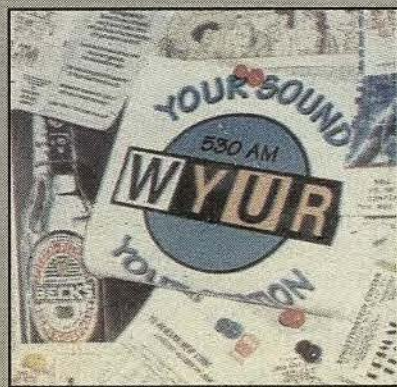
As for the administration, the evaluation forms are useful sometimes in determining the retention of adjuncts from year to year. "They're here if we need them and sometimes we glance at them quickly." Mostly they are "one way of getting student feedback." She notes that it is "helpful when students write things on the back. One or two sentences where a student writes her assessment or evaluation of a class is more helpful than the numerical boxes."

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## Coming Next Issue:



**INSIDERS:  
The Students  
Who Really  
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**WYUR:  
Will It Ever Be  
Resurrected?**