



OBSERVER

After Years of Attempts, SCW Finally Buys 251 Lex

By Arie Staller

Yeshiva has finally acquired a new building on the Beren campus. After several unsuccessful years of attempting to purchase the 251 Lexington building, nestled between the 245 Lexington, SCW's main building and the original SCW building of 253 Lexington, on the corner of 35th street, Yeshiva has completed the purchase.

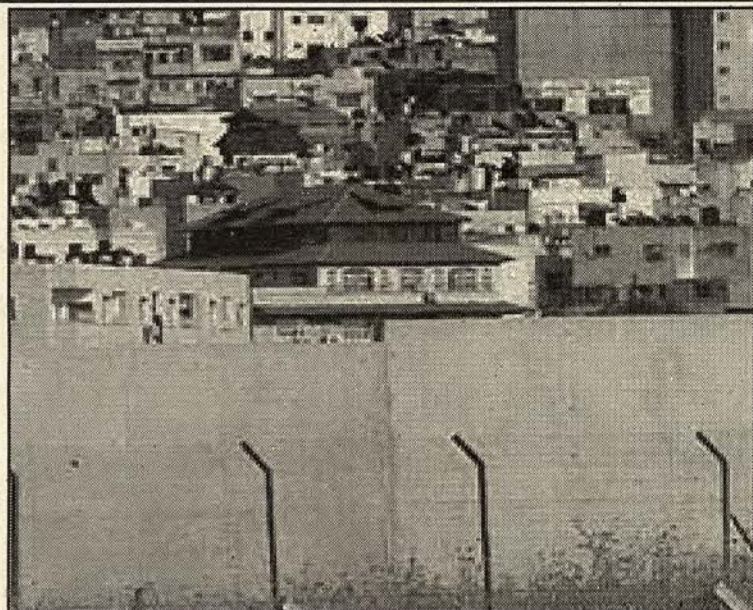
"It was signed about three weeks ago," said Peter Ferrara, director of public relations. Although the building now belongs to Yeshiva, it is still unknown when the building will be available for use by SCW. "There are six tenants living in the building and one commercial tenant-- the wireless store on the first floor," said Ferrara. "That lease is up soon."

As mandated by Manhattan law, tenants may not be removed or evicted from their apartments without valid legal reasons, explained Ferrara. Therefore, Yeshiva must wait until the current tenants' leases at 251 Lexington are completed. Federal Wireless, located on the building's first floor, will end before the others and will be utilized as soon as possible, even while tenants remain on the upper levels.

According to Joel, the university was primarily interested in securing the building as a means of ensuring appropriate occupation of the Beren Campus vicinity. "We don't want a massage parlor moving in," said President Richard Joel.

The Yeshiva administrator most involved with the ordeal, Jeffrey M. Rosengarten, associate vice president for administrative services, was unavailable for comment after repeated phone calls made by *The Observer*.

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The International Court of Justice at The Hague will determine whether Israel's Security Fence, above, is against international law

Yeshiva Students Protest at The Hague

By Shayndi Raice

Student leaders scrambled to organize an emergency mission to Holland in less than two weeks, to protest a hearing at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principle judicial organ of the United Nations, at The Hague regarding the legality of Israel building the Security Fence around the West Bank. On February 22, 100 Yeshiva students will be joined by thousands of Jews from across the globe in a silent march condemning the ICJ.

The ICJ decided to hear the case concerning "The Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Territory," after the

desire to present oral statements was requested by Palestine, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference as well as a slew of other countries including South Africa, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Belize, Cuba, Indonesia, Jordan, Madagascar, Malaysia, Senegal, Sudan and Turkey according to a statement released by the ICJ on February 18.

Plans for the trip started when YC sophomore Dovid Wildman suggested to Brad Karasik, assistant dean of students, the organization of a group of Yeshiva students to protest at The Hague. "I read an article about students from Israel

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Still No CFO

Prime Candidate Slips Through Yeshiva's Fingers

By Rachel Cyrulnik

Yeshiva's leading choice for CFO, a female administrator from Yale University, retracted her application, dashing the university's hopes to fill the position by its stated January target date, *The Observer* has learned. Sources confirm that the unnamed candidate decided to decline Yeshiva's offer citing personal reasons right before year's end.

The Yale contender seems to have risen to the top of the pack in light of a number of specific criteria Yeshiva has focused on in its search. In particular, she boasted a discrete familiarity with a major research institution that included a medical school, a factor Yeshiva believes to complicate the position and limit its pool of potential choices. The implication of her withdrawal is expected to manifest itself in the broadening of the university's search base to secure a person to fill the job.

"We are looking for...[a person] in the university world, in the financial arena with a relatively senior position, with emphasis on universities that have medical schools," enumer-

ated President Richard Joel. But Joel admitted that these standards would change if necessary. "If we can't find that, we will look more generally. It's a relatively small universe."

Although the university's original goal was to fill the position by January, as proclaimed by Director of Public Relations Peter Ferrara when the search was first announced this past October, Joel downplayed the existence of any deadline, insisting that the plan has always been to take whatever time is necessary to secure the appropriate match. "This is a pivotal, difficult job," he stated. "We are not in a situation where we have to say, 'Let's go out and find the first body we can have.' It will be filled when we find the right person."

Those following the search have been perplexed by the cloud of confusion concerning current Vice President for Business Affairs Sheldon Socol's new position in the university's administrative scheme. While it is clear that the search for a CFO commenced as an effort to replace the current post of Vice

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Joel Announces Restructuring of Israel Program

Israel Studies to Improve at Yeshiva

By Shayndi Raice and Esther Flaschner

After his mid-semester trip to Israel, President Richard Joel announced two new initiatives that will take priority on his agenda, improving undergraduate education on Israel and a stronger Yeshiva presence in the S. Daniel Abraham Joint Israel Program. Despite the announcements made at the Town Hall meeting on the Beren Campus on February 4, Joel stressed that in regard to both initiatives, "we are really only in the conversation phase."

In his September inaugural address, Joel articulated a vision for increased connection between Yeshiva and Israel. Calling Yeshiva undergraduates, "the largest body of pro-Israel students on any campus outside Israel," Joel cited the dream to make Yeshiva the address for Israel in the United States. Seizing on that goal, the presi-

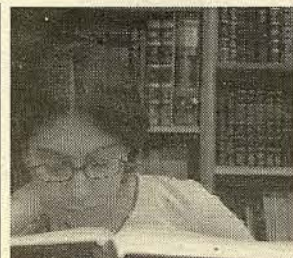
dent has taken measures to enact the new policy and imbue Yeshiva with Israel centrality.

Over winter break, the president accompanied undergraduate deans Dr. Karen Bacon, Dr. Charles Snow, and Dr. Norman Adler on their annual recruitment visit to Israel. Over 700 Yeshiva students are currently spending a year learning in Israel, utilizing the S. Daniel Abraham Joint Israel Program to earn college credit for their Jewish studies.

Joel accompanied the deans on visits to nine such schools, meeting with students and listening to their concerns. "He communicated the feeling that they are the future of Judaism," said Bacon of Joel's visit with the students. The delegation took candidates for Yeshiva's Distinguished Scholars program to a *techeylet* (the ritual bluish dye traditionally used for one of the eight fringes in the *tzitzit*) factory in Kfar Adumim, where

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Miky Butler Remembered. Page 6

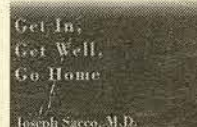
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**LOOKING
FOR A FEW
FUNNY
WOMEN**

**aspiring come-
dian?
class clown?
Leno junkie?
scw social
critic?**

**Show us what
you've got
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Shayndi Raice
Editor in Chief

For many students, the decision to go to Yeshiva is based on the uniquely wide-range of Jewish studies courses available to them. It is not rare for a young woman to pass up an Ivy League education for the thorough Jewish education available at SCW. However, many students and faculty, most notably President Richard Joel, have made the observation that the Jewish studies department is sorely lacking in one area of Jewish education: Israel.

From Joel's inaugural speech in September to his most recent trip to Israel, he has stressed the centrality of Israel as a major foundation of American Modern Orthodoxy. "Centrality with Israel is a key focus of Yeshiva University, fostering student solidarity with that country's people and advocating for their security," according to Joel's presidential website in which his four pillars of Yeshiva are clearly delineated.

Indeed, since the Intifada began in September 2000, activism for Israel has flourished on the Yeshiva campuses. Mission Hague, the most recent product of Yeshiva activism in support for Israel, is only one example of our commitment. Scores of speakers specializing in Israeli politics and history visited the Yeshiva campuses, ranging from Daniel Pipes, Ra'anana Gissin, Mitchell Bard and most recently, Rabbi Shlomo Riskin. SSSB offers a program that allows students to learn about investment opportunities in Israel. Over the past decade, Yeshiva students have organized three successful solidarity missions to Israel, and charity drives for victims of terror are constantly underway. Over the recent winter break, Yeshiva students raised over \$20,000 for the One Family Fund, an organization that provides emotional and financial relief for Israeli families that have been affected by Palestinian terror. According to Yummy Schachter, the president of the YSU, the YC/SCW Israel Club is the most active club on campus, holding events more than twice as often as all the other clubs.

But when it comes to classes, there are few options. "I have never heard of someone coming to Stern to study Israel," said Joel in a recent interview. "There's no shaped major in Israel studies." Joel is correct in his assessment. SCW offers two Jewish History courses on Israel: Modern Israel and History of Palestine. YC offers three: Modern Israel, Israel Since 1492 and History of Zionism. Neither provides enough for an academic concentration in Israel studies. Even the Bernard Revel Graduate School for Jewish Studies (BRGSJS), where a master's degree in Modern Jewish History is offered, the only course

available relating to Israel is History of Zionism. So why, if Yeshiva is so committed to Israel and its centrality to Judaism, does it offer so few opportunities for its study?

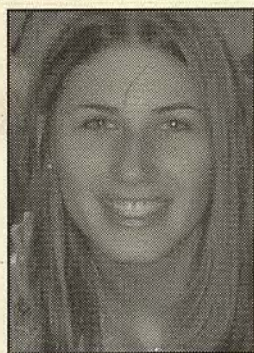
This is most perplexing when the fact that Yeshiva has been a forerunner in the fight against Palestinian propaganda is considered. Yeshiva students have traveled across the globe to lend support to other Jewish college students, though we're not personally threatened by anti-Jewish fervor on our own campus. Palestinian champions have used academia as a source and creator of propaganda. And while Yeshiva has focused its pro-Israel work on activism, it has not attempted to produce serious scholars well-versed in Modern Israeli History and current politics.

While speaking with one Yeshiva administrator, he referred to Israel studies as "fluff." We seem to have accepted the notion that because the State of Israel is a secular state, it is not worth considering within the rubric of Jewish studies. On the contrary, it should be seen as a prime example of the experiences of Jews in the 20th and 21st centuries. A secular Jewish state could probably not have come about during the Middle Ages. For Jewish Historians and Philosophers, Israel certainly presents enough fodder for a non-"fluff" course load.

An academic study requires an attempt at honesty, and a certain emotional distance from a topic. It often seems that those who shy away from any serious academic study of Israel are fearful academia would preclude our employing the rhetorical dogma with which we educate our children. They are right. We cannot present conspiracy theories and historical facts in the same breath, as we very often do. Although we, the religious Jewish community, know significantly more about Israeli politics than most unaffiliated Jews, much of what we know is in response to attacks against our beloved homeland.

We need to create a place where Jews can learn about the miracle that is Israel in an environment that embraces debate and serious scholarship, regardless of what may come from that scholarship. Professors in our community cannot be vilified for their views unless we have proof that they have crossed the line from academics to preachers of hatred. I have yet to meet a professor in the Yeshiva community that has come close to the latter term. Yet, at SCW, the classes on Israeli history are tarred with the stigma of a purported left-wing viewpoint. This is not supported by fact. To be fully educated, one must be aware of, and understand, all the debates and opinions that exist surrounding Israel. We cannot shy away from taking up the torch and leading the academic world in an honest and serious scholarly study of Israel. To be compelled to argue in favor of education at a university seems incongruous, yet our fear of what we may discover has held us back for too long.

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Rachel Cyrulnik
Editor in Chief

It is a strange phenomenon indeed. In the minds of several members of Yeshiva's administration, a student newspaper is properly approached with an extreme hesitation grounded in the belief that words will be obscured and twisted, in an ultimate effort to accomplish the patently obvious goal of badmouthing the university.

Truth be told, I cannot help but wonder about the reasoning underlying this increasingly disturbing approach. Admittedly, universities often condemn the motives of student organizations like fraternities that engage in hazing or gangs that promote violence, contributing to a composite picture that sets student values against those of a university. But, the principles that guide Yeshiva's ideology are the very same ones that stand behind our student newspaper.

First and foremost, *The Observer* endeavors to illustrate the doctrine of *Torah U'maddah* in its production of a newspaper each month. Even I first assumed the post of Editor in Chief, I firmly believed that our paper possessed the ability to report unbiased and influential news to keep its student body informed, while simultaneously satisfying two Biblical directives.

The first, and more passive of the two, is that of *Lo ta'amod al dam ra'ayecha*. *Halakhik* manifestations of this particular obligation implicate a duty to refuse to stand by while a fellow comrade is being slighted. While the verse is often interpreted and applied to particular situations in which an injustice might occur, its underlying premise and directive serve as the most prevalent basis for the institution of a newspaper. A publication that seriously accepts the challenge of creating a structure that makes it more difficult to commit injustices and rectifying the few that might nonetheless occur, plays a vital role in the perpetuation and advancement of a *halakhik* social structure. In fact, the *Chofetz Chaim*, renowned for his speaking out against slanderous practices, sanctioned a potentially dangerous instrument - the newspaper - based on this very constructive purpose.

Moreover, a newspaper is charged with an additional responsibility, that of sufficiently informing a readership that puts its trust in the paper. A newspaper staff must not only express concern over individuals who have been slighted but genuine care for the throngs of readers who depend on it as their source of news. As members of a student body, SCW students carry an important right to be involved and to influence decisions that promise to shape the future of what will be their alma mater.

The second maxim to which *The Observer* strives to adhere is best captured by the Biblical instruction: "*Hocheach tochiach et amitechah*," the requirement to rebuke your fellow Jew in the instance where he has committed a wrong. While there undoubtedly exists a strong sentiment in Yeshiva's administrative hallways questioning the propriety of rebuke in a student newspaper, I truly believe that a newspaper carefully striving to remain unbiased and respectful can successfully call its administrators to task.

While the students on newspaper staffs by no means lay claim to any particular inherent qualities that confer them a unique power to critique, the post they have chosen to accept carries with it its own set of obligations and powers that rest on a recognition of this imperative and its application on a communal level.

Recently, *The Observer* has had the opportunities to tangibly pursue these values. I am fortunate enough to have investigated and reported on Yeshiva's search for a Chief Financial Officer. Students should not remain ignorant of the developments that promise to affect Yeshiva as an institution. Sadly, many SCW students are unfamiliar with the university's administration, its struggles and its goals. While day-to-day life on campus does not require extensive knowledge of these topics, it is pitiful when Yeshiva graduates enter the world without any connection to Yeshiva and its ideology. That relationship can best be fostered during the years in which they become intimately familiar with their institution. And it can only be solidified through education.

Several months ago, *The Observer* published an investigative article critiquing the Office of Academic Advisement. While the paper received ample flack from Yeshiva higher-ups for its efforts, calculated and noticeable improvements have been made since that time. (See story page 11).

It is a shame that our administration often fears the dissemination of information to its student body. After interviewing a handful of administrators regarding the subject of the CFO and learning of no new information, I pursued other leads that finally guided me to the unearthing of new information contained in a lead story of this issue. Finally, I remember thinking, I have encountered a Yeshiva insider who understands the value of a student newspaper. All too often, administrators view their role in a diametrically opposite manner; they confuse their obligations to inform with the need to thwart investigation of any kind. Case in point, the academic advisement article we published on improvements that could be made on campus garnered only critique from Yeshiva, instead of enthusiasm and appreciation for playing a part in creating positive change.

We beseech the administration to become our partners in informing and making improvements to our Yeshiva community. Maybe next time you'll give us the scoop - for the greater good of the university and for its students.

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

CF-No

Yeshiva has remained silent. From the party lines doled out by the institution's spokespeople, faculty and students would barely be aware of the fact that pivotal changes are taking place in the university's leadership structure.

While Yeshiva officials begrudgingly admitted that a search for a new Chief Financial Officer was underway some four months ago, they refused to report on potential candidates and failed to produce the names of any leading options. Admittedly, some details of the negotiation process need not be disseminated on a daily basis; but key developments regarding a process that is sure to shape Yeshiva's future should be transmitted to those who will be most affected - the Yeshiva community. Instead, no explanation was given for the passing of the projected January goal and no information about how the search's progress was proffered. It seems as though Yeshiva's decision makers are acting behind a veil of secrecy.

The change of position for Dr. Sheldon Socol is no less murky. It is clear that Socol's power has been diminished; the change, however, has taken place with more tact than force. The Yeshiva community is confused by the multitude of titles, positions and phases that have abounded in the aftermath of the Joel administration's decision to depose the Vice President of Business Affairs.

Perhaps worse than being ignorant is being patronized. Yeshiva's vague answers and covert decisions do not gain support from concerned members of the Yeshiva community; they only arouse suspicion. It is time for Yeshiva to clarify its intentions with regard to the future of its financial leadership, in place of clinging to the hope that vague pronouncements and nuanced job titles will leave a confused public to sit by quietly as bystanders, awaiting the next press release announcing the completion of the process.

Disgrace to God (and Yeshiva)

A week ago, an e-mail was sent to the vast majority of the Yeshiva community, accusing the YSU president of stealing funds. This claim was accompanied by a slew of other accusations leveled against him - and his friend who is not a member of YSU - so atrocious, they are not appropriate for publication.

This e-mail is not only an embarrassment to the YC students mentioned, but the entire Yeshiva community. It is a source of shame to the entire University that such vindictive and jealous students actually exist on our university's campuses.

There are several respectable venues through which students could bring complaints. Yeshiva's administration, student court and opinion forums in student newspapers are appropriate venues to which this concern could have been voiced. Indeed, student leaders do need a system that ensures checks on their power, but these e-mails in no way help achieve fair leadership.

Yet these students reduced themselves to the most pitiful brands of *loshon harah* (gossip) and public embarrassment. This e-mail, which was disseminated to thousands of people, was not the first online attempt to quash the YSU president's reputation. A few weeks ago his personal credit card and credit card statement was stolen, placed on the web in a pathetic attempt to show that he had stolen funds from YSU.

In fact, the YSU account was audited twice by the dean of SSSB and it was discovered that YSU owed money to the president after he had laid out his own money and not paid himself back. The level of jealousy that has been demonstrated by members of our own peer group is not only offensive and insulting, but it is hurtful and utterly shameful.

Let us not forget that this e-mail was sent to Jews and non-Jews alike. It is hard to imagine a scenario in which Yeshiva could have been associated with a graver *chilul Hashem* (disgrace to God).

It will take a long time for Yeshiva to recover from this shame, but a lesson could be learned from this travesty. Students are entitled to disagree with, or object to, a student leader's alleged behaviors. But when jealousy and anger take the place of sincere commitment to bettering Yeshiva, the outcome may be tragic.

Letters to the Editors

Online Registration as Convenient as Waiting On Line

To the Editors:

In response to Arie Staller's recent article 'Registrar Offers Online Registration in the Hopes of More Efficient System,' I would like to point out that the key word in that phrase is *hopes*. Indeed, the recent experience of many SCW students (myself included) while registering online a few weeks ago, left the impression that Yeshiva still has a long way to go before proclaiming their online registration an 'efficient system.' Unfortunately, many students who awoke at 6:15 a.m. on the first and second days of registration were met with a system failure, and could not register. The designers of the web registration should have realized that many students would wake up in the wee hours of the morning in order to avoid the familiar occurrence of being closed out of a necessary class. Wasn't there a way to create the system so that it could accommodate the large amount of students simultaneously? After all, this is not such a foreign concept, since this system is basically in place in every other major college and university and seems to be working without any problems there. Hopefully, the school will rectify the problem, so that in the future, students do not have to experience the same frustration that I and so many others did.

Thank you,
Leora Blumenthal
SCW '04

Decoding the Review on The Da Vinci Code

To the Editors:

I was quite upset with the review of Dan Brown's latest best-seller *The Da Vinci Code*. First of all, the author was very wishy-washy about her opinion. She said that you should expect to waste many hours on a book that she could not put down. Isn't that a contradiction? Also, she said that if you are in the mood for a light read, it's a great book to choose. Then, she said that this is definitely a book that makes you think. As my roommate pointed out, doesn't a light read imply that you DO NOT have to think too hard as you read it?

It also upset me that the author said that she wishes she could broadcast to the world that there were some misconceptions in the book about Judaism. Is she a world renowned expert on Judaism? Just because she has been born Jewish and goes to SCW does not make her the most knowledgeable about the subject. I read the book too, and yes, I was also disturbed about some of the things that were said about Judaism; but when I discussed it with people who are older and wiser than myself, I was enlightened by the fact that it is very possible that the author took a fact about Judaism and just blew it slightly out of proportion. And, on top of that, it is very possible that there was other mis-information in the book. Did she ever consider that? Did she research everything in there?

In addition, I specifically remember that the address for the world headquarters of Opus Dei is at 243, NOT 245 Lexington. (For those of you who didn't know, 245 is the address of SCW). In the future, may I recommend to all the readers the following caveat: take everything you see/read/hear with a grain of salt, which in some cases might take an entire salt shaker. *The Observer* should consider getting more than one review in the future so that students can hear more than one opinion.

Thank you,
Esther Malka Stromer
SCW '05

Men Wanted: Shabbat Rabbi a Necessity

To the Editors,

After I read Shoshana Chanale's column, "The Shabbat Rabbi: Do We Need a Man When There Are Capable Women?," I was eager to debate this issue with her in person, but since then, every Shabbat that I have spent in Midtown, she did not.

Had she stayed in more often, she might have noticed that a *d'var Torah* (speech on the weekly Torah portion) is given at each meal, most often by one of the women of SCW. Additionally, should she feel that a *d'var Torah* during a meal is insufficient, she could simply ask Beth Hait about the possibility of including an additional activity in each week's Shabbat program, such as a *shiur* delivered by one of the women of SCW.

While it is true that neither I nor the other Shabbat Rabbi (Rafi Eis) are currently ordained, it is also true that both of us are very well qualified for the posi-

tion. Imagine if all entry level employees were told that since they were not licensed in their field, they were not needed. One day we might decide to pursue rabbinic positions and now are obtaining the experience we will need. Although, judging from the crux of your editorial, even if we were ordained, I think you would still ask why SCW does not choose a woman for this role.

To answer that question, I would like to paraphrase your closing argument, replacing the position of Shabbat Rabbi with that of Professor:

"I know that the men currently hired to be the professors are wonderful, able people; however, why do we seek to hire men for a job that there are plenty of capable women to fill?"

Does this sound like a valid argument to you? Assume for a moment that we are simply the best candidates for the position, like any male professor hired by SCW.

But the truth is that a man is needed for this role, and here's why. You are correct in asserting that building a family environment on campus is one of our responsibilities as the Shabbos Rabbis, however, this cannot be achieved solely by giving a *d'var Torah* and a *shiur* on Shabbat. Some of our other responsibilities are inappropriate for the women of SCW to undertake, such as assuring that the minyan runs properly and that the reading of the Torah is error-free. My assumption is, and I don't think it is farfetched, that the women want a minyan held at SCW on Shabbat, and that they want the men from the Wilf Campus to come down to the Beren Campus to enhance their Shabbatot.

That being said, there are many difficulties that could arise when attempting to make a minyan each week of ten different men. Not everyone's customs are similar. Not everyone utters the same prayers, and not everyone reads the same *haftarah*. Oftentimes, one of the men in shul will ask me what SCW's *minhagim* are. Part of creating a family environment is establishing consistency in customs and traditions. Suffice it to say that I disagree with your claim that this position is "absurd."

I think what you mean to ask is why aren't the SCW undergraduates taking a more active role enhancing their *Shabbatot* and not why a Shabbat Rabbi is necessary. They are more than welcome to participate to the fullest extent they can, but a Shabbat Rabbi is still necessary.

Sincerely,
Moshe Mayefsky
Shabbat Rabbi

Reis - Guy :

What's on Yael Reisman's mind?

Guilty is as Guilty Does

Long time no pontificate. I know that many of you have been waiting with bated breath for this long overdue issue of our esteemed newspaper and while I have been just as eager to put my new musings into words, I have been quite busy. First there was Reading Week, where my friends and I did everything but read. Then there were finals and papers which culminated in a trip to Las Vegas with my excellent, albeit rowdy travel companions. (Repeat after me: Stern Girls Gone Wild: Vegas Style).

Originally, I had planned to devote all of my 1000 words to all of the lessons I learned in Sin City, but I quickly realized that Vegas would only provide me with minimal fodder for my ever over analytical, satirical mind.

While I had expected to report many life lessons garnered from cocktail waitresses and many an Elvis impersonator, the wisdom I acquired in Vegas can be summed up in one fell swoop. Simply put, Las Vegas is one giant, ostentatious Five Towns Bar Mitzvah.

There are themes galore, all the cheesy karaoke you can shake a stick at, free alcohol, and mobs of scantily clad ladies. And as profound as this observation is, I thought it would behoove both you and me to concentrate my attention elsewhere.

Enter Valentine's Day. Most of us know it well, and we have Hallmark and Co. to thank. It is a day where we are told by the advertising powers of the world that we are to lavish cards, flowers, candy and Lexus SUVs (am I the only one who noticed that absurd commercial?) upon our loved ones come February 14. After all, everyone knows that the only way to show sincere love and affection for that special someone in your life is through gift giving.

This is not to say that Valentine's Day does not have legitimate roots. After some exhaustive research I can report that this love holiday is named after some Saint Valentine character who facilitated some sort of

romantic carnival. This irrefutable evidence leads us to two conclusions: one, Valentine's Day is a most legitimate holiday and secondly, it is completely and utterly inane. As

Simply put, Las Vegas is one giant, ostentatious Five Towns Bar Mitzvah.

for those of us in our community who fiercely condemn any sort of Valentine's Day celebration on the basis of religion, I debate that statement's veracity on the basis that it has largely become a totally secularized holiday so much so that most people do not even know that it has any sort of religious origin. So why is it then that so many of us practice it in secret?

The answer is simple. Valentine's Day is quite possibly the sappiest day of the year. It is a day which revolves around all things touchy feely. No man wants to publicize the fact that he spent his February 14 giving his lady friend some cheesy, plush teddy bear. And quite frankly, I don't blame him.

Now that we understand and appreciate the covert operation that is celebrating Valentine's Day, I would like to turn your attention to things that we perform secretly but should not. How many times have you heard someone substantiate their intense love for 80's New Wave by classifying it as a "guilty pleasure?" And what about those who insist that they're into "Saved by the Bell" merely for its kitsch factor?

People, it is time to own up to our interests and hobbies no matter how nerdy they may be. Sure, my passion for pop culture is probably seen as highly superficial by most, but if reading archived "Spin" magazines makes me ridiculously happy, so be it. We don't need to label our leisure time pursuits with post-modern literary characteristics to enhance their value. And besides, nerds and their hipster counterparts are currently way chic so wear your vinyl collection

proud. This unapologetic mantra I recommend we heed can be applied to things much more substantial than pop culture. (Yes, there are things that are more important than pop culture. And no, I'm not just saying this to appease you). Take for example, my "real life" which will be starting May 21, 2004. Sure, I was supposed to be starting law school, embarking on a sensible path for myself, but instead I decided to nix all of that for something that doesn't make me want to asphyxiate myself.

Come late May I hope to be working in the great beast that is media. The question of how exactly is not important, and frankly those plans are a tad sketchy right now. Let me rephrase. Those plans are non-existent. I have no apartment, no security, no guidelines and certainly no job. I also have no reason to believe it will all work out in the end. But, you know what? None of that matters. What matters is that I've taken the very mature, and very correct, step toward doing something that will make me happy. I'm embracing what I want to do and not what I can do to get a lot of money. Nobody wants their kid to be a writer just like no one wants to hear that their kid has an uncompromising love for Duran Duran.

But as we all know, this isn't a perfect world. Some of us do love Duran Duran and some of us need to be writers. (And more often than not, those who are Duran Duran fans are also writers). It's less a choice than it is an imperative to embrace all of who you are and not just the parts that are socially accepted a.k.a. what makes Bubbe proud.

To end on a complete oversimplification, I would like to suggest the following. Be true to yourself. You'll feel better and more complete and right about everything, even if your roadmap is not yet drawn. And isn't that really what Bubbe would want?

Jealousy is Not the Answer

By Hindy Poupko

Over the past several months, a tremendous feeling of animosity and jealousy has been stirring on our campus toward student leaders. This sentiment, possibly fueled by a sense of entitlement and severe lack of sophistication, has brought, and continues to bring, shame to the streets of both the Beren and Wilf campus.

Yummy Shachter, YSU president, has been the unfortunate subject of harsh criticism and slanderous remarks at the very onset of his administration. His close friend, Jona Rechnitz, has suffered the same punishment,

but demonstrated the intensity of the problem. Many of us are incapable of being happy for those who surpass us and are constantly plagued by feelings of jealousy and bitterness.

Even if their claims are justified, how can one accept the means that were employed to express those opinions as the proper venue to have their message heard? Have we not yet graduated from childish cheap shots?

As a proud student of Yeshiva University, I am deeply hurt and ashamed of those who have chosen this path. We are all reflections of the banner "Torah Umada," and we all carry responsibilities with that title. We

As a proud student of Yeshiva University, I am deeply hurt and ashamed of those who have chosen this path.

merely based on his association with Shachter.

Whether or not Schachter is deserving of any criticism is irrelevant to this discussion. What I would like to address, however, is the manner in which his critics have gone about voicing their opinions.

A recent e-mail sent to hundreds of students on both campuses, was the epitome of the resentment that certain individuals feel toward those in positions of power. The e-mail not only made false accusations against Shachter and Rechnitz,

must strive to achieve the goals set for us by those who have created this incredible institution, and those who continue to sustain its vibrant existence.

We can not act rashly. It is time to take our roles and the roles of our student leaders more seriously. If we work together, we can build a community founded on camaraderie, and sincere respect for one another. The tension must come to an end and it is time to look toward our peers with pride and hope for a bright future.

Attention
SCW students and faculty:
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artitorial by chaya glaser



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A Message from Your Presidents



Anat Barber,
SCWSC President

As I begin thinking about that bittersweet time of graduation, I can't help but hearken back to the beginning of my collegiate experience. As is commonplace, with the culmination of any experience comes its evaluation. Thinking about my time at Yeshiva, I turn back to the first day that I walked through the doors at 245 Lexington Avenue, and it seems puzzling to me that only two and one-half years later, I will soon be exiting those same doors for the last time as a Yeshiva undergraduate.

My experience seems to have been dramatically shortened given the time I spent learning in Israel. After a year of study at Midreshet Lindenbaum, I returned to SCW and thought to myself, "I'm a year ahead in the game." After a very fulfilling semester on campus I went back to Israel for an additional six months, pursuant to one of those standard parental agreements.

If I thought I was ahead of the game after my *shana-aleph* you can only imagine how accomplished I felt after my second stint in Israel. I was well on my way to accomplishing that much coveted feat of minimizing the duration of my college education as much as possible. Now, five semesters later, I can't stress enough how I wish I had more time to enjoy my years on the Beren campus. While the time I spent in Israel was extremely significant, the time I spent in col-

lege was equally as important. While the opportunity to spend a year being *koneh Torat Yisreal b'Eretz Yisreal*, acquiring the Torah of Israel in Israel, is priceless, the time spent developing my secular knowledge as well as continuing my Judaic studies at SCW was essential.

President Richard Joel has recently proposed a slow process through which the S. Daniel Abraham Israel program would be colored with more Yeshiva involvement, which will most probably include limiting the number of credits accepted from Israel institutions. While many students are very resistant to this change, I think that these changes have the potential to be very beneficial. One of the main objections to Joel's proposal is the mitigating effect these 'college-like' experiences would have on preserving the 'womb-like sanctity' of the year in Israel.

Upon a closer investigation, it is obvious that save for some exceptions, the *shana-aleph* cocoon is already punctured voluntarily with hockey and football leagues, outings to *Emek-Rephaim*, Saturday night concerts at every venue in Jerusalem and obviously the weekly trips to *Ben-Yehuda* and *Mea Shearim* (though some find the latter redeeming given the proximity to at least five Jewish book stores). Therefore Joel's suggestion of *shabbatonim* and group experiences, *chesed* opportunities and lectures, seems to perpetuate the already informal social construct that is present amongst the *shana-aleph* community.

A second objection proposed is that students do not want to have to think about the real world while spending time focused on Torah. No one seems to mind the process of filing for transfer credits and college forms when the outcome is exactly to their liking (i.e. receiving full credits for time spent abroad).

Once the benefits are not exactly what students feel they are entitled to, the process seems to be so burdensome to the point where attending an extra lecture once a month or completing some type of academic requirement is such an onus that students feel they may collapse beneath it. Well, in the words of parents almost everywhere, "No one ever said life was fair." While you may think these steps unreasonable, I believe their benefits will be reaped individually and institutionally.

The attempt to bridge the gap between Yeshiva's Israel programs and the undergraduate programs in the United States would complement each unique experience with a glimpse of the other. Such that time spent in Israel would be perceived as the beginning of one's time as a Yeshiva undergraduate, and time spent on campus in Manhattan would be perceived as a continuation of one's time in Israel. The two encounters would seem less like poles on a given spectrum and more like a continuous middle area that would breed a feeling of continuity.

Moreover, once Yeshiva's Israel students are having shared experiences, perhaps their return to campus will yield a less fractious student body. The unification of students while in Israel will lead to a lesser tendency of students to return to the Wilf and Beren Campuses for an exaggerated game of Color War, where each Yeshiva is a different team vying for the propriety of their *hashkafa* over that of their peers. Hopefully, with the evolution of this program Yeshiva will see an increased commitment to academic excellence and religious unity that can only bring our institution to greater heights.



Lisa Grundman,
TAC President

Over winter vacation, I went to Los Angeles with some friends. We busied ourselves with the typical "tourist" activities: tour of Warner Bros. and Universal Studios, saw some stars and walked down Rodeo Drive. While we were there, we met two Israelis that were on vacation as well. However, they were not on a break from school. They had just finished their service to the army and decided to spend a few months travelling across America. We began talking and made an immediate connection. Although we were practically the same age, we were at completely different points in life. They had experienced things that I have not seen and hope to never see.

As the conversation continued, I could not help but begin to feel a sense of guilt. While I was rewarding myself from a semester of hard work, they were rewarding themselves from risking their lives to protect their land and mine. It hardly measures up.

Right now, while I am sitting here in my dorm room on 29th Street in Manhattan, there are hundreds of kids my age, some a little older and some a lit-

tle younger, risking their lives to protect our country. Why is it that their parents had to send their children to the army, while we "get off easy" and can not even fathom all that our peers have to experience. Is it fair that we have the luxury of going about our daily lives while they have to attend a funeral of one of their family members or best friend?

But I guess that life is not based on fairness. There has to be a better explanation as to why I'm here and they are there. Why God chooses to let one woman in a bus bombing live, and everyone else around her die.

I do not know what the explanation is and I do not think that God wants us to try to figure it out. Rather, we need to evaluate each individual situation and make the best of it. We need to make sure not to let the moment pass by having any regrets of things that we could have done or accomplished. Of course, I can compare my life to my friend in the army feeling guilty and say - his is so much harder but that will not change things. At the end of the day, he will still be fighting and I will still be living my life here dealing with the "normal" occurrences in the life of a 21-year-old.

Perhaps by looking to those in Israel for inspiration and hope, I will be doing just what God wants. Not looking to degrade myself, but looking to admire and appreciate what others do for me, for *Klal Yisrael* - raising each other up, especially in times when it is so easy to be brought down.

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A Legend Passes On

Yeshiva Mourns the Loss of Mikey Butler

By Rebecca Rosenberg

Frank Michael Butler, known by friends and family as "Mikey," passed away early Monday morning on January 26th at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in Shadyside after battling cystic fibrosis for twenty-four years. YC alumni, Mikey's persistence and positive spirit has been a great source of inspiration to the Jewish community at large and particularly to Yeshiva.

One paradigmatic example of how Mikey spurred the larger community to do good was the creation of a web journal called *Mitzvah for Mikey*, organized by numerous National Conference of Synagogue Youth (NCSY) regions. The site kept friends and family informed of Mikey's condition in addition to encouraging them to take on a *mitzvah* (good deed) on his behalf.

In the web journal's last entry, his parents wrote, "We're so sorry to have to tell you that, after twenty-four years of resisting, Mikey's body - which never did measure up to his spirit - gave out today."

Their words resonated throughout the community as friends and family fondly remembered his courage and strength. "He was always concerned about everyone else," said friend and

YSU President Yummy Schachter. "He was always in great spirits and interested in helping others. The things that Mikey went through are beyond words, but I never heard him complain - never."

Mikey was born with cystic fibrosis, a genetic disease, which causes the lungs and intestines to fill with thick mucus. The result is malnutrition, poor growth, frequent respiratory infections, breathing difficulties and eventually permanent lung damage. Lung disease is the usual cause of death in most patients. When he was only a few months old, the doctors told his parents that he would not live more than a few hours.

Despite a bleak prognosis, Mikey lived a fulfilling and meaningful twenty-four years, offering wisdom and strength to those around him. According to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Mikey was a field tester for Starbright World, an interactive computer network linking hospitalized children nationwide. At the Washington D.C. unveiling of the system a few years ago, he met and inspired Steven Spielberg, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore.

Despite his debilitating illness, Mikey insisted on earning a college degree from YC, though

he often had to carry an oxygen tank to class and interrupt his studies for three-week hospital visits. He did not let these drawbacks hinder his motivation and participation in student clubs.

When Mikey was unable to attend his YC graduation due to his health, Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, then president of Yeshiva, held a ceremony at Pittsburgh International Airport and presented him with his BA degree in political science.

During his college years, Mikey volunteered at a camp for children with special needs and was very involved in the NCSY where he encouraged many participants to become more in touch with their Jewish heritage. He spent countless hours communicating via e-mail with people interested in Judaism.

After his graduation ceremony, Mikey underwent a lung transplant and eventually developed lymphoma associated with transplant recipients. The treatments for cancer caused hearing loss and cataracts. In his last days, Mikey had difficulty speaking and hearing and developed tumors all over his body, but continued to e-mail his friends and family.

On the day of his funeral, Yeshiva held a memorial service for Mikey at the Lampport Auditorium on the Wilf Campus. Lamm delivered a eulogy for



Mikey Butler was beloved by many at Yeshiva

Mikey and told the audience that on the day of Mikey's death he received a letter, written by Mikey's cousin on Mikey's behalf. According to the letter, Mikey had heard Lamm might be reviving a YC program called Dorm Talks. Dorm Talks consisted of Lamm visiting students in their dorms to informally discuss relevant concerns of the student body. In the letter, Mikey offered suggestions on how to improve these talks and was eager to participate. According to Lamm, though cystic fibrosis ravaged Mikey's body, his enthusiasm and joy for life remained a vibrant and inspiring force from which people sought guidance.

"His stories have touched thousands of people who've never met him," said Schachter. "Think of how many people's lives he touched who are only religious because of him."

His funeral was held January 27th at 12:30 pm in Congregation Poale Zedek in Pittsburgh. Yeshiva organized two buses to

drive to Pittsburgh for the funeral while still many students drove on their own or took flights despite the inclement weather. The YC memorial service was organized by Schachter and other student leaders. Approximately 800 students from both the Wilf and Beren Campuses attended the service where in addition to Lamm's eulogy, the audience heard from Shira Reifman, the Director of NCSY in Upstate New York.

Lamm called Mikey a legend, saying he lived a life of Torah and concern for others. "Mikey had legions of admirers and evoked the better angels of our nature," said Lamm. "His example challenges us to overcome difficulties in our own lives and persevere in our commitment to Torah values."

Mikey is survived by his parents Doctor Nina and Judge Daniel E. Butler and his siblings YC senior Gavri, Uri, Shoshi and J.J. Butler.

The Observer
joins the Yeshiva community
in mourning the loss of
Mikey Butler a"h.
May the Butler family
be comforted among the
mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Talmud Program's Leading Teachers To Make Aliyah

By Miriam Shapiro

After serving as the trailblazers of SCW's Graduate Program in Advanced Talmudic Studies, the two featured teachers, Rabbi Eitan Mayer and Rabbi Assaf Bednarsh will be resigning due to their plans to emigrate to the Holy Land.

Currently, Mayer, Bednarsh and Rabbi Yitzhak Berger form the triumvirate of the program's mainstay educators. "It is very powerful to have Rabbis Berger, Bednarsh, and Mayer as part of program," commented Nechama Price, SCW alumna and graduate teaching assistant. All three are members of Yeshiva's selective and prestigious *kollel elyon*.

Although the loss will be a critical one, the programs administrators remain positive. "A loss to Israel really isn't a loss at all, it's a gain," said Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel, the program's leading administrator. "They have both done a marvelous job, and we couldn't have been more honored to have them as such a central portion of the program."

Mayer and Bednarsh, who both plan on making aliyah with their families this July, are sorry to leave their positions but expect to see the programs continued success in the future. "I am confident that the program will have its choice of top quality teachers for next year," commented Mayer. "We will be leaving our students in talented, experienced hands."

Whose hands those will be, however, has yet to be determined. The search process for replacements is well underway. "We have interviewed a number of people," said Kanarfogel. "We are very hopeful. We have some excellent candidates lined up."

Price expressed her regret for the loss of the rabbis, but was

very optimistic about the program's future. "It is very sad," said Price, "But they seem to keep bringing in new people to interview and look around."

SCW alumna and graduate teaching assistant Rachel Brenner explained that the atmosphere in the *Beit Midrash* created by the dynamic relationship between the rabbis generates a feeling of admiration from the students and anyone within its confines. "The *Rabbanim* are

"While making aliyah is the fulfillment of a dream long standing for my family, the whole family is acutely aware of the precious things we are leaving behind," said Mayer.

"One of the great sacrifices is leaving the great teaching opportunities that my wife and I have enjoyed here."

always talking and learning, and they involve the students in their deep discussions," she remarked. "It's so good to have role models like that, so engrossed in what they are doing. It is so exciting to watch them."

The two-year program, which is reaching the conclusion of its fifth year, boasts a total of 16 students, four short of its maximum enrollment of twenty. "Last year was the first year that we took a full ten for the first year students," explained Kanarfogel.

The curriculum, divided between studies in Talmud and halakhah, offers textual study in the three main genres of analysis; *shiur*, *sefer*, and *chavrutah* styles of learning. First year students study the laws of Shabbat and *kashrut* with Bednarsh, while second year students learn the laws

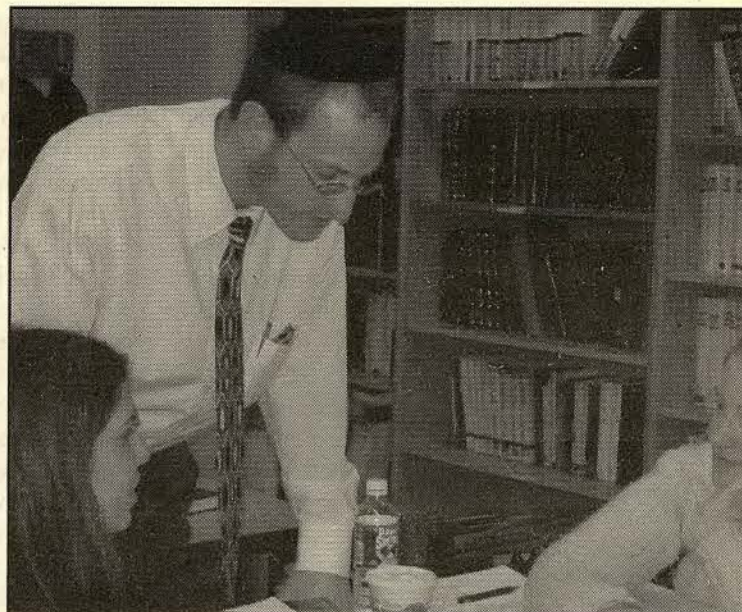
of *niddah*, family purity, with Rabbi Yitzhak Berger, who is also rabbi of a congregation in Mt. Vernon. Both groups are tackling tractate *Sanhedrin*, taught by Rabbi Moshe Kahn.

Although the program does not independently present its own masters degree, it currently offers its graduates a series of certificates that have been widely recognized and honored by various institutions as credentials for a degree in higher education of this discipline. The creation of such a degree has become a priority for the program's administration. "Separate planning for a master's degree is in the works," said Kanarfogel. "The end game is to make a degree out of this," added Brenner.

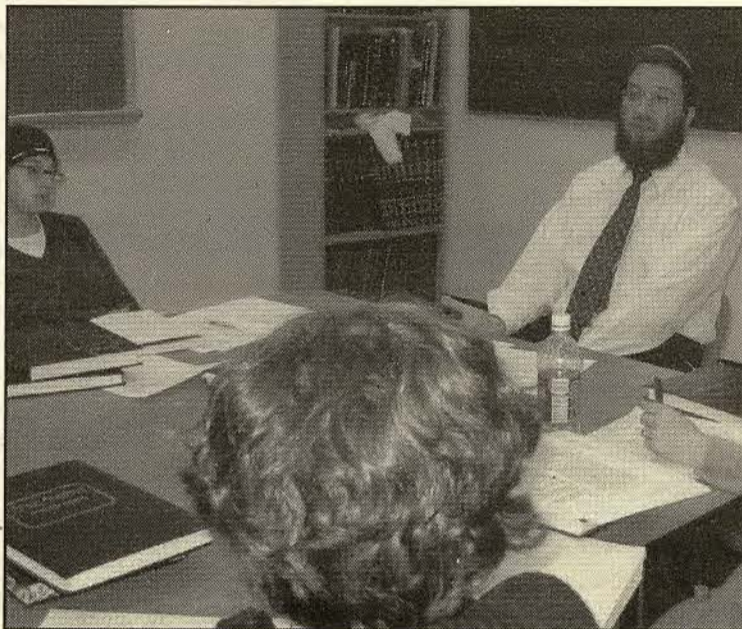
Joint programs with the Azrieli School of Jewish Education and Administration and the Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies are made available to students.

Now being advertised both nationally and internationally, what had come to be known as "the Talmud program" to students on the Beren campus, will fill its maximum of twenty students for the coming year. "We are happy with the rate of applicants," said Kanarfogel. "People are really enjoying the program. Our Graduates have taken excellent positions in *chinuch* (Jewish education)."

Kanarfogel also noted that students have begun to offer *shiurim* both within and outside the SCW community. "We want to increase substantive presentation from our students and help the community enjoy [the lessons taught by the students]," he said. Brenner also expressed her desire to encourage the programs expansion to the public face, and plans to take an active role in that process.



Rabbi Assaf Bednarsh, above, and Rabbi Eitan Mayer, below, will both be moving to Israel leaving the Talmud Program without two of their main educators



Mayer, who plans to continue teaching Torah to adults in Israel, is excited about his move, but is aware of what he is leaving behind, in terms of both his career and his personal life.

"My students at the Graduate Program for Advanced Talmudic Study based at Stern College are the ideal students for me," he said. "They are devoted to Torah; committed to learning, seriously, easily the brightest

students I've taught anywhere." He continued, "While making aliyah is the fulfillment of a dream of long standing for my family, the whole family is acutely aware of the precious things we are leaving behind. One of the great sacrifices is leaving the great teaching opportunities that my wife and I have enjoyed here."

Dedication of 36th Street Lounge is Falk's Last Gift to Yeshiva

By Shifra Bronstein

In a ceremony held during winter intersession on January 18th, the back lounge located in the 36th Street dormitory on the Beren Campus was dedicated as the Anne and Isidore Falk Lounge, long-time philanthropists and friends of Yeshiva.

Rebecca Steindecker, Falk's daughter spoke at the ceremony, explaining how SCW administration first approached Falk about the dedication of the Yeshiva facilities while he was lying ill. The lounge was chosen with much consideration, since he knew that the donation would be the final gift of his life. Chancellor Norman Lamm had presented Falk with pictures of various areas of the Yeshiva campus that need funding and spon-

sorship.

Falk chose the 36th Street lounge because it reminded him of something his wife would have liked in a home. Steindecker also mentioned how sorry she was that her father wished to see the dormitory himself. Unfortunately, Falk fell ill and passed away soon after.

The dedication program began with opening remarks by SCW Dean Karen Bacon, followed by words from President Richard Joel and SCW junior Bella Tendler. The dedication address was given by Chancellor Norman Lamm.

In her speech, Tendler thanked the Falk family on behalf of the student body and praised the room and the dormitory. "The environment is really conducive to living, developing friendships and studying," said

Tendler. Tendler was also impressed with the generosity, and pleasant nature of the entire Falk family. "I found them all to be very sweet and down to earth, interested in the students' personal goals and how they would enjoy their gift."

SCW junior Yonina Bomzer, resident at 36th Street, gave a tour of the dormitory to members of the Falk family. "They thought the dorm was beautiful," Bomzer recalled. "36th Street didn't exist when they went to Stern and they appreciated what it had to offer." Many students enjoy the facility and embrace its versatile nature. "It is a beautiful room," says SCW junior Aderet Block, a Senior resident of 36th Street, about the Falk Lounge. "My friends and I like to *daven* (pray) there and it's great for studying. It's good to know that

it is being supported."

Isadore Falk, a major supporter of Jewish organizations and academic institutions, has been a committed friend to Yeshiva. He has previously spon-

sored the recreation center and pool at the Albert Einstein School of Medicine.



Yeshiva administration and the Falk family

Former SCW Student Speaks from Experience on Eating Disorders



Former SCW student and psychologist advises students about eating disorders

By Aviva Balk

When Shuli (Gertel) Bossewitch (SCW '01) came back to visit the Beren campus on January 26, it was not to catch up with old friends and teachers. She came to discuss eating disorders and how to respond to those who have them. Bossewitch, a recovering anorexic, captivated the audience's attention at an "Eating Disorder Symposium" sponsored by the Psychology Club. "I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to get help for your friend," said Bossewitch. "I do credit my friends with saving my life."

Bossewitch was joined by Dr. Alisa Schwartz, who works a few blocks away from the Beren Campus, as featured speakers. Each presented guidelines for dealing with victims of eating disorders and then opened the floor to questions from the audience in the Levy Lobby.

Psychology Club President Yonina Bomzer noted that the conception of the event came from personal experiences. "I myself was friends with someone with an eating disorder, and for a long time I tried to help her on my own," she said. "There were times, though, that I feared saying something that would push her over the edge."

She recalled that she had wanted to seek additional help for both herself and her friend, but was embarrassed to do so, thinking that she should be able to handle it on her own. Such feelings prompted her and Co-President Ayelet Feinberg to conduct the symposium, with the help of Mrs. Zelda Braun, Assistant Dean of Students, Rachel Kraut and Shana Glasser, of the Office of Residence Life.

Braun recalled an experience

at SCW where three roommates approached her, suspecting that the fourth member of their room was anorexic. "Staying with the friend is what's critical," she observed, noting that through the concern of the friends and the help of the administration, they were able to make the situation easier and safer for their roommate.

"I credit my friends with saving my life."

Bossewitch, who was hospitalized twice for her anorexia, pointed out that it is usually friends who notice problems before parents, since they are in school all day and are only at home for one meal a day, if any at all.

Students expressed difficulty in differentiating if their friends, who can be exceedingly weight and food conscious, have eating disorders or just bad eating habits. "It becomes a problem when it interferes with your life," Schwartz noted. "It shouldn't get in the way of your daily functioning and routines."

Bossewitch also stressed that eating disorders are not only about losing weight. "Eating disorders really don't have anything to do with food," she said. "Food is a manifestation of a lot of deeper issues that are going on." Therefore, focusing on eating and food is not the way to lead someone to the road towards recovery. "Had my friends spoken to me about everything else in my life, [like] why they were friends

with me in the first place, that might have reminded me of the things in my life that were so much more important," she explained.

Both women agreed that identifying an eating disorder is based on distinctions between food-related diseases, not only physical changes. Bulimics, for example, often remain unnoticed for longer due to the nature of their bingeing/purging routines, and maintain reasonable sizes for some time. In reality, they are, among other things, throwing off the electrolytes in their body, increasing their chances for heart attacks. The average heart rate for a teenager is 80. At her worst point, Bossewitch's heart rate as an anorexic was about 47 beats per minute.

In the male anorexic community, men often show an unusually determined focus on exercise or spend a lot of time talking about food, a trait common to bulimics. Eating disorders with men are "trickier" according to Schwartz, because it is often very uncomfortable for them to have a disorder that is so commonly associated with women—and rightfully so. In fact, 90% of people with eating disorders are female. Bossewitch recalled that when she was in the hospital there was one man among the ten or so in her group who seemed very embarrassed and defensive about his masculinity for these reasons.

Bossewitch and Schwartz offered a set of "tips and tools" for students coping with friends with eating disorders. Advice included not mentioning food, not commenting at all on the person's weight, not putting pressure on the person to eat and not answering the question "Do I look fat?"

Students who feel they might know someone in danger of an eating disorder can contact several individuals on campus, such as Beth Hait, Coordinator of Student Services, Zelda Braun, Rachel Kraut and on-campus psychologists at (212) 340-7715.

Days of Her Life

Alumna Profile: Leah Laiman



Deidre Hall and Drake Hogestyn play Marlena and John on NBC's "Days of Our Lives," the soap opera that Leah Laiman wrote for

Like many college graduates, when Leah Laiman graduated from SCW in 1967 with a degree in English Literature, she was unsure of which career path she wanted to follow. But now, Laiman's academic and career paths lead her to ultimately become a prominent head writer for daytime television. She has since earned several Emmy and Writer's Guild Award nominations for her work on the soap operas "General Hospital," "Days of Our Lives" and "One Life to Live."

After earning a bachelor's degree in English Literature from SCW and a master of art's degree in theater from Hunter College, Laiman worked in the marketing department of the National Educational Television Center. "I found out where the creative department was and I knocked on the doors of producers," Laiman explained. She introduced herself to producers and expressed her interest in working in the field of television. Luckily enough, one of the producers gave her a job as his assistant. "Coincidentally, much later that producer ended up giving me my very first television writing job," she noted.

Laiman described herself as a late-bloomer. "I didn't start out thinking I needed a career," she explained. "I dropped out for a while - I moved to Woodstock and became a hippie." In 1977 Laiman married Ralph Toporoff with whom she now has three children. It was her husband who pushed her to get a job. "It was not a matter of making money, I just had to do something," she recalled. "That's when I desperately started looking for a job."

Laiman was introduced to a director of daytime programming in 1980. Laiman had never actually seen a soap opera, but after the producer expressed her interest in Laiman, she successfully encouraged Laiman to become familiar with soap operas. "She sent me home to watch television," she remarked. "She said, 'You could probably work here if you want, but it will take you a year to get a job if you're persistent.'" Laiman did as she was told and watched television soaps for four months. She was eventually given a sample script to write and continued

to be persistent, which she insists is key to succeeding in her business. "People don't return your phone calls, they're not the ones who need a job," she stated.

In 1981, Laiman's persistence paid off and she was offered a job in Los Angeles as the head writer for "General Hospital." As head writer, she was responsible for working together with the producers to expand the various stories on the show.

In 1984, Laiman was employed as the "Days of Our Lives" head writer for six years. She then came back to New York where she went through a number of soaps as head writer including "One Life to Live," "Guiding Light," "Another World" and "As the World Turns."

Along with her employment in various soaps, Laiman has also written six romantic novels, which she described as "soap operas in book form." She is now working on her first non-soap related fictional novel. She finds that it is very different from writing for soap operas because she has no time constraints and she is able to take more care in terms of language. "Now, writing a book, I might spend a whole day working on one paragraph," she said.

She describes writing for a soap opera as "continual, relentless work." She explained that it is completely different than other types of television programs because the shows are "one hour a day, five hours a week, 52 weeks a year, with no breaks and no hiatuses, and you can't repeat yourself." Laiman feels that the hardest part is "just maintaining the energy." But that in the end, the hard work pays off. "It can be fun working with other writers who are often very amusing, intelligent people," she said.

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Joint Program with UMDNJ Finalized

By Arie Staller

After two years of negotiations, two new joint programs are in the works for SCW students. A collaboration between SCW and the physical therapy program at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of NJ (UMDNJ) has been secured. The contract between the two schools is in the final signing stages. The Masters Nursing program with Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing in Baltimore is in its final stages, but is still being reworked and modified.

The Doctorate of Physical Therapy Program with UMDNJ will allow students to spend

three years at SCW, completing their undergraduate requirements as well as prerequisites for UMDNJ. Students will then go on to UMDNJ for another three years to receive their doctorate degrees. Upon completion of the first year of graduate school, SCW will award students with a bachelors of arts degree.

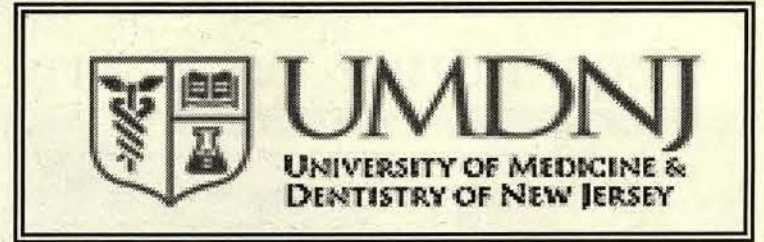
"For students who know what health career they want to pursue," explained Bosworth, "this is an excellent opportunity to enter a quality program, save a year of college and assuming the students maintains their grades and receives the letters of references needed, be assured a spot in the health care program."

After numerous requests from students to develop more

joint programs, said Dr. Stefan Bosworth, SCW prehealth advisor, it came to the administration's attention that there was much interest in nursing from the SCW student body. Bosworth is responsible for organizing the joint programs.

"We thought it might be nice to do nursing with a school that had a Masters program," said Dean Ethel Orlian. "Baltimore is a nice community and we thought it would suit our student's lifestyles."

An accelerated program has been designed for SCW students to enter Johns Hopkins in their last undergraduate year to receive their bachelors of science in Nursing from Johns Hopkins along with their bachelors of arts



from SCW. Students may then continue on for a Masters degree in Johns Hopkins. Depending on their chosen major, the curriculum for the Masters will take one to two years.

The first student to enter this program in the fall will be SCW junior Audrey Weinberger. For a student entering SCW with this program in mind, their entire two or three year stay (depending on whether they are coming from spending a year in Israel) is completely mapped out with the appropriate prerequisite classes for the program.

According to Orlian this program has been specially modified for SCW students. "Johns Hopkins does not have this for any other students," stated Orlian. "They heard about our students and made it specifically for us."

"We want our students to have the highest credentials," explained Orlian for the motive behind the joint graduate programs. "So as the field moves in that direction, we want our students to progress."



"The Passion" depicts in gory detail the last 12 hours in the life of Jesus Christ

Will "The Passion" Cause Anti-Semitism? The OU Gathers with Yeshiva Students to Discuss

Continued from back page

Christianity annuls our Torah, the roots of our faith. Following the same vain, Skobac stated that it is our duty to strengthen our own spirituality, and thereby disprove the Evangelical Christians, who believe that our faith is dead, and that we are just "playing the game of religion".

"The ultimate way to inoculate our community is to build homes and synagogues that celebrate Torah, Judaism, joy, and enhance our spiritual connection with God," said Skobac.

In his presentation, Berger announced that there were both

proper and improper criticisms attached to the film. "Many of the criticisms are misplaced and self depleting," he said. However, he did explain that even from a fundamentalist Christian perspective, it is a distortion to portray only the blood-thirsty crowds of Jews, rather than depicting his Jewish followers as well. "The large crowds of Jews listening and loving his sermons are absent from the film." In addition, he said that it is of extreme importance that we do not utilize this debate surrounding the historical credibility of the film (based on religious texts) as a form of hostility

toward the Christians. "They are our friends with regard to Israel," he remarked.

Weinreb conceded that nothing can mute of the effects of a Hollywood movie, and that he knows no cure for anti-Semitism except for prayer and Torah study. "The challenge is for us to learn more about our faith, and to strengthen our beliefs."

"I think there was an underlying theme to each of the presentations," said SCW junior, Aviva Balk. "The way to counteract the potential effects of this film on our community is by strengthening our own faith."

Choral Ensemble Echoes Throughout SCW

By Melodie Balarsky

Every Monday evening SCW adjunct Marcia Young, who holds a master's degree from the University of Minnesota, teaches the new Choral Ensemble course in the 245 Lexington building. She works with students on developing vocal productions and ensemble singing skills.

Young deals mostly with medieval, Renaissance and Baroque music. She is a musician who plays the early harp and sings, and is a radio announcer for a classical music station.

Dr. David Glaser, SCW music professor, commented that the Choral Ensemble was formed, "In order to increase the opportunities for our students to have a venue for performing music and learning to improve their vocal technique at the same time."

Young utilizes physical and vocal exercises to facilitate musical growth. Basic renaissance dance steps help students internalize rhythm and learn to use their entire body in order to improve their singing. The first

half hour of the course is spent practicing vocal exercises. "Professor Young instructs us to sing variations on tunes and vowel sounds in order to warm up our voices," stated SCW senior Malka Simkovich. "We then divide into various groups to learn our respective parts and towards the end of class we come together and sing as an ensemble."

In order to present students with a diverse repertoire, the students study an array of composers from numerous time periods. For example, the class learned an old English round song (known as a fugue, a piece of music sequentially overlapping the same melody) titled "Rose." The class has even explored modern Jewish pieces by composers such as Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach.

The class has sixteen students, each with varying levels of musical background. Everyone who is interested in music is encouraged to take the course, said Young. "For students who would like to minor or major in music but are not proficient on any instrument," explained



Young, on the left, teaches the Choral Ensemble class

Glaser, "this will be a way of gaining performance experience and earning credit toward the requirements."

Students have many reasons for taking the course as well as differing goals they hope to achieve throughout the semester. "I decided to take Chorale Ensemble because I thought it would be fun," said Simkovich. "I

also hope to widen my range and learn how to enunciate syllables better while I sing."

"It is clear to me that there is an interest in choral singing because the class is filled to capacity," stated Young. "I hope my students will be more confident with their singing voices and vastly improve their ability to hear within an ensemble."

Professor Young and Dr. Glaser look forward to continuing the success of the Choral Ensemble course and hope to host an annual concert starring SCW students.

After Public Attention, Academic Advisement Makes Drastic Improvements to Website

By Orlee Levin

Although the Office of Academic Advisement decided to revamp its website several months ago, the process was expedited in light of the student dissatisfaction that was reported in *The Observer* in November. Still, however, the website continues to be a work in progress.

The former website was not very informative, explained Mrs. Miriam Schechter, academic advisor at SCW. "We had been talking about it for a while and were looking forward to using the most modern tools available to provide information for students."

"We started working on the changes before the summer" said Schechter. According to her, the improvements took a long time because, "we wanted to be sure that we were explaining everything as clearly as possible. For instance when writing the requirements we sought out the feedback of others who were not

familiar with our requirements. If the information was not clear, we continued to make changes."

Students who have browsed the website are amazed by the vast choices and links that the site offers. "It has everything," exclaimed SCW junior Chani Ozarowski, when she saw the site. Students who log onto the SCW homepage can now click on a link for academic advisement and, at her fingertips, connect to links informing her of her requirements, notices of deadlines and dates, academic calendars, faculty hours and a wealth of other critical information.

The website offers students links to other sites that they may not have been aware of before. As Ozarowski put it, "When you see the details in front of you, you are encouraged to take advantage of things like the writing center, which you might not have done before."

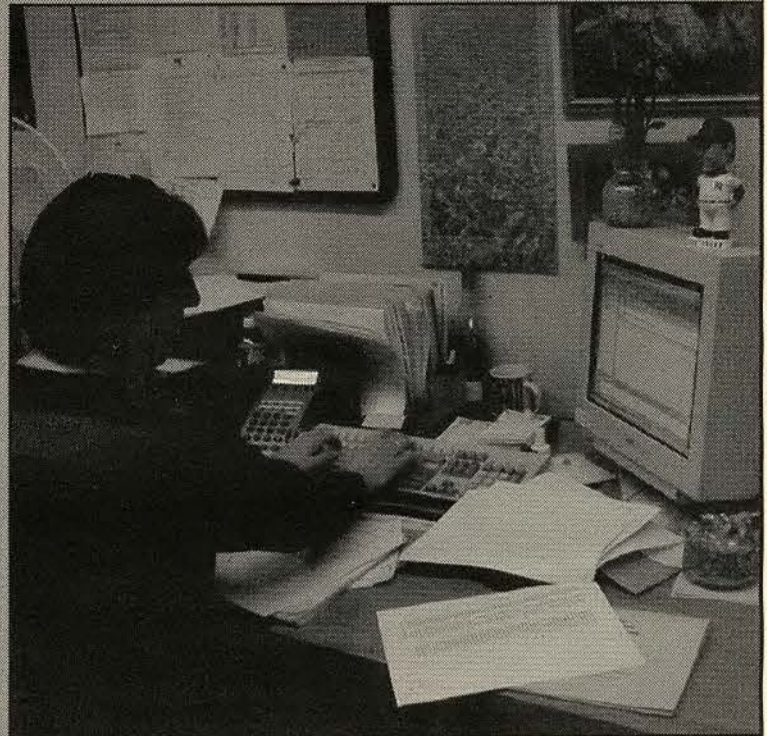
One popular link on the site is 'Calculate your GPA.' A screen with directions prompts the student to enter specific informa-

tion in the calculator in order to calculate personal GPAs. The site does not only provides a numerical GPA; it also lists the corresponding number grades. "That was a student's suggestion and so we found a way to place the calculations needed on the site," explained Jane Galland, assistant to the dean.

Both Galland and Schechter stress that they want student feedback on the site and are interested in students' ideas. "Clearly the students can play a role in expanding the site by sharing ideas and suggestions," Schechter commented.

While the website has made drastic improvement over three months ago, when its screen still blinked, "Have a great summer," there is still much improvement planned for the ensuing months. Plans for additions include more FAQ's and information about summer school courses.

A university student's ability to access important information is often the sign of a well functioning academic system and the



Mrs. Miriam Schechter has been working for months on improving the Office of Academic Advisement's website

Office of Academic Advisement is renovating their system to function best.

Additional changes include the posting of the major/minor sheets in the waiting area for the

Deans' offices and a survey box that enables that Office of Academic Advisement to better evaluate their operations based on student feedback.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ESSAY AND WRITING AWARDS SPRING 2004

Yeshiva University has four endowed awards to be made annually for the best essays submitted by undergraduates in various fields of Jewish Studies. In addition, there are three annual SCW awards for excellence in writing. Specific information on eligibility and procedures for these awards follow:

ESSAY AWARDS - OPEN TO ALL UNDERGRADUATES

The Lawrence P. Fischer Memorial Award

Awarded to the best paper submitted by an undergraduate on some aspect of Jewish history
Must be written in Hebrew
Cash award \$750

The Edward A. Rothman Memorial Award

Awarded to the best paper on the theme of "Issues in Orthodox Judaism in Practice"
Should be between 2,000 and 3,000 words in length

The Fannie and Asher Scharfstein Memorial Award

Awarded to the best paper on the topic of *Gemilat Hessed*. The essay should deal with the definition of this term in its broadest interpretation, and its importance.
Cash award \$750

The Morris and Chaya Zuckerman Memorial Award

Awarded to the best research paper on Jewish history
Cash award of about \$150

EXCELLENCE IN WRITING AWARDS - OPEN TO STERN COLLEGE STUDENTS

The Professor Laurel Hatvany Award

Awarded for creative writing
Open to all SCW students; preference normally given to seniors
Cash award \$100

The Dean David Mirsky Memorial Award

May be on any subject
Awarded to a graduating Stern College senior
Cash award \$1000

The E. Billi Ivry Prize on American Jewish History

Awarded for the best essay on an American Jewish history or sociological theme
Open to all SCW undergraduates
1st place - \$2000
2nd place - \$1000
3rd place - \$ 500

PROCEDURE

The submission deadline for essays is **March 29th** except for the E. Billi Ivry Essay, which is **April 19th**. (Students on the YU Program in Israel may submit their essays to the Israel Office).

Submit the typed essay in a manila envelope simply stating "Essay submitted for the (Fischer, Rothman, Scharfstein, etc.) Award" to the Office of the Dean.

On the title page of the essay write a pseudonym and the name of the award for which you would like your work considered. Attach a sealed envelope on the outside of which is your pseudonym and inside of which is your true name, class, and school.

c:/rr/awards/essaywritingawardsannouncement

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Politics Goes Beyond Student Government at Yeshiva

Democrats and Republicans on Campus Show Their Support



Senator Joseph Lieberman, above, gained support from Yeshiva students

By Arie Staller

Democratic and Republican presidential candidates for the '04 election are finding support at Yeshiva. Students from the Wilf and Beren campuses have rallied behind their candidates; the Republican Club is working on the Bush campaign and the newly formed College Democrats took active steps in the primaries campaigning for Connecticut Senator Joseph Lieberman, prior to his withdrawal from the race.

Members of the College Democrats traveled approximately four hours to the towns of Peterborough and Keene in New Hampshire to assist Lieberman in the New Hampshire Primary. Although their contender came in fifth place, the College

Democrats remained behind the senator and his platform.

"In general, he's really a centrist," explained SCW junior Devorah Whitman. "That's what we need, but people are extremes; people want the anti-Bush, and [Lieberman's] not."

President of Yeshiva's Republican Club Yoni Perl supports student participation. "I think any time students get involved in the political process it is admirable and important," said Perl. "It is just too bad that Lieberman doesn't seem to be going anywhere in the race, because no other candidate out there seems to connect to our college democrats enough for them to want to get involved with."

Although not all members of the College Democrats fully supported the notion of Lieberman becoming the next president, they maintained that backing "one of your own" is important. "There's a pride to see another Jew, an observant Jew in such a position," stated Mordy Groner, a YC junior.

According to Elissa Kempin, an SCW freshman and co-president of the College Democrats, although her attendance at the primary originated from Lieberman's desire to have Orthodox support on his campaign, she does not feel that religion alone is a reason to vote for a presidential candidate. In fact, Kempin believed exactly the opposite. "People have to stop looking at it as him being a Jew,"

she asserted, prior to Lieberman's dropping out of the race. "If you make it an issue, it will be."

"In any campaign, one of the primary things that runs the campaign is volunteers," explained Whitman. "So college students are an excellent source."

Yeshiva College Democrats seem to have felt the same way. They did all they could in New Hampshire to inform voters of Lieberman's political positions. The two major roles they played included standing outside the polls talking to voters and canvassing—walking door to door telling people to vote for Lieberman.

All students that attended the primary as well as those involved with the College Democrats that were unable to attend, believe that they receive more from working on the presidential campaign than what they put into it. "You learn a lot and meet a lot of interesting people," noted Groner. "Election time is a very exciting time. If you feel a connection with a candidate, you should get involved."

Although Democrats and Republicans usually disagree, Yeshiva's College Democrats and the members of the Yeshiva Republican Club do agree that it is their mission to inform fellow students on the important issues their respective parties stand for. "People on campus just don't know what it means to be a Democrat or a Republican," said Leo Paige, a YC junior and

Kempin's co-president. "It's our job to educate them."

With over 400 members in their club, the Republican Club is holding a Republican Week to do just that—educate the students. In conjunction with approximately 15 other colleges, a Campaign Training Institute (CTI) took place on February 15th from 10am to 4pm in the Koch Auditorium.

Columbia University, Barnard College, New York University, Touro College, Queens College, and Hunter College are among some of the other schools that will have representatives present at the CTI. Jordan Sekulow, Youth Director for the Bush campaign, is scheduled to attend the event to help train young Republicans in campaign methods. "The event will focus on training students on how to get involved with campaigns and why if they care about Israel it is imperative to do so," Perl explained.

The final event of the week was held on February 18th. According to Perl, the purpose of this event was slightly different than the CTI. YC and SCW students are currently in the process of creating a national organization under the College Republican National Committee (CRNC), called the Jewish College Republican National Committee. "This will place a Jewish student on every college Republican chapter's executive board," said Perl. "That student will then act as a republican liai-

son to the Jewish community on each campus."

The event on the February 18 was meant to be the inauguration event, which included Jewish students from almost every city college as well those from selected other states. Both national media and Jewish media were present as the students announce their formation, their plans, and their commitment to action. "We are working with the highest level members of Republicans and college Republicans," noted Perl, "including highly placed Jewish members of the community." Additionally, a political fair is in the works for next semester. After questioning the student body regarding political issues and different party platforms, the leaders of the Republican Club and the College Democrats decided it was their duty to politically inform their fellow students. "We said, 'let's do something to educate people,'" said Paige. "We're trying to benefit the country and work together. You throw out your idea, I'll throw out mine."

The political fair will consist of forums explaining the different views of Republicans and Democrats as well as educational booths containing political information. There will also be sign up sheets for the Republican Club and the College Democrats. "We want people to be interested and informed," said Kempin, "not apathetic."

YU GOLD: Halakhik Happy Hour

By Yael Saden Barach

About two dozen Yeshiva graduates gathered for an evening of socializing and networking at Abigail's Restaurant February 4. Sponsored by YU GOLD, Graduates Of the Last Decade, in conjunction with YUPN, Yeshiva University Professionals Network, the graduates met for February's First Wednesday Club event, which takes place at Abigail's the first week of each month.

During this monthly "halakhik happy hour," as Bob Saltzman, Director of University Alumnae Affairs, refers to the club, Yeshiva graduates exchange business cards, make referrals, meet potential clients, and discuss new business trends and opportunities. It is also a chance for people with common interests to get to know one another over dinner.

In a concerted effort to involve new graduates, members of the Alumnae Associations of SCW, YC, and SSSB formed YU GOLD about two years ago to run events and create services for graduates from the '90s and '00s of all three undergraduate schools.

Chavi Eisenberg (SCW '01), director of undergraduate alumnae programs, described the group's focus as providing great opportunities for recent graduates to socialize with members of "the chevra from their college days" with whom they may have lost touch. While GOLD's emphasis is on social interaction, it does cross over with YUPN, which provides business-networking opportunities for Yeshiva graduates. YUPN is predominantly comprised of graduates from the '70s and '80s.

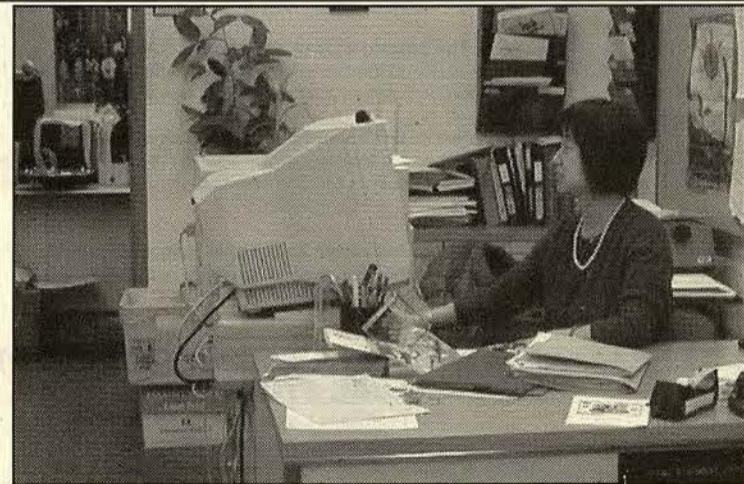
Members of both YU GOLD and YUPN joined together for the most recent First Wednesday Club event, where older professionals were able to connect with younger ones and offer sound business advice.

In addition to the First Wednesday Club, YU GOLD coordinates other functions of interest to young graduates. The organization recently sponsored a Super Bowl party. Future events in the works include a comedy night, murder mystery event and other leisure activities.

The group spearheads networking events such as lectures on financial planning and, in response to graduates' expressed interest in more job-specific net-

working groups, has developed new specialized groups for attorneys, entrepreneurs, educators, and other specialties. A real estate networking group event is being planned for April 21. "The Alumnae Associations realizes that today's graduates need help networking," Saltzman said. These groups and events are intended to assist Yeshiva alumnae in fostering essential connections.

In addition to YU GOLD, the Alumnae Associations of Yeshiva's undergraduate schools remain active. On February 5, an evening for SCW alumnae involved in health professions and interested SCW undergraduates was held in the Schottenstein Residence Hall. SCW alumnae continue to commemorate the college's Jubilee year with celebratory events throughout the year. The Shabbat hospitality program, through which 125 SCW alumnae have opened their homes to SCW undergraduates for shabbatot and *chagim* (holidays), is another initiative undertaken by SCW's Alumnae Association.



The Dean's office at ASCW plans on taking on a fellow

Fellowship Program Underway

Continued from back page

eager for students to take advantage of this experience. "It will put some vitality into the administration," Joel explained. "My ears are 53 years old. We need to make sure the range of voices remains heard."

In addition, he noted, "It's of added value to YU to get the best and brightest to spend a year in administrative structure of the University."

Many students are also enthusiastic about the new program. "I would definitely consider being a graduate fellow," said

Elysia Rothenberg. "It's a real way to give back to Stern, an institution that I gain a lot from. It's also a good transition from college to the working world."

Yeshiva Buys 251 Lex

Continued from front page

Plans for the utilization of the new acquisition have yet to be determined. "As we acquire the building it will continue functioning as is," stated Joel. That is, "until there is a compelling reason to change that."

The SCW deans as of yet have not been involved in the negotiations for the addition to their campus. "Did we get it?" was Dean Karen Bacon's initial response when asked about the building.

"More room in Stern would certainly be a welcome addition," noted Associate Dean Ethel Orlian. Bacon agreed that the attainment of 251 Lexington would be extremely beneficial to the Beren campus, because "it would allow us contiguous space," being that the 245, 251, and 253 Lexington buildings all connect.

Ultimately, Yeshiva will be



The purchase of 251 Lexington will create a contiguous block of Beren Campus buildings

"soliciting student input," said Joel. "The uses will be discussed between SCW deans and students," added Ferrara.

Other new additions to the Beren campus are in the works due to the Israel Henry Beren endowment recently donated to SCW with intentions of beautifying the campus. "This includes banners, signing, landscapes, and maps, and some redesigning of 245 Lexington," said Joel. "But I have no clue beyond that what this means."

Search For CFO Persists

Continued from front page

President for Business Affairs, Socol's position and title remain intact.

While Socol's responsibilities were slashed in August, causing faculty and students

Academic Affairs Morton Lowengrub. "[Socol's] portfolio of responsibilities has changed," Joel affirmed. "Dr. Socol is now focused completely on fiscal and business affairs."

According to Joel, Socol will undergo a second change, one in



Confusion still clouds Sheldon Socol's position

"The implication of [the Yale candidate's] withdrawal is expected to manifest itself in the broadening of the university's search base to secure a person to fill the job."

alike to exult in the prospects of a less autocratic Yeshiva, it now seems that the demotion process has been divided into two phases. The first phase indeed took place when the Joel administration added a third post to its cluster of highest level positions; Vice President for Student Life Hillel Davis thus assumed responsibilities that had formerly by default belonged to both Socol and Vice President for

title, when a CFO is finally secured. Socol will become simply Vice President, according to Joel. "He will remain as a vice president and a counselor to the president," he noted. The plan is somewhat curious, inasmuch as Socol is slated to remain a vice president but without a defined area of authority. Most Yeshiva insiders have essentially assumed that the omission of a specified domain of responsibili-

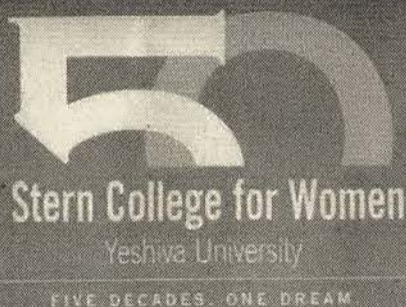
ty amounts to the Joel administration's version of a non-confrontational displacement of the infamous Socol.

The CFO will replace Socol as the third member of the triumvirate of vice presidents who are intimately involved in Yeshiva's policy and decision making. Joel characterized the participation of these three as "operational on a day-to-day basis," while Socol will eventually join what Joel refers to as his cabinet, with whom he meets less frequently.

Sunday, February 29
8:00PM

Yeshiva University Museum
Forcheimer Auditorium at the
Center for Jewish History
15 West 16th Street
(between 5th and 6th)

Admission is free with
valid photo ID.
For more info call 212-
340-7863 or email
rentas@yu.ed
Advance reservations
are required.

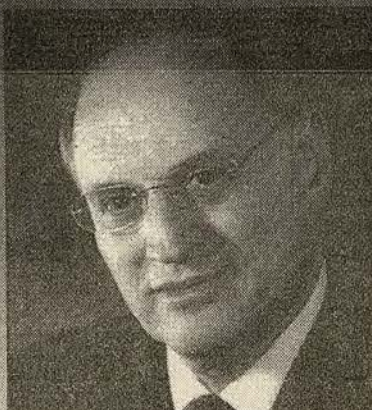


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GARY ROSENBLATT '68YC
Moderator
Editor and Publisher, *The Jewish Week*

Jewish Studies Department Makes Headway in Overcoming Elementary Level Placement Problems

Upperclassmen Still Feel Resentful

By Rebecca Rosenberg

For some elementary students at SCW, their uphill battle to master basic Jewish skills is compounded by additional hurdles. Students with stronger Jewish studies backgrounds are often participants in the same classes and lectures, impeding the lower level students' ability to learn efficiently. The Jewish Studies department, headed by Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel, has undergone a series of steps to improve the situation, though the system is not foolproof.

The Structure

Beginners in Jewish studies are clearly in the minority at SCW. Fewer than ten percent of SCW students are enrolled in lower level Jewish studies classes which include elementary, lower intermediate and intermediate course levels, according to Kanarfogel. Fewer than five percent of SCW students are enrolled in elementary level Jewish studies classes.

The administration has invested a disproportionate amount of time and effort into creating a program that serves a small portion of the student population. "For a relatively small number of students, we've put in a significant amount of work," said Kanarfogel. "The message is that these students are important. We've tailored the program to their needs."

As such, the lower level Jewish studies classes are designed for students to remain in each level for no more than one year and then advance to the next level.

Due to the few students enrolled in the elementary level, very few course options are available for them. If a student begins on an elementary level where typically only fifteen to twenty students place, she has no options for her three CORE (cluster of classes typically comprised of one Hebrew, one Judaic, and one bible course) classes offered for the entire semester. When she reaches the lower intermediate level, she will have two to three course options per semester. At the lower intermediate level even more and at the advanced level there is an array of choices available to students.

The Content

At the elementary level, the Judaic courses tend to emphasize spiritual and philosophical elements of Judaism more than textual work. Partially, this is done to counteract the potential dryness of lower level Hebrew and Bible courses, which primarily stress Hebrew grammar and skills.

For instance, Rabbi Gideon Shloush, rabbi of the 29th Street Synagogue and SCW professor, focuses on arousing student interest with stories and symbolism in his course titled Intro to Judaism. "I try to give students a sense of love, interest, and inspiration for the beauty that Judaism is," Shloush explained. "I certainly spend time on *halakhah*, but that is not my main emphasis. I try to focus on the spiritual aspects of what sometimes become monotonous experiences," he said.

Basic Jewish Concepts is taught on the lower intermediate level by Rabbi Lawrence Hajioff, the head rabbi of the Jewish Enrichment Center, a *kiruv* organization in Manhattan. Hajioff also focuses on inspiring a love of Judaism in his classes and encourages discussions, but he adds Hebrew texts to his curriculum in the second semester. "We talk about everything from the belief in God to proving the Torah is true to the beauty of Jewish relationships, prayer, how to make Jewish families holy," he explained. "I'm not so much teaching as bringing out ideas in them." In his intermediate level class The Sabbath, he does not teach intricate laws, but rather discusses the philosophical importance of keeping the holiday and then reviews the thirty-nine *melachot*.

Professor Rywka Shulman teaches all three levels in the lower Jewish studies bible courses in addition to teaching more advanced classes. Her main emphasis is helping students develop their Hebrew skills but acknowledges certain difficulties. "They have eighteen year old minds but are at the knowledge level of six year olds," she said. "We must find a balance between interesting material versus drill." In the lower level courses, Shulman starts by translating verses in the *Chumash* word by word gradually increasing the speed and adding *Rashi* script. "At that level it is a bit dry," she added. "But we intersperse that with discussion, I often find they are willing to do the drill because they are very motivated to learn."

Approval of the elementary level courses has come most strongly from this year's elementary level students. "Basically, being that I come from a public school background and have never taken a class in *Chumash* or Hebrew before, I've found that this is a welcoming and supportive environment to be in," said junior Emily Fischer. "The teachers understand what level we're at." Fischer attended George Washington University in Washington D.C. for two years before transferring to SCW in August 2003.

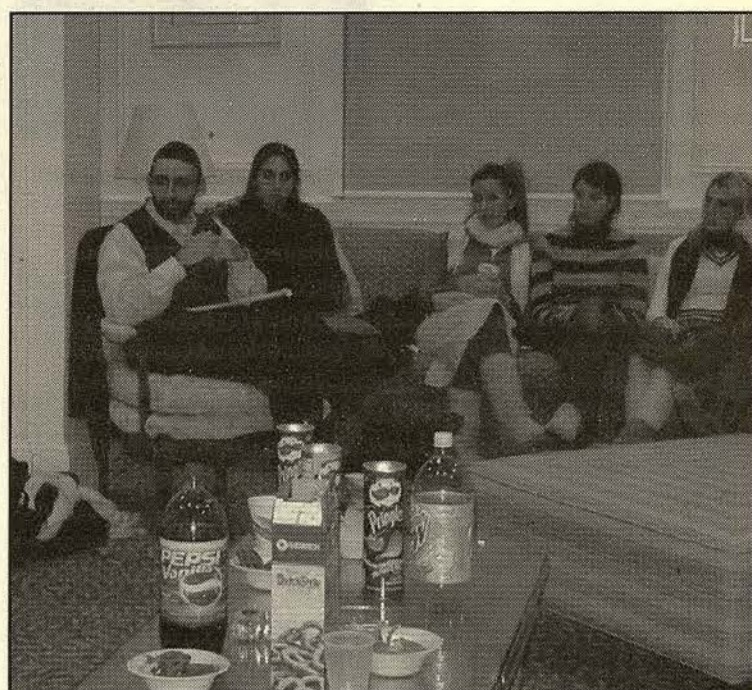
The Issues

Advanced Students in Elementary Courses

With its de-emphasis on grammar and textual study and focus on spiritual ideas, these elementary level courses have attracted students with fuller Jewish studies backgrounds. While a wide spectrum of students with varying backgrounds in certain types of classes can be a positive factor, most students who encounter it in Hebrew and Bible courses find it detrimental. Students who had never learned the *aleph bet* can find themselves in class, sitting next to students who had complete elementary and high school Jewish educations.

For instance, senior Ita Cohen attended *Beis Yaakov* for elementary and high school; however, she placed herself in elementary Hebrew at SCW. "I knew Hebrew words but didn't understand basic grammar," she said. Though Cohen felt she needed to gain a foundation from elementary Hebrew, she acknowledged that, "they were the easiest classes I've ever taken."

Senior Jodi Pollock had a similar experience. She went to a non-Jewish school until she was in eleventh grade, switched to a yeshiva day school for her senior year then went to Michlelet Esther in Israel for a year and a half. Despite her background, she also started out in elementary Hebrew. "It was definitely



Rabbi Hajioff, seen here lecturing informally to SCW students, believes that mixed level classes are beneficial for student growth

edges that students with backgrounds have a clear advantage in the course; however, she insists that they too need the Hebrew foundation provided in the elementary level.

One concern over having students on a more advanced level in these classes is that they might intimidate women who have less background from feeling confident enough to participate in discussions and the reading of Hebrew texts. Shulman acknowledges the challenges the varied backgrounds place on the lower level students and encounters this problem regularly. "Advanced students in lower level classes are very detrimental to the class," she explained.

"How can you put a girl who has been in public school all her life in a class with Beis Yaakov girls and expect her to keep up?"

the level I needed but a faster pace wouldn't have hurt," she said. "On the whole I felt that I learned and am progressing." She acknowledged that the courses were easy for her, requiring little effort before tests or for homework.

Some students with extensive backgrounds are encouraged to join elementary levels because their Hebrew educations did not properly prepare them for college level courses. "Girls with background might have more exposure, but it's really a mish mash of information," said Zafira Lidovsky, Hebrew professor and coordinator of Hebrew classes. "Elementary goes into two channels- teaching new habits to the girls who have none and undoing the bad habits of those with some and eventually they meet somewhere." Lidovsky acknowl-

"Students feel inhibited and afraid to speak because they think they sound stupid. Depending on the degree of participation from the advanced students, a professor sometimes will go galloping off with them leaving the rest of the class behind without being conscious of it."

Aside from participation, many students find that the presence of students with strong backgrounds in their classes impedes their ability to learn. "How can you put a girl who has been in public school all her life in a class with *Beis Yaakov* girls and expect her to keep up?" said sophomore Tiffany Khalil. "I'm frustrated by the fact that there are girls with several years of background because elementary Hebrew is supposed to be where everyone starts from the same place."

In an effort to more efficiently place students, the Jewish studies department implemented a new system two years ago, based primarily on their Hebrew language skills. A detailed Hebrew test was developed to determine students' placement into their Hebrew classes evaluating grammar, vocals, reading comprehension, and writing. The department then places students at the level that corresponds with their test results, although exceptions are made in special situations.

"Previously the placement was made by the students themselves which is absurd," said Lidovsky. "However, now the placement is based more on skill rather than background." The result is that most students are placed appropriately at their level, Lidovsky explained.

Once the test was administered, the number of students enrolled in Hebrew courses shot up by thirty percent, swelling the lower level Jewish studies classes. Lidovsky acknowledges that this is a problem for the Hebrew department, especially those on a lower level. "The classes grew, which makes it harder for students to work individually with the faculty," she explained. "Language classes should never be more than fourteen students and many have twenty-five." Currently, Lidovsky is working with other administrators to expand the number of Hebrew classes available.

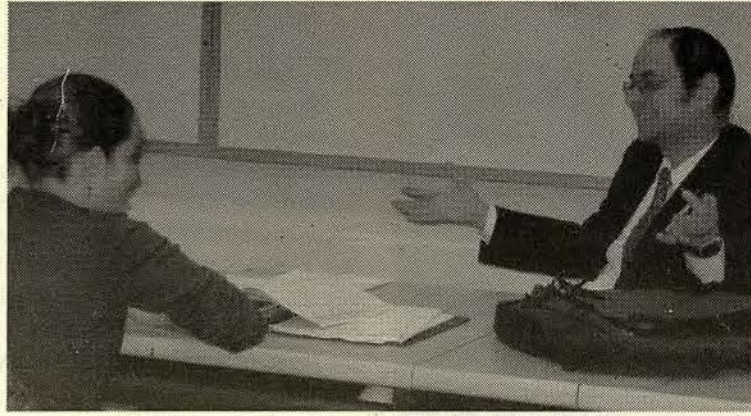
The problem improved drastically with the implementation of the new placement test, as is evidenced by the more positive experiences of women starting at the elementary levels this past year. Yet, many students who began college before the implementation of the new system in September 2002 still suffer from the disadvantages of mixed-level Hebrew and Bible classes. And underclassmen who take classes with advanced upperclassmen also confront this

problem.

But even while the test has affected positive changes, it is impossible to ensure that students take the placement test honestly. Students may want an easy A, especially when they have such a large work load.

In response to student concerns, Lidovsky has set up a rigid curriculum for the lower level Hebrew classes in an effort to ensure that the material is tailored to the women who place in the specific level. For instance, before the second semester commences, professors of elementary Hebrew are instructed to teach at the level of the students who continued from the previous semester, regardless of how advanced the students are who joined for the second semester. "It's the job of the teacher to stick to the same program, even if some students are more advanced," Lidovsky said.

In many Judaic classes, professors have encountered a more positive experience dealing with varying knowledge levels. Most probably this is because they do not rely heavily on Hebrew texts and diverse backgrounds can enliven classroom discussion. "I think it is a positive factor," said Hajioff. "Jews coming together to learn Torah is a beautiful thing. It is open to people at every level and everyone can get something out of it. For my class, it is irrelevant what level you're



Rabbi Palmer teaches Intermediate Level Jewish Studies Classes

on when you walk in."

Lack of Elementary Level Courses

Frequently, there are too few students in lower level courses to create separate classes. This means that women from varying backgrounds must be clumped together to create a class of ten or fifteen students.

A common complaint from students in lower level Jewish studies classes is the limited number of classes available. On the elementary level there are not choices and on the lower intermediate level very few. "I think that some classes need be offered on practical *halakhah*," said SCW senior Jodi Schachar. "I don't know how to create a kosher kitchen or how to cook a meal and serve it on *Shabbos* because I don't know enough of the basic laws."

There are a limited number of options in the lower level

because there are just not enough students to sustain more than one set of elementary courses, explained Kanarfogel. Also, the system is designed to push students up a level after one year. "This is why there aren't eighty-seven options for the lower levels," he said. "Students aren't meant to stay on a lower level for more than one year. The same concept works for lower intermediate and intermediate."

However, many students feel that they are pushed too quickly to reach higher levels. "I think there should be a wider variety of classes and teachers on lower levels," said SCW junior Jessica Epstein, who has progressed from elementary to intermediate. "Students should not just be pushed to the next level because the semester is over. The levels I'm being pushed into have girls coming from *Beis Yaakov* and *yeshivas*. It's hard to cram what other people know from *Yeshiva*

into a few semesters."

Schachar agrees with Epstein. "You're supposed to be pushed to take hard classes," she said. "It is an honorable thing, and I really tried hard and gained knowledge from the hard classes that I took. However, there were not enough classes to gain the background knowledge I still needed to excel in the challenging classes I took."

Students who felt that the lower level classes prepared them for advanced levels were mostly those who came from extensive backgrounds. "I knew approximately half of what we were learning," said SCW junior Malka Sadoff of her elementary level Hebrew classes. Sadoff had a Hebrew education from first grade onward. "I felt that elementary prepared me for lower intermediate. The next year [sophomore year] I was able to take a class taught completely in Hebrew."

If a student struggles in the beginning of the course, they should make an effort to speak with their professor or Kanarfogel, said Lidovsky. "The problem is that a lot of students are big on complaining but are not proactive on their own behalf," she said.

Kanarfogel encourages individual students who are struggling to speak to him. He will try to establish a program appropriate for their level and set them up

with tutoring if necessary. "We're not a cookie cutter machine," he said. "Students should feel encouraged to let us know if there having a problem. If students really haven't reached that level, we work with them."

In addition, the Jewish studies department has established study aids for students who are having difficulty in their courses, in response to student requests. Two Hebrew tutors were made available to students who need or want additional help for several hours a week, free of charge. In addition, Kanarfogel is planning a mentoring program for next fall. "We're working on a mentoring course where students have access to a faculty mentor so students can feel very comfortable and we can be as student focused as possible," he said. There are also plans to expand peer tutoring programs.

While the administration is still smoothing over the rough edges of the program, explicit improvements have been made. "It was messy last year, but I think this year has been working far better," said Lidovsky. "We're still getting into the groove of things. I think as we continue it will only get better and better."

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Cardinals Visit Yeshiva



At the initiative of the World Jewish Congress, an international group of Catholic cardinals and monsignors met with leaders and educators from Yeshiva on January 19 on the Wilf Campus. The delegation discussed issues facing both faiths in the hectic conditions that now prevail internationally, and

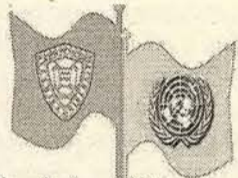
how belief and the practice of faith can best thrive in a scientific, secular arena. The meeting focused on broader universal problems of special interest to both religions. The distinguished Catholic leaders came from Angola, Austria, France, Germany, India, Italy, the US and Canada and included Cardinal Christoph Schonborn from Vienna, Cardinal Jean Marie Lustiger from Paris, and Cardinal Edward Egan from Manhattan.

History Professor Discusses McCarthyism

Ellen Schrecker, history professor at SCW and YC, spoke at a social research conference in Manhattan on February 7 at the New School University's Tishman Auditorium as part of a three-day conference entitled "Fear: Its Political Uses and Abuses." During the conference, Schrecker discussed McCarthyism, political repression and the fear of communism. She focused on the early years of the Cold War and how American policy makers used scare tactics to invoke a fear of communism in order to generate support for U.S. foreign policy. Former Vice President Al Gore opened the conference with a keynote address.

14th YUNMUN Event a Success

Over 100 Yeshiva staff students and more than 400 high school students attended this year's 14th annual Yeshiva University Model United Nations (YUNMUN.) The three day conference held at Kutscher's hotel in upstate New York was a tremendous success. The conference was organized



Yeshiva University
YUNMUN XIV

by Rachel Chudnoff, SCW senior and Secretary General of YUNMUN, along with Undersecretary Generals Arie Staller, Kevin Cyrulnik, and Eli Isak. This year's YUNMUN was formed of 16 mock United Nations committees, each with a Yeshiva student assigned as Chair, Assistant Chair, and Administrative Assistant. The high school participants act as delegates from allocated countries, meeting in a delegation to discuss problems affecting the world. By the end of the three day conference, resolutions have been debated, voted on, and finally passed by the high school delegates. On the last day of YUNMUN, an award ceremony was held for the best delegates.

Rabbi Benjamin Blech Lectures at Annual Seforim Sale



YC professor and author Rabbi Benjamin Blech shared highlights from two of his best-selling books at a lecture for the annual SOY sponsored Seforim Sale

on the Wilf Campus on February 15. His last published book, *Taking Stock: A Spiritual Guide to Rising Above Life's Financial Ups and Downs* was recently reviewed by *The New York Times*. The book sale remains open until February 29. It draws hundreds of students, parents and educators from across the tri-state area. Blech joined the Yeshiva faculty in 1966 after receiving his bachelor of arts degree from YC and his masters of arts degree from Columbia University. He also received ordination from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary.

Nobel Prize Winner Speaks at Yeshiva

Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman spoke at Yeshiva on February 3 in Weissberg Commons on the Wilf Campus. Kahneman is the Eugene Higgins professor of psychology and professor of public affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. He lectured on "Intuition and Bounded Rationality" at Yeshiva's Alexander Brody Distinguished Service Lecture in Economics. Kahneman received the 2002 Nobel Prize in economic sciences for his groundbreaking work in integrating psychological research into economics. He developed an approach to the study of judgment and decision-making, which explores how human judgment may take shortcuts that separate from the basic principles of probability.

Yet Another Town Hall Meeting

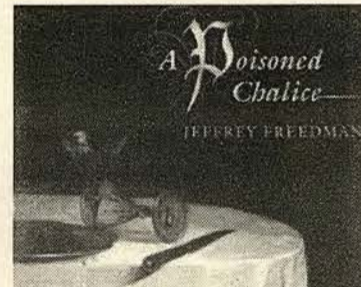
Yeshiva President Richard Joel hosted his second town hall meeting on the Beren Campus in the Levy Lobby on February 4 to discuss his ideas for Graduate Leadership Fellowships and enhanced Israel study. Other issues Joel spoke of were financial support for WYUR, developing a center for Israel studies, the possibility of women using athletic facilities on the Wilf Campus, renovation of Yeshiva biology labs, employee holidays, student government funding and brown bag lunches with Joel. Joel also took a moment to remember YC alumnus Mikey Butler, who recently passed away.



YU Launches Distance Learning for Jewish Day Schools

The Association of Modern Orthodox Day Schools and Yeshiva High Schools (AMODS) and Yeshiva launched Angel, a web-based course management tool with a distance-learning video conferencing component. This will enable students in Jewish day schools around the country to do their class work from home, the library or any other location. The project begins next fall at several schools in AMODS' national network. "Together, these two technologies allow education to break out of its traditional confines of location and time," said Rabbi David Israel, Yeshiva's project director and head of Max Stern Division of Communal Services (MSDCS) that staffs AMODS. "Video conferencing extends the expertise available in one classroom to many venues. Angel goes beyond the classroom to make learning possible for any student, any time, anywhere."

Book Party for Faculty Publications



SCW Dean Karen Bacon hosted the annual book party on December 18th at the Jerome and Geraldine Schottenstein Residence Hall on the Beren Campus. Bacon honored Dr. Zafira Lidovsky Cohen, associate professor of Hebrew, for her publication "Loosen the Fetters of Thy Tongue Woman: The Poetry and Poetics of Yona Wallach," Dr. Jeffrey Freedom, associate professor of history, for "A Poisoned Chalice" and Dr. Jay Ladin, assistant professor of English, for his work "Alternatives to History." From the Jewish Studies department, Rabbi Alter Metzger, professor of Jewish studies, was honored for two works "Chasidic Perspectives: Discourses on the Jewish Holidays by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson" and "The Heroic Struggle: The Arrest and Liberation of Rabbi Yosef Y. Schneerson in Soviet Russia." Finally Dr. David Shatz, professor of philosophy, was also honored for two works, "Philosophy and Faith: A Philosophy of Religion Reader" and "Questions About God: Today's Philosophers Question the Divine."

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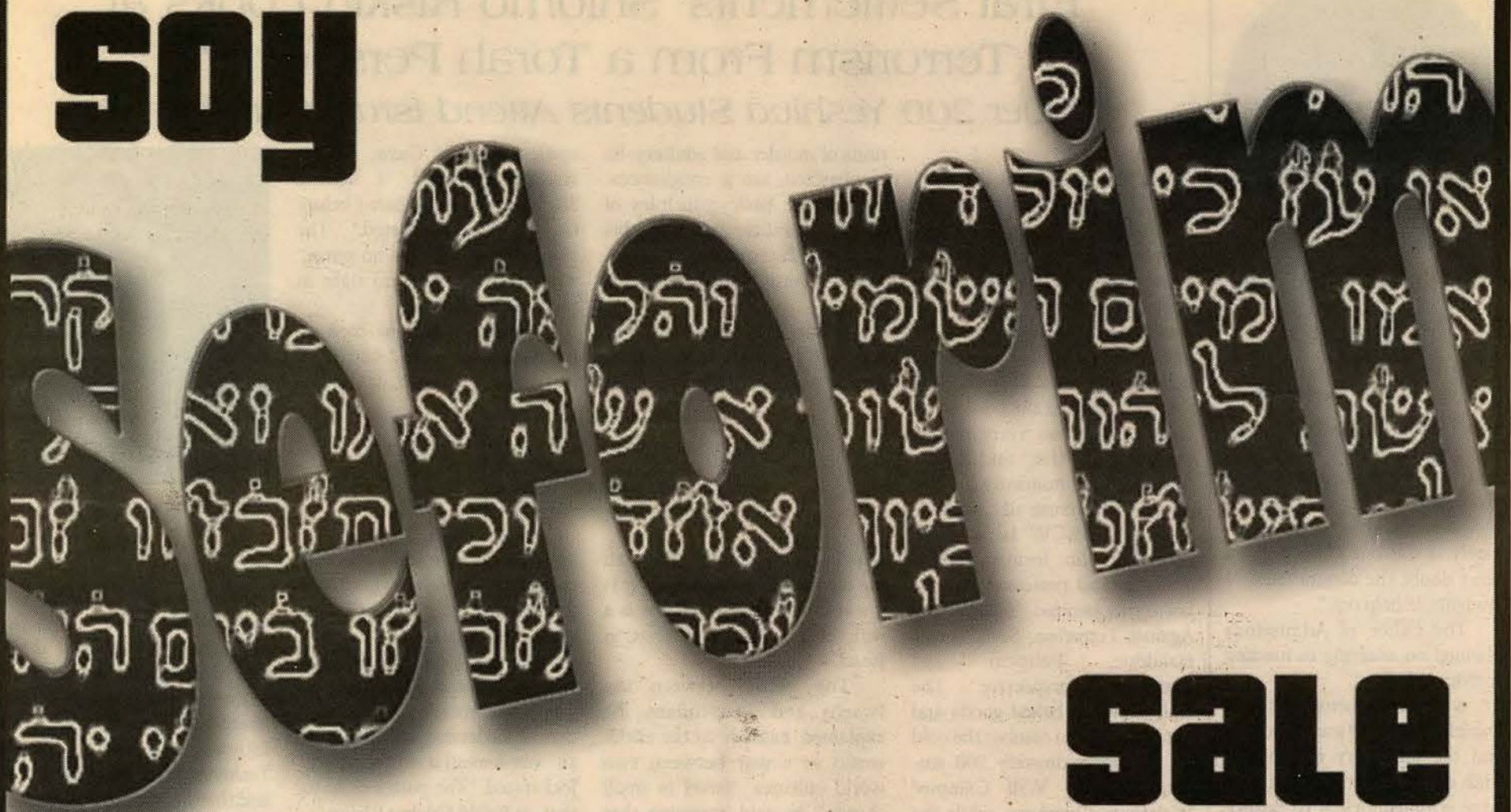
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22 2 pm-10 pm	23 6:30 pm-10 pm	24 6:30 pm-10 pm	25 12 pm-3 pm	26 9:30 am-3:30 pm 6:30 pm-11 pm	27 Closed	28 8 pm-11pm
29 2 pm-10:30 pm						

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Yeshiva Mission Cancelled

Continued from back page

were looking for a more economical way to get to Israel," she said. "A lot went anyway. There was a portion who wanted to go and weren't able to, unfortunately. I was one of them. But I don't doubt the commitment of students to help out."

The Office of Admissions planned on assisting in funding activities that

would have involved the S. Daniel Abraham Israel students and the university did in fact find donors, but these funds were still insufficient to finance the trip.

Despite this mission's failure, Barber believes that students should continue fighting for Yeshiva-organized missions to Israel in the future. "It's definitely possible," she averred. "You have to be very aggressive to find funding. I would encourage [future students] to be more aggressive toward the university. A mission reflects really well on the university. In the past, it reflected well on the university, even though they weren't even involved monetarily."

Students who traveled to Israel independently over vacation, however, were privy to programming organized by Yeshiva student leaders. "There were great events that admissions did help out with," noted Barber. "This showed that Yeshiva University has a commitment to the state of Israel and the people in Israel. That goal was one of the focal points of the mission and it was accomplished."

Efrat Settlements' Shlomo Riskin Looks at Terrorism From a Torah Perspective

Over 200 Yeshiva Students Attend Israel Club Event

By Aviva Balk

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, founder and chief rabbi of Efrat, Israel, announced to Yeshiva students February 4 that understanding what God intended for humanity is a crucial element in fighting terrorism. "If you believe that God created the world, you must believe that every human being must be free," said Riskin. "Our common humanity has the power to overcome all barriers."

The YC/SCW Israel Club invited Riskin, former Yeshiva graduate and professor, to give his lecture entitled, "Israel's War Against Terrorism: Seen from a Halakhic, Political and Theological Perspective." The club provided baked goods and hot chocolate to combat the cold for the approximately 200 students in the Wilf Campus' Weissberg Commons, while the group listened to the details of what he called a "critical mission that has never been more important than it is now."

"We must find a way to teach the world the *Sheva Mitzvot B'nei Noach* [Seven Noahide Laws]," he said. "Everyone doesn't have to be Jewish to have a share in God, but everyone has to keep the *Sheva Mitzvot*." These laws, which include the prohibi-

tions of murder and adultery, he emphasized, are a conglomeration of the basic principles of human morality, and it is this untainted humanity that serves as the major weapon against terrorism.

Riskin also noted that the war in the Middle East is not a matter of land. "[The war] has

settlements in Gaza, Riskin strongly affirmed, "I believe Sharon will be evacuated before Gaza will be evacuated." The plan, he said, "makes no sense," as it would leave Gaza right in the hands of Hamas.

"I thought that he took an interesting approach," said SCW junior Elie Appleson, of the lec-

"Our common humanity has the power to overcome all barriers."

absolutely nothing to do with the territories," he affirmed. "It is a war for our right to be. It is a war for the future of Jews in Israel."

The battle between the Israelis and Palestinians, he explained, extends to the entire world as a war between two world cultures. "Israel is small change," he said, stressing that America poses a bigger threat to the fundamentalist Islam of Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. "Yes, we're fighting for Israel, but we're fighting for the entire free world."

After the speech, Riskin answered questions from the student audience. In light of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's recent announcement to dismantle virtually all Jewish

territory. "What he told us was very crucial for us to hear, mostly so that we can try to implement these ideas into society."

Yeshiva President Richard Joel introduced Riskin as his friend and mentor. "My definition of leadership is vision, plus an implementation strategy," Joel stated. "The poster child for that...is Rabbi Shlomo Riskin."

Riskin praised Joel accordingly, noting that "the most important quality [he] has is the genuine understanding that a university exists first and foremost for the students."

Riskin graduated as valedictorian, *summa cum laude*, from YC in 1960, where he majored in Greek, Latin and English literature. Three years later he received his rabbinic ordination



Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, above, addressed over 200 Yeshiva students

from Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, his teacher and mentor. He holds a master's degree in Jewish history, as well as a doctorate from New York University's department of Near Eastern Languages and Literature. Riskin joined Yeshiva's staff first as lecturer and then as associate professor of Bible and Talmud from 1963 to 1977. Of his years at Yeshiva, Riskin remarked that he considers them "the most important years of his life in terms of intellectual and religious development."

He also served as the rabbi of the Lincoln Square Synagogue before moving to Israel and developing the settlement of Efrat, part of the Gush Etzion bloc.

Joel Plans for Israel's Future at Yeshiva

Continued from front page

Rabbi Moshe Tendler delivered a speech on the synthetically engineered *Techeylet* while the students were treated to dinner.

These supplemental activities are examples of what Joel envisions for an expanded Joint Israel Program. The president called for more Yeshiva involvement with the students studying in Israel, providing them with weekend retreats and special lectures to make Yeshiva, Torah Umadda and Zionism an intensive aspect of their Israel experience. Joel met with leaders of the Israel schools to hear their needs, discuss more rigorous standards and bridge the gap that exists between Yeshiva and Israel. "The feeling is that which ever school they go to, they can all know that they are students of Yeshiva University," said Bacon.

However, it is not only in regard to programming that Joel has expressed the need for improvement. He has also mentioned a review of standards required to allow an institution to become part of the Israel Program. "There should be a mechanism to evaluate them," said Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel, chairman of the Rebecca Ivry Department of Jewish Studies at SCW and also the chairman of the Israel committee responsible for reviewing the standards and

requirements from participating Israel Program institutions. "For most schools it wouldn't probably be a burden," However, Joel made clear at the Town Hall meeting that ultimately, some schools who are not willing to comply with the Yeshiva requirements will ultimately find themselves removed from the Israel program list. "I think that over time there will be a review," said Joel. "Not a revolution but an evolution."

In addition to the Israel Program, Joel visited Israeli universities such as Bar-Ilan and Hebrew Universities and met with prominent leaders. He spent a day with the president of Bar-Ilan University, Moshe Kaveh and his staff, meeting with academic administrators and touring the facilities. "They want to have a closer relationship with YU," explained Joel, citing the royal treatment he received as a visitor. "Because they recognize the new administration, the caliber of the faculty and student body, and want to join...they're reaching out to us because YU is an added value partner." Joel also met with the president of Hebrew University and dined with the American ambassador to Israel, Daniel Kurtzer.

This connection with Israeli educational institutions presents the opportunity for future aca-

demical collaboration and the joining of forces for various initiatives. Joel commented that Yeshiva officials are currently in discussion with Bar-Ilan, as the two universities, although different in many respects, serve complementary roles in the Torah Umadda philosophy.

To ensure a strong focus on Israel, Joel also proposed establishment of an "Israel Center," or "Center for Israel Affairs," at Yeshiva. Although still in its developmental stages, the center is slated to serve as "a place of conversation about Israel."

Some have suggested a center for activism, while others, a center for academic initiatives, according to Joel. "You have packages of initiatives of equal value," said Joel. However, he has expressed his concern over the dearth of Israel studies classes available to Yeshiva students, both undergraduate and even on the graduate level. "I have never heard of someone saying they want to come to Stern to learn about Israel," said Joel. "There could be a shaped major in Israel Studies."

The entire notion of Israel Studies as a separate academic sphere from Middle Eastern Studies is relatively new. In fact, only one other college in the country, Brandeis, has decided to initiate such a program. "More

and more Middle Eastern Studies departments are becoming hotbeds of Palestinian propaganda," said SCW and BRGS professor of Holocaust and Eastern European History, Joshua Zimmerman. "World Jewry now feels on the defensive...the history of the State of Israel has been so distorted in the past three years since the Intifada, a more equitable presentation has to be presented." Bacon agrees with Zimmerman's assessment and hopes that SCW will ultimately take up the banner in providing students with courses that can educate them. "It is, to me, an absolute necessity," said Bacon of Israel Studies. "As there are fewer voices that are independent it is imperative for us to take a role."

Faculty at Yeshiva have already begun researching and compiling numerous curriculum offerings on Israeli topics. They hope to offer courses on Israeli history and politics as early as next fall. The Sy Syms School of Business has already initiated a course this spring semester on business dealings with Israel, and all schools seek to enrich their Israel academic options. Joel also mentioned the option of attaining working internships in Israel, and encouraging students to seek such positions.

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Yeshiva Students Gather in Israel

Continued from back page

when wounded, also attended the center. They returned to the facility to perform for its current patients. Yeshiva students were able to visit the injured patients and their families, inquiring about their unfortunate experiences, talking about their lives, or dancing with them.

The day concluded with an intimate meeting with President Richard Joel at the Sheraton Plaza Hotel, where he stressed a need to keep the "YU family" together. "Somehow, along the way, we don't stay close," Joel said.

The Chevron trip was one that, according to students, brought that family close together. "I think that more than going by ourselves, it was really important to go as members of the YU community," remarked SCW senior and the Treasurer of the TAC Ariella Marcus. "We went in as a powerhouse—as a team."

"I have never in my life felt more proud to be a part of YU," said Poupko in agreement with Marcus. "I think YU is the only institution that can make a trip like this possible. We all felt like we were on a mission."

That spirit continued on that Saturday evening, January 17, with a concert co-sponsored by Yeshiva and *The Jerusalem Post* in Jerusalem's Great Synagogue to raise money for One Family Fund. Schachter spotted Chairman of One Family Fund Marc Belzberg just a week before and suggested they hold a concert as a fundraiser.

"When Yummy called me from Israel five days before the

concert, I asked how it would be possible to arrange it on such short notice," remarked Rechnitz, who was in charge of ticket sales. "He said, 'Don't worry.' Of course, we had a concert five days later."

In the short time between the conception of the concert and its taking place, posters were hung in every major public area in Jerusalem advertising the event.

About 1,600 people attended the "All Together Now Concert," created by Yeshiva student leaders and Belzberg, hosting bands such as Blue Fringe, Oyf Simches and singer Yehuda Glantz. Only 600 attendees were expected.

"It was an unbelievable experience...full of excitement when Blue Fringe hit the stage," Rechnitz said. "You felt intensity...everyone was clapping and screaming."

Belzberg thanked Yeshiva and Schachter for arranging the concert that turned into such a pleasantly surprising success.

There was an overall sense of support among the students for the Israeli community. Hochberg commented during the trip what an inspiration it was for Chevron residents to see members of the Yeshiva community walking through their city and experiencing their lifestyle. The concert raised \$20,000 for families of terror victims.

A Message From Your Israel Club President



Hindy Poupko

Over Winter Intersession, myself, along with ninety other YC/SCW students gathered together on a day like any other and embarked on what turned out to be one of the most meaningful experiences of my life.

In an array of long black skirts, the proverbial blue button down GAP shirt, and a variety of hooded sweatshirts, the men and women of Yeshiva gathered in the lobby of the Inbal Hotel in Jerusalem at 7:45 am.

The destination was Chevron, but for some reason the events of the day seemed to be a total mystery; my mind kept skipping to what I thought would be the pictured scenes at the day's end, but to no avail. The plans were set, the program outlined, but the day's outcome was a total fog.

We all assured our parents and loved ones that Chevron was safe, and that we'd only stop at Kever Rachel for a few brief moments. Yet, as I got on the bus, it was obvious that the words "safety" and "security" were the farthest thoughts from anyone's mind.

It was the classic pre-tiyul (tour) bus ride: *tefilat haderech* (prayer for safe travel) followed by some singing, but our *kumzitz*

(singing session) was interrupted as we approached *Maarat Hamachpela* (Tomb of the Patriarchs). As we descended the bus and began climbing the steps in the rain, I felt as if I was part of something spectacular, like we were all part of a great dream. It's hard to express the feelings that were racing through my heart as the voices of my peers echoed a hollow, but deep sound throughout the cave of our forefathers. The sounds of the prayers grew louder and stronger and my ears were ringing with the phrase: "Mi Kiamcha Yisroel (Who is like the nation Israel)?"

It was almost strange to sit down and eat after such a moment, but consumed with hunger, my mind was soon fixated on the Israeli style breakfast that the people of Chevron had provided for us. We were then greeted by different leaders of the Chevron community. Ironically, they all thanked us for coming, while they are the ones who make it possible for us even to visit. The leader of the tour, Rabbi Simcha Hochbaum, graduated from Yeshiva. It was so beautiful to watch his face beam with joy as he led students of his alma mater through the streets of his hometown, Chevron.

And there I was, marching proudly, unified with my peers as we toured the holy city. The greatest gems of the Jewish people filled the synagogues and *kollels* (places of study). As we walked, we chanted, "Vi'shavu Banim Li'gyulam... (And the children will return to their borders)."

In a small trailer packed

with fourteen children, a father humbly spoke of the miracles that took place in his home. Bullet holes lined the kitchen walls and windows, a constant reminder of their neighbors who relentlessly seek to bring an end to their existence. The trailer glowed with rays of strength and courage, much like the family inside.

As we returned to the bus and continued to ride down the rain drenched streets, a twenty-one year old soldier joined our group and told us his story. He too was a student of Yeshiva, yet he chose to leave his life in America and fight for our homeland, Israel. His inspiring words brought tears to many.

While we left the city in the same bus that took us there with the same people, something was incredibly different. It was obvious that this experience had moved us all in significant ways. I felt a certain pride that I had never felt before. I was proud to be part of this great institution that motivates and inspires its students far beyond the classroom. Our presence there that day meant something to the people of Chevron, but more importantly, it meant something to each of us.

We all knew that the experience we shared that day would stay with us for a lifetime, and that our roles as students of Yeshiva University had evolved far beyond what we could have ever imagined. We left Chevron crowned with glory and with a new sense of our duties back home.

Yeshiva Goes to The Hague to Support Israel

Continued from front page

and Europe getting together to protest at The Hague," said Wildman. "I thought we should really be there to support them." Karasik ran the idea by student leaders YSU President Yummy Shachter and SCWSC President Anat Barber, who immediately embraced the idea and initiated plans to coordinate the trip. "It's important for us to show that we stand behind Israel, and we won't stand silently by while they're putting our country on trial," said Barber. "We would be remiss if we didn't take action when we have the chance, especially when we can have an effect on the Jewish people."

The Jerusalem based World Union of Jewish Students (WUJS), which represents hundreds of thousands of Jewish students worldwide, planned the silent march, according to the Jewish Telegraph Agency (JTA). With the addition of the 100 Yeshiva students, over one thousand students worldwide will be protesting in support of Israel. "They can't ignore that," said Wildman.

A mad rush then ensued to obtain funding for the trip titled,



The ICJ, above, is the official judicial body of the United Nations

Mission Hague. Dr. Joseph Frager, president of the American Committee for the Preservation of the Land and the People of Israel (ACPLPI) - who was largely responsible for helping secure funding for both Operation Torah Shield Missions to Israel - obtained nearly half the necessary funds from the founder of the ACPLPI, Susan Ross. Vice President for University Affairs Herbert Dubrinsky was responsible for securing the rest of the \$50,000 that was needed to cover costs through a slew of private donations. Each student must pay only \$100 to participate.

Along with Dubrinsky, President Richard Joel, Vice President for University Life Hillel Davis, Vice President for

Business Affairs Sheldon Socol and Deputy to the President Ed Fox have been assisting student leaders, virtually round-the-clock to ensure the success of the trip, according to Schachter. "The school, really from [President] Richard Joel down, turned the world over to make sure this would happen," said Schachter. "I think this just shows that when it comes to Israel and making the student body happy, this administration will stop at nothing."

On Monday evening, February 16, Schachter received word that the funding had come through and plans for the mission could proceed. However, problems arose when, like many Jewish organizations around the globe, Yeshiva realized that the

State of Israel was not recognizing the proceedings and is not actively encouraging any Jews to travel to The Hague. This is due to concern that such protests will grant validity to the ICJ's decisions. The Yeshiva administration waited overnight for a response from the Israeli government. "The only reason the school was waiting is because Israel is being very vague about its stance," said Schachter.

Ultimately, Israel neither condoned nor condemned the decision of Jewish groups to protest at The Hague. The Yeshiva administration proceeded full-force with the mission, despite the ambiguous response. "We feel that although, Israel and the United States are not recognizing the court, as they shouldn't, this is being done primarily as a publicity stunt," said Hindy Poupko, president of the Israel Club. "If it's a publicity stunt, we need to fight back with publicity. We can't pretend that this isn't happening and that millions of people won't be hearing about this event. We have to make sure that all those who staunchly support Israel are heard."

Finally, on Wednesday,

February 18, e-mails were sent to the entire student body informing them of the mission. Barber and Schachter appointed a third party, YC senior Gavri Butler, to sift through over 200 applications to determine who to accept for the mission. Butler made his final decisions on Wednesday night and a few hours later contacted students. Meetings were set up on both campuses to go over last minute details.

The students will be arriving in Amsterdam on Monday morning. From there, they will travel directly to a silent protest. In New York a simultaneous protest will occur, at the United Nations in front of the Isaiah Wall, protesting against the ICJ and the UN. Busses will be available from both campuses to transport students to that protest.

After the trip to The Hague, Yeshiva mission participants will travel back to Amsterdam to meet with the Chief Rabbi L.H. Sarlovis to organize an event with Holland's Jewish community. "Part of this trip is to give *chizuk* (strength) to the Jews of Holland who feel besieged by all this," said Poupko.

Bio Department Takes On New Staff

By Shevie Moskowitz

SCW is welcoming two new adjunct assistants, Dr. Mark Frankel, Dr. Zev Williams and Dr. Paul Good to its Biology Department. Both Frankel and Williams are currently enrolled in Mount Sinai School of Medicine's joint program, Medical Science Training Program (MSTP), or MD-PhD, which offers a doctoral-medical degree. Both have completed the requirements for their doctoral degrees and are now completing their last semester of medical school there. Dr. Good is an assistant professor in the department of pathology at Mount Sinai.

They will serve as "incredible role models," according to Chairman of the Biology Department Dr. Harvey Babich, since many students wish to pursue careers in medicine, nursing, and other medical professions.

These professors are expected to provide guidance and information in research. Additionally, their contacts at Mount Sinai, a prestigious Medical School in the heart of Manhattan, will undoubtedly prove invaluable for students looking toward careers in medicine.

Zev Williams (YC '96) defended his doctoral thesis in 2002 and is now completing the medical school segment of his education, finding time to escape from clinical rotations on Mondays and Wednesdays to teach at the Beren Campus.

Williams is teaching Molecular Biology, which, in his opinion, has always been a "fun field." "Molecular Biologists can spend time figuring out how life works at a very fundamental level, playing with molecules and very quickly being able to test their hypotheses," he said.

Williams enjoys teaching at SCW immensely and considers himself lucky to have a bright and active class in which the students ask challenging questions, and never fail to keep him on his toes.

Despite his short tenure, his students have already expressed their satisfaction with the new course. "Molecular Biology Labs provide me with great hands-on experience, and really help me understand and apply what we learn with Dr. Williams in lecture," said Tamar Kreiger, an SCW junior.

While the medical school curriculum at Mount Sinai, like any other school of medicine, is challenging and exigent, Williams feels attending a school like Yeshiva, with its rigorous undergraduate dual curriculum, helped prepare him for the academic demands he faced throughout his medical training. "The hardest part of medical school is training your brain to get used to retain[ing] lots of information very quickly." Williams described his experience at Mount Sinai as being unique in that there is "a genuine warmth and friendship among students and faculty." An added bonus is that the lab structure affords students the opportunity to work closely with their mentors.

His most recent publication is titled "Secretion and Assembly of Zona Pellucida Glycoproteins by Growing Mouse Oocytes Microinjected with Epitope-tagged cDNAs for mZP2 and mZP3," and was published in *Molecular Biology of the Cell* in 2003. The article discusses expression, composition, and various functions of the extracellular coat surrounding mammalian eggs which plays a key role during oogenesis, or development of the female egg, fertilization, and embryo genesis, development of an embryo. Williams has also published various articles regarding related topics in other Scientific Journals, including *Nature Cell Biology*, *Biochemistry* and *Biochemical and Biophysical Research Communications*.

Dr. Mark Frankel, a graduate of Brooklyn College, completed his doctorate three years ago in biochemistry. Specifically, he studied the relationships between the structure and func-

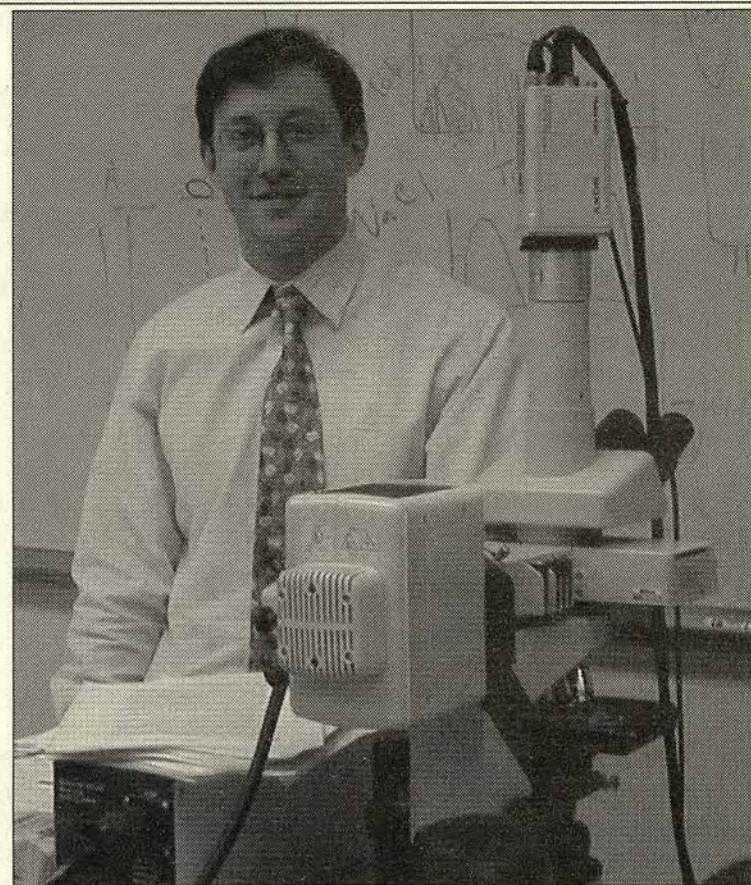
tion of insulin receptors and is now completing his final clinical rotations and applying to residency programs.

Frankel is teaching Essentials of Biology II, or Biology for Non-Majors. He describes his experience so far as having been "a lot of fun." The students seem to be "very engaged with the material," and are attempting to "understand what can be a very difficult subject."

His arrival at SCW has been well-received by his students. "Although I am not majoring in Biology, I feel that this subject is really enriching, as it is helping me see Hashem's world in a whole new light," stated Mickey Blechner, an SCW sophomore.

This is no surprise, since Frankel was taught with a unique methodology at Mount Sinai. It departed from traditional science education in that it not only focused on the scientific aspect of medicine, but on humanistic aspects as well. Humanistic or values-based medicine is something that Mount Sinai emphasizes while educating its students. The values of humanistic medicine include emphasis on treating patients with compassion. Frankel was taught to see a patient as an individual.

Frankel, like Williams, has authored numerous articles in various scientific journals. His most recent publication, titled "Multiple Activation Loop Conformations and their Regulatory Properties in the Insulin Receptor's Kinase Domain," was published in December 2001 in the *Journal of Biological Chemistry*. This article discusses one way in which cells can be inhibited from performing their functions - conformational changes are induced by means of enzymes known as protein kinases. This form of cellular inhibition is known as intrasteric inhibition and is observed in some of the proteins that make up the insulin molecule. Frankel has also published articles in the journals *Molecular and Cell Biology*



Zev Williams, above, has joined the SCW Biology Department

and *Protein Science*.

Good, who is teaching Honors Neurobiology this semester at SCW, received his undergraduate education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He subsequently attended the Mount Sinai Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, where he received his doctorate. Good has been teaching at Mount Sinai since graduate school. Aside from neuroscience, he has studied the subject of teaching intensely. Specifically, he focused educational theory and is currently attempting to apply what he learned.

Good, who works as a neuroscientist, has been fascinated with the brain since his childhood. He is currently investigating changes in Semaphorin signaling in Alzheimer's disease. Semaphorins are a group of proteins that play a role in the regulation of the actions of neurons within the brain.

Good's most recent publication, "TorsinA immunoreactivity in inclusion bodies in trinucleotide repeat diseases," published in *Movement Disorders*, discusses torsinA, a protein whose function, normal or abnormal, is still unknown, and the role that

it may possibly play in degrading other essential proteins, leading to neurological disorders such as Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease, and spinocerebellar ataxia type III (otherwise known as Machado-Joseph Disease, a rare, debilitating disorder of the central nervous system that is characterized by degeneration of a particular area of the brain called the hindbrain). He has published dozens of other scientific articles in many journals, including *The American Journal of Pathology*, *Brain Research*, *Journal of Chemical Neuroanatomy*, and *The Journal of Laboratory and Clinical Medicine*.

SCW administrators are enthused by and supportive of the faculty expansion. "It is exciting to broaden the offerings and to add new voices to an already strong department," said Dean Ethel Orlean. "It indicates growth and increasing student interest in the biological sciences." SCW is truly fortunate to welcome these individuals to their already highly impressive staff.



Students learn about Science as they tie-dye

Colorful Science Lessons: Biology and Chemistry Clubs Host Tie-Dyeing Event

By Shevie Moskowitz

Learning about how the dyes function and the various biochemical processes involved in tie-dyeing apparently did not spoil the fun at the SCW Biology and Chemistry Club function on Wednesday night, January 21. "It was a blast," said SCW senior Yael Gamms, head of the Chemistry Club and herself a biology major. SCW junior and chemistry major Michelle Faber agreed, stating that "the event really brought chemistry to life."

After President of the Biology Club Deena Weissman, SCW junior, provided those in atten-

dance with a short introduction into the biochemical mechanism of the dyes, the sixty-plus students in attendance grabbed their white t-shirts, towels or socks, provided by the Biology and Chemistry Clubs, and dove right in.

Faber noted that the number of non-science majors in attendance was quite impressive and how hopefully this activity, and others like it, will help bring science out of the classrooms and labs, helping students realize that "science really is fun."

Science, she said, encompasses far more than mere atoms, molecules and cells, and while studying the structure of a mole-

cule in a textbook might be boring for many individuals, learning about it outside of the classroom—in the context of various colors of dyes and how they attach to the cellulose fibers of a T-shirt, thereby creating a work of art, is not just exciting, according to Faber. "It is chemistry coming to life," she said.

The Biology and Chemistry clubs have many more exciting events planned for this coming semester, including a magic show, SURGE club meetings, and a career fair.

AECOM Professor Writes Healthcare Guide

By Reina Roth

This past December, Dr. Joseph Sacco, assistant professor of family and social medicine at Albert Einstein College of Medicine (AECOM), wrote and published a guide book for patients and their family members, providing them with general hospital knowledge that layman may not know. *Health Smart Hospital Handbook* was written to teach people who are hospitalized how to advocate for themselves.

Sacco wrote this book after his own personal experience when his mother was hospitalized for cardiac problems. "If I, a specialist in the care of hospitalized patients, was feeling adrift, I imagined that others less informed must feel completely lost," he said. "So I decided to put all the useful information on the entire hospital experience, from the fifteen-hour wait in the emergency room to delivery by wheelchair outside the main

entrance for the drive home, down on paper."

The book aims at improving patient outcomes and preventing mistakes. Its other goal is to reinvent the hospital image and disassociate hospitals with the stigma that has recently developed. People are predisposed to be suspicious of their care. The premise of the book is to explain that, although no one wants to be in the hospital, it is the way to recovery, and working together with the hospital staff will expedite that goal. "My aim in writing the book is to help people avoid hospital complications and get the full benefit from their hospital experience while also providing useful information on how to work with their doctor, hospital professionals and the entire health care system with good results," noted Sacco. "Help healthcare help you."

The book is a goldmine of information from Sacco's twenty years' medical experience. In it, he has accumulated knowledge about doctors, nurses, medica-

tions, operating rooms, x-rays and blood tests. The reader will become familiar with all the details associated with being in the hospital.

It discusses the external stresses that come into play when one is admitted into the hospital. Between insurance, medical error, waiting rooms, and the nursing shortage, the tension of the environment can play a vital role in a patient's recovery. "People have to realize these stresses also affect the hospital, it is not that they want to have these problems but they can not avoid them," the doctor explained.

The book approaches all topics in a general manner. It explains general medical terminology, and advises patients and relatives to ask questions when information is unclear. At the end of each chapter, Sacco includes good questions and suggestions for the doctor concerning the particular subject of that chapter.

The chapter on pain manage-



HOSPITAL HANDBOOK

Get In,
Get Well,
Go Home

Joseph Sacco, M.D.

ment is specifically of interest to the author since he is very much involved in the field. Sacco is an activist for pain management. In the chapter, he addresses the myths of opioids, the reality of these drugs and the options a patient may have. "There are many misconceptions that patients have when it comes to pain medication," said Sacco. He feels it is his responsibility to clarify the information so that people can utilize the resources available to them.

Joel Guest of Honor at Einstein Gala

President Richard Joel was the guest of honor at Albert Einstein College of Medicine's Palm Beach Gala on February 15th at The Kravis Center for the Performing Arts in West Palm Beach, Florida. Since his tenure began, Joel has frequently discussed the importance of science and medicine at Einstein, especially in his inaugural speech in which he emphasized the value of research in genetics, cardiology, cancer, Alzheimer's, diabetes, and other diseases. Central to Joel's vision is the ability of Yeshiva's graduate and undergraduate institutions to ensure that learning and knowledge advance society ethically and intellectually as well as professionally.

While in No Way Restful, Dr. Babich Finds Sabbatical Rejuvenating

By Shevie Moskowitz

Although it is common for professors to take a sabbatical from their teaching career, Dr. Harvey Babich's attitude toward his sabbatical is rather uncommon. For Babich, chairman of the biology department at SCW, a sabbatical from teaching is not a break from learning or scientific advancement. But it is a year of renewal, similar to the Biblical agricultural sabbatical. Like *shmitah*, it is designed to be a peri-

od of rejuvenation, yet is in no way, shape or form meant to be a time of rest, and is definitely "not a paid vacation," he asserted.

Research and course enhancement are his primary objectives during his teaching hiatus this semester. In his research, he is continuing a project on evaluating the differential responses of normal and malignant cells to components of Green Tea. Two undergraduate students, SCW juniors Malka Krupka, and Helen Nissim are also involved in this study. They

are currently being taught the basics of *in vitro* toxicology. "We will be getting used to the basics of working in a lab," said Krupka. Afterward, they will be expected to jump into the research effort, a task which the students are eagerly anticipating.

Regarding course enhancement, Babich is working on upgrading his lectures on DNA and will be evaluating new laboratory exercises, probably in genotoxicology, to be incorporated into the laboratory portion of genetics. Students planning on

taking his courses next year can look forward to improved laboratory exercises and lectures that are far more stimulating.

As his research is being conducted at SCW, Babich is still available to advise students. In particular, he would like to encourage students to apply for summer research internships and is hopeful that the university will again, as last year, provide in-house funds to support student summer research.



Dr. Harvey Babich

SCW Biotechnology Class Hosts High School Students

By Shevie Moskowitz

Dr. Brenda Lowey's biotechnology class hosted 19 juniors and seniors from the Samuel H. Wang Yeshiva University High School for Girls (SWHSG) in the Sussman Lab for one of their sessions on December 18, 2003. All the visiting students were interested in majoring in biology and possibly pursuing careers in the biomedical sciences.

The students were accompanied by Ruth Fried, SCW '85, who majored in biology and pre-health. She is the chair of the science department at SWHSG and teaches AP biology and regents-level freshman biology.

According to Fried, the experience positively impacted all the young women who attended.

For most students in their junior year, it was their first visit to a biotechnology lab, since many of the biotechnology experiments done in the AP classes at SWHSG are not performed until later in the junior

year. According to Lowey, this trip was the students' first exposure to a state of the art laboratory. Having the opportunity to perform an experiment in the Sussman Lab "gave these girls a feel for what a college laboratory is like," said Lowey.

Dr. Harvey Babich spoke to the students specifically about opportunities available in the biology department and uniqueness of Yeshiva's undergraduate colleges in general. At Yeshiva, one of the nation's top research universities, not only can one obtain an impressive education in the sciences, but the school is unique in that instruction is offered within the confines of a Torah institution, he said. He described how what one learns in her science courses supplements and indeed enhances the Torah learning offered at SCW.

According to the participating SCW students, the program was enjoyable from both perspectives. "It was so nice to spend time with students from Yeshiva's affiliated girls' high school," stated senior Pegah

Rabizadeh. "I hope they enjoyed their experience at Stern and will consider [it] as an option when choosing a university." Lowey also felt that the event positively impacted the SCW students enrolled in her class, as it afforded them the opportunity to explain themselves in a clear and professional manner.

Dean Karen Bacon expressed her satisfaction with the outcome of the event. "For some time, Stern College has been building its position as a leader in undergraduate science education for women," she said. "As part of this goal, we seek to encourage more young women to consider careers as scientists. Since many career decisions are made already in high school, we want these young women to see first hand what we have to offer here at Stern."

Over time, the department hopes to invite more students and schools to spend time as visitors in the Beren campus' labs.

State-of-The-Art Equipment Debuts at SCW Molecular Labs

By Shevie Moskowitz

Students in the SCW molecular biology labs are constantly working with, manipulating and studying basic components of the cell: DNA, RNA and various proteins. The Biology department has been persistent in its request for the most up-to-date and necessary equipment.

With the assistance of their new adjunct Assistant Professor of Biology Dr. Zev Williams, SCW has ordered new laboratory equipment. The equipment should arrive in time to be used during the second half of the course.

The apparatuses will allow students to perform very sensitive analyses of individual proteins and complex protein mixtures by carrying out gel electrophoresis of proteins.

Whether the students continue with careers in medicine, research or just want a deeper understanding of molecular biology, experience with protein gel

electrophoresis using the new equipment will certainly "prove invaluable to them," according to Williams.

"The Sussman laboratory was built to be a state-of-the-art teaching facility in the Biology Department," Dr. Harvey Babich, Head of the Department of Biology. "Thus, and we are most pleased that Dr. Williams has further upgraded our equipment, so that this laboratory remains in the forefront of biotechnology, as a key teaching facility."

The students' feelings regarding Williams's recent work seem to echo Babich's words. Tamar Kreiger, an SCW junior and Biology major, stated, "Although we have not yet reaped the benefit of this new equipment, we are looking forward to this new experience."

SPORTS



By Dodi-Lee Hecht

The Lady Macs had their annual game against the Baruch College Bearcats on Monday, January 26 at Baruch. It was a difficult game which the Lady Macs fought to overcome. Although the Lady Macs were the first to score, the Bearcats succeeded in capturing an early lead which they maintained throughout the rest of the game. It was a game that meant a little bit more than it should have to the SCW fans of their team because it was perhaps the only game most fans would see all season.

The defeat was not pretty. In the final minutes of the game the various Lady Mac players missed a total of five shots. However, this loss still leaves the Lady Macs with an impressive mid-season record, eight wins and four losses, a record that is

unbeaten by any other athletic team at Yeshiva. And the Lady Macs still have another month of games to improve their record.

Still, for those friends and fans of the Lady Macs who cannot make the trip to Queens to see the home games, this single game was the season. This includes Lea Almo who has two cousins on the team. Almo commented that this Bearcats game was the only one she's gone to so far this season and it was the only game she went to last season. When asked if she would go to more home games if transportation were provided by SCW, Almo responded, "Definitely, the girls need support from their fellow students and friends."

Most SCW students at the Bearcats game agreed with Almo's sentiments that the team deserves to have fans and the fans deserve transportation to the home games. Amanda Miller, a friend of Almo and her cousins added that the YC Macs fans have easy access to the home court. "It should just be equal," asserted Miller, "The girls are an equal part of the school and should be treated as such."

Lisa Fever, another SCW

student at the Bearcats game, suggested that "they should have [the Lady Macs home games] at Yeshiva [i.e. the Max Stern Athletic Center] to bring more school spirit." Adena Rohatiner, who played on the Lady Macs last season, noted that the absence of fans at home games has a very negative effect on the players. "It doesn't motivate us to play," Rohatiner explained.

The possibility of sharing a home court with the Macs is not an option for the Lady Macs for various reasons, including the highly likely schedule conflicts which would arise.

Nevertheless, the fans are not being ignored as much as it may seem. Coach Karen Green, when asked about the possibility of transportation for the fans, elucidated "We used to have a bus and only two people would come. If interest is there we'll have as many buses as needed." Green recognizes the importance of fans for her players and felt that, even though they lost, "We outnumbered the fans [of the home team.] It gave us some momentum at an away game."

Jessica Epstein, the team's starting forward Monday night, anticipates that this game is only



the beginning for a strengthened relationship between the players and their fans. "Now hopefully, people will realize that Stern has a team and people will come out and see us." Shayna Greenwald, the team's point guard and the only player on either team to remain on the court for the entire forty minutes of game time, made it quite clear that the fans are an integral part of the game for her and her teammates. "We are so appreciative of the fans," affirmed Greenwald, "and hope

that they can continue to come out and support us because their cheers make a big difference."

Greenwald had a team high in points (12), assists (4) and steals (6). Epstein had six points and grabbed four rebounds. Debbie Ginsberg, the starting center for the Lady Macs Monday night, grabbed a team high eight rebounds. Ginsberg also blocked a game high two shots.

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Annual Arts Festival: It's Time To Get the Audience Involved

By Dodi-Lee Hecht

The Annual Yeshiva Arts Festival has once again graced the Wilf and Beren campuses. This two-week odyssey through the arts allows SCW and YC undergraduates to feel a passion for visual, performance or verbal art and form the beginnings of a bond with those who share their devotion. However, those who attend these events as spectators wish there was a way to know which events featured their friends and colleagues. Rachel Reinstein, an SCW student, commented that, "I felt the festival was very well advertised; however, it would have been nice

to know who was performing at each event." The Arts Festival is one of the only opportunities for these artists to display their work and enjoy the work of their peers in an informal and communal setting, yet it seems that the fostering of such a community should not exclude those who come to appreciate but not, necessarily, to contribute.

Similarly, among the artists themselves there seems to be a lack of communication prior to the events. Elisheva Shulman, an SCW senior who performed at the Kol Shira event on February 18th, remarked that "I discovered there was talent everywhere...but there was not enough publicity or organization." Shulman noted

that there were performers throughout the night who seemed to need pairing up, i.e. there were vocal artists without musical accompaniment and musicians without vocal accompaniment. Shulman felt that this lack of effort to complete each ensemble showed that the event was not taken as seriously as it could be.

Of the nine events in the festival, Kol Shira is the only non-co-ed event. Despite this restriction, this women-only musical night boasted one of the largest turnouts of the festival (as of the printing of this article), with approximately one hundred SCW students in attendance. It also introduced students to the

SCW choir. Pesia Soloveichik, an SCW student attending of the event, noted, "I really enjoyed listening to the choir and I think it would be nice if we got to hear them more often."

Still, as the only non-co-ed event, Kol Shira must attempt to encompass as many of the arts which women would feel uncomfortable or halakhically negligent in performing before a mixed crowd and, invariably, there are overlooked forms of expression. Hadassah Carr, an SCW student, felt that dancers were the ignored subgroup of artists. "We have many gifted dancers in our school," averred Carr, "And it was a shame that they weren't involved in this

event."

The other events in the festival are mixed and distributed over both campuses. Of the nine events scheduled to take place during the festival, five of them will take place on the Wilf campus including the opening night concert on February 12th and the closing night jazz show on February 25th. The remaining four events, including Kol Shira will take place in various locations across the Beren campus.

In the second week of the festival, the Beren campus will host the Drama Night on February 22 and the Poetry Reading on February 23.

HOW TO GET INTO THE MIND OF AN OUT OF TOWNER

By Marisa D. Parker

Disclaimer: The premise of this article will employ stereotypes and generalizations for the purpose of getting a point across. There are exceptions to every rule. There are New Yorkers who could be mistaken for out-of-towner's and visa versa.

Today, like many days, I found myself wondering what every out-of-towner often ponders: Why is it that residents of the tri-state area full heartedly believe that New York is the center of the universe? This is a thought provoking question indeed.

The more I thought about it, the more the realization dawned that we are to blame. By "we" I mean the non-New Yorker's. We give credence to the New Yorkers' belief by calling ourselves the derogatory slur "out-of-towners," thereby making the statement that New York is "the town."

As a native Floridian, I flock to those of the same ilk. Thus, most of my friends fall in the category of out-of-towners. I openly admit that we are all guilty of the stereotypes. We are laid

back, even what some might describe as spaced out. Much of typical New York behavior is completely foreign to us. Sometimes we feel like strangers in an alternate universe, where the overriding mantra is only the strongest will survive (strength i.e. physical ability). This How

trying to relate, think back to your seminary year. Remember the anxiety of having to go to strange places with different foods, all the while worrying about transportation and presents. Aren't you happy those days are over? Now try to keep that feeling fresh in your mind.

friend is still left with no plans for the weekend and she is put in the uncomfortable situation of having to ask you about the validity of that off-hand invitation. New Yorkers- you must be assertive and persistent (c'mon you're good at that.)

If you want to truly empathize with an out-of-towner, consider the following scenario. When an out-of-towner gets sick during the school week, there is no mommy to run home to tuck her in or drive her to the doctors. We are on our own, left to fend for ourselves. This grave situation befell a close friend of mine. She had caught a bad virus and was extremely sick in bed. She could barely move and her parents felt so bad that nobody was there to take care of her they flew her home for the weekend.

Why weren't there scores of New Yorkers offering to pick her up from the dorm on Friday and take her to their homes for Shabbat.

My roommate hail from the major out-of-town hot spots such as Florida, Chicago, Columbus, (where's that?) and Cleveland. When one roommate was replaced by- brace yourselves- a Teanecker, there were huge adjustments to be made.

She came in on Sunday night and left on Wednesday evenings. After all she was a New Yorker. (For those of you who are thinking that Teaneck is in New Jersey, that is merely a technicality. Despite a few minor discrepancies, it might as well be smack in the middle of the Five Towns.) At first we were scared by our new roommate- we've never been in such close contact with one of them, but our apprehensions turned out to be unfounded. She brings us Shabbat leftovers every week. She has already planned a roommate shabbaton and most importantly, she has extra drawer space. If you stop by the fifth floor in Schottenstein Residence Hall, you will see out-of-towners and New Yorkers living side by side in peace and harmony. Let this be a lesson to New Yorkers and out-of-towners alike. And let it be clarified that we do not need your sympathy or pity, just your food. And transportation to the airport would be nice.

Why is it that residents of the tri-state area full heartedly believe that New York is the center of the universe?

To article is directed toward our inquisitive New York friends who are interested in getting into the mind of an out-of-towner.

I must begin where any out-of-towner begins- with the dilemma of Shabbat. While I understand that having a guest may be burdensome and even annoying, it is also important to realize that New Yorkers have no clue about how it feels to be virtually homeless. For those of you

With that thought in mind, invite your out-of-town friends over for Shabbat. Additionally, bring back leftovers to your out-of-town friends who might have stayed in and had caf food for Shabbat lunch. Yes, these things do happen.

Approaching a non-New Yorker on a random Tuesday and saying "You never came for shabbos. You should really come sometime," does not qualify as an invitation. Your out-of-town

Restaurant Review: Murray's Falafel and Grill

By Devorah Heching

We frantically tried to hail a cab as the snow whipped sharply around us. It was a bitter cold night, but we were in a single-minded pursuit of the one thing that could lure us from the cocooning warmth of an overheated dorm room. That's right, we were on another quest for food.

Eager to find a perfectly seasoned falafel reminiscent of the hundreds consumed while vacationing in Israel, we directed a harried cabbie to journey deep into the heart of Stuyvesant Town. While this was a location well outside the boundaries of our usual hangout, we decided to make an exception and sample cuisine that couldn't be accessed via the Lexington line. Rumor had it that there was a restaurant located on the corner of 1st Avenue and 15th Street offering a Middle Eastern fare rivaling anything that New

York City had to offer.

The cab came to an abrupt halt in front of the restaurant, and we all piled out scrambling for gloves and change. Gazing upwards, we were confronted by a brightly-lettered sign spelling out "Murray's Falafel and Grill." With bated breath and grumbling stomachs we pushed the door open and proceeded inside.

The restaurant was established a year and a half ago by a fellow named - surprisingly - Murray, along with his nephew Noah. Back in the seventies Murray attempted his first foray into Middle Eastern Cuisine by selling falafels out of a pushcart on Wall Street. He then returned to his native country, Israel, and spent years refining his recipes, traveling as a tour guide throughout the whole country and sampling all it had to offer. Finally, Murray came back to New York City, his old stomping grounds, to show its residents how an authentic falafel should truly taste.

Apparently, the various kosher pizzerias that offered their version of the falafel just weren't up to par.

Walking into the restaurant we were transported back to the colorful streets of Jerusalem's Ben Yehuda, where falafel joints abound. The atmosphere was cheerful and informal, the walls were mirrored and there was even a television in the background playing all Israeli stations. We were immediately seated at a table near the window and handed laminated menus offering an extensive array of options.

Appetizers included classic options like hummus and Moroccan cigars to more exotic dishes like *kubbeh*, deep fried dough filled with spicy meat. Unable to make up our minds, we decided to sample almost all of the appetizers. While the cigars were too spicy for my taste, the *Kubbeh* turned out to be my personal favorite.

While finishing off the remains of the appetizers, we began ordering entrees and were

again surprised at the extensive options. When the dishes arrived, I found the food well presented and the portion sizes were

extremely generous. Each entree was accompanied by pita bread, extraordinary Israeli salad, in addition to an option from a number of side dishes. One main course we particularly enjoyed was the Shwarma - a dish that many Middle Eastern restaurants cannot perfect. Another favorite was the *Kufta Kabob*, an Israeli version of the hamburger that trumps its American counterpart hands down.

We were just about to pass out from eating such a large quantity of food when we suddenly experienced a horrifying revelation. We had not eaten any falafel balls - not one. Although we were full to the point of bursting, it was understood that in order to fulfill



the evening's quest for the perfect falafel ball, we would have to find a little more room. A few minutes later a waiter brought out a plate of complimentary falafel balls. It was a sign from G-d or, as we learned later, store policy. If the restaurant gets crowded and a line forms, complimentary falafel balls are distributed on forks to assuage hunger pangs. We each reached for a falafel and took a tentative bite. Ahhhhh...mission accomplished.

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Be a Child or Bring a Child or Prepare to Be Bored: Exploratorium not for Adults

By Dodi Lee Hecht

Upon entering the specially arranged gallery on the third floor of the American Museum of Natural History, which will house the Exploratorium exhibit for the next five and a half months, one is quickly bombarded by two very distinct sounds. The first is the somewhat random gong-like pattern of metal-on-metal vibrations coming from the right-hand center of the room. The sounds are emanating from the Turntable display, which demonstrates the effects of a circular force on linear motion. The unsystematic but constant nature of this beat arises from the exhibit's hands-on approach, where children are permitted to play with metal objects on a spinning metal platform.

This observation brings the unsuspecting visitor to the source of the second distinct sound, which floods this warmly lit gallery - the chatter of children. The Exploratorium, comprised of approximately thirty-five exhibits on loan from the more expansive Exploratorium in San Francisco, is advertised on the museum's website as designed for "audiences of all ages and all levels of scientific knowledge, from preschoolers to professors..." However, the hum of children's voices reveals the truth.

Every aspect of the Exploratorium is perfectly designed for children. The height of the displays, the chairs provided at the displays, even the structure of the signs at each table are meant for the mental and physical dimensions of a child between the ages of four and nine. Of course, there are adult-size benches; they are discreetly placed at a short distance from a

cluster of displays - close enough for parents to protect their children but far enough away to give these children a sense of independence.

Still, despite the obvious predisposition toward children, adults can also learn some new information. The short passages instructing children on how to make the most of the hands-on activities also feature small scientific explanations complete with vocabulary words in bold. Although the explanations are quite elementary, these words are interesting additions to a non-scientist's vernacular.

Despite the opportunity to expand one's vocabulary, it is quite easy to get bored. The Exploratorium is divided into four sections: Rotation, Earth Processes, Pendulums, and Mirrors and Illusions. Each section blurs easily into the others, and there is much repetition of information throughout the displays. The gallery's brightly decorated red and orange walls can slowly suffocate those who are too old to be captivated by liquid sandboxes for more than a minute.

A wandering adult may desperately try to find tranquility in the beauty of the Turbulent Orb display or, in need of a more drastic escape, will duck into the Duck Into Kaleidoscope display. Yet, even within this profoundly intriguing use of reflection, the optical illusion of solitude is fleeting at best. Finally, the lure of the single computer screen in the entire gallery is too overwhelming, and the childless adult will make his/her way across the room to the Satellite Orbit Simulator, attempting to squeeze into the child size chair and try feverishly to transform the orbit of the blue satellite into one that is geosynchronous.

The adults who find them-



Everyone can learn something from the Exploratorium Exhibit at the Museum of Natural History

selves in such a position must finally realize that the website was deceptive. The Exploratorium is not for children of all ages; it is for children of childish ages and their parents who can enjoy such exploits vicariously. It is enjoyable and educational and provides hours of fun activities for those who don't completely comprehend time just yet.

For those who do comprehend time and have no children to educate but want to spend a Sunday afternoon frivolously - try a matinee.

More information about the Exploratorium can be found at www.amnh.org, the official website of the American Museum of Natural History.

Stylin' in the City "Eyes on You"

By Lauren Wertz

Thinking back to the eighth grade, I can't help but recall my first encounter with eye make-up. It was a sunny, spring afternoon, and I had the much anticipated thirteenth birthday party of my friend, Sabrina. After rummaging through my mother's make-up bin, I arose with the goods: purple eye shadow, a vile of mascara, and what seemed to be a silver pinching device. I began my beauty treatment with the eye shadow by touching my index finger to the purple hue, swiping hard to insure myself an ample amount of powder. After confidently spreading the shadow over my entire lid, I continued on to the mascara. With my arm raised, steering the wand hand directly toward my flinch-

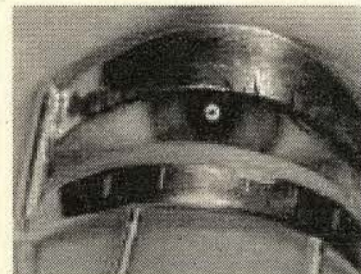
ing eye, I couldn't help but shut my lid to prevent the impending eye gouge. And, totally clueless as to what purpose the tiny silver torture device was intended, I tried several different approaches before identifying it as some sort of eyelash curling device. The thought of such an apparatus was entirely absurd to me, so I placed the gadget aside, and I looked at myself in the mirror. Suffice it to say, I looked quite *mascary*.

From this unfortunate experience, I learned early on that there is much complexity and detail necessary to attain perfection in the art of made-up eyes. I will relay to you the valuable lessons of my youth so that those egregious mistakes will not be made again.

I first went wrong in applying one solid color over the com-

plete surface of my eyelid. Regardless of the color, you should never shadow your entire lid with just one color. Shadow is, at the very least, a two-shaded endeavor. To start, cover the eye-socket area of the lid in a light, neutral (shimmery, if you are daring) shadow, to balance out discoloration. I recommend trying a pinkish, nude tone. It appears very natural and looks good on every eye color. Your second shadow should be a darker, similar shade. In contrast to a sheer, light pink, try a mauve or brown. Place the darker shade in the crease of your eyelid, creating a natural looking, defined eye.

My second mistake was ignoring the all-important eyelash curler. A crucial part of eye-art, curling your eyelashes opens up your eyes, making them appear at least two times larger.



The eyelash curler is a dreaded "torture apparatus" for many women

This practice must be done before putting on mascara. Doing otherwise will risk not-yet-dry-mascara attaching itself to your gadget, possibly tugging at your precious lashes. From my experience, it pays to invest in a top quality eyelash curler. The best on the market is the "Shu Uemura" version, and although pricier than your average drugstore brand, this baby works. You can find it at Sephora stores nationwide, or easily on Sephora.com. If you are not inclined to spend the extra money on a designer brand, don't just settle without one. Everyone

can benefit from an eyelash curler. Try a drugstore brand, and I suggest running it under warm/hot water before use, enabling a curling iron effect on your lashes.

And lastly, some words of true wisdom: never hold your mascara brush pointed at your eye. Obviously, it is meant to be clutched horizontally, and gently feathered against your top and bottom lash. Many people don't realize the importance of coating your lower lash-line. Really girls...why would you leave half the job undone?

With these tips, you should feel comfortable to go out and show off those sparklers. If you have any questions on which shadows or colors look best on you, don't be afraid to ask department store saleswomen. Certain colors and shadows complement different color eyes, so find what is best for you. In no time you'll have all eyes on you.

WYUR: A Women's Perspective



Eliana Rudolph and Rachel Levinson
hard at work on the air

By Observer Staff

I knocked tentatively on the door and then tried twisting the knob. Locked - I should have known. Just about to begin taping my first radio show and the girls' bathroom is unavailable. My eyes scanned anxiously for additional restrooms. It was five minutes until air time and I was growing desperate. Suddenly, my eyes fell upon the boy's commode. Oh well. I took a deep breath and pushed open the door. As long as I don't breath in, survival is a possibility - right?

Yeshiva's radio station, WYUR, is recorded at the Shottenstien Building on the Wilf Campus. The radio studio is located on the third floor of the building right next door to *The Commentator* newspaper office. This is not a location that girls often frequent and the prospect of recording an all-female show from its confines was daunting.

My interest in having a radio show was first piqued while fooling around one night on-line. There was a rumor that Yeshiva actually had re-started their once defunct radio station. I decided to check it out and was surprised by how entertaining the programs were. The producers sounded like they were having fun and made it seem like anyone could do radio. Even...me.

Two weeks later, I found myself waiting in the green room, a rectangular room filled with old records, preparing to go on-air. I nervously reviewed the minute-by-minute list I had prepared, providing me with poten-

tial topics to discuss with my co-producers. As the time for our show drew closer the topics began to appear increasingly juvenile. We had a top ten list a la David Letterman, a breakdown of strange current events and an in-depth sports review. Would it be enough to fill a whole hour's worth of air time? What if we experienced the dreaded dead air, a radio host's biggest nightmare?

A hassled-looking radio intern stepped out of the studio and motioned us inside. He warned us to hold our noses as the previous host apparently had a body odor problem. He wasn't kidding. We each took a seat before a formidable looking microphone and tried to remain calm. Unfortunately, deep breathing wasn't an option. We decided that if the prepared topics ran out of steam then we would just play music - indefinitely. A tape with two hours worth of music had been set aside for this very purpose. Come to think of it, we really did not have to talk at all. This thought was very comforting.

Three, two, one... and we were on. We started introducing our show to the listeners - all four of them. At first our voices shook and I erupted into nervous laughter about every three seconds. Then a miracle occurred. We forgot that we were on air. The show became three girls talking to each other about topics they had discussed every night while lying around in their dorm until 3 a.m. The hour flew by and we had only played two songs. During that hour we discussed any topic that came to mind - other than the ones we had prepared - and accepted phone calls from listeners that had tuned into our show. All right, fine. It was our producer who had snuck into the bathroom with her cell phone, but it was exciting nonetheless. Our show even ran a little overtime and we quickly wrapped it up. We were a success. I only wonder what we should prepare for next time...

Jews and Hollywood: An Affair to Remember

Eric Goldman Lectures on the History of the Jew in Film

By Dodi Lee Hecht

The Morris Epstein Forum on the Arts once again invited a noted speaker to address a mixed crowd of Yeshiva students and public guests on an aspect of Jewish cultural life on February 10. This year's prestigious lecturer was Dr. Eric Goldman, a respected and well-known authority on Jewish, Israeli and Yiddish film.

Professor Peninnah Schram, who co-chairs this annual event with Dr. Jeffrey Gurock, remarked that the choice of speaker reflected her sentiments that the history of Jews in film and moviemaking is an American phenomenon of which everyone should be aware. The focus of "Looking at Ourselves: The American Jewish Experience on Film" was the history of this unusual relationship between an ancient ethnic group and a modern art form.

The lecture itself was very informative and excellently delivered. It raised important questions about the difficult paradox of ideals that the American Jew struggles over. Goldman framed these issues in a comprehensive package of anecdotes about the general history of Jews and Hollywood.

Still, the most telling moment came not during the lecture or the question and answer session afterwards or even during the light reception that closed the evening. It came after most people had left and Schram turned to Goldman to ask, rather nonchalantly, what scene in all of Jewish film history stands out in his mind as the "I'm proud to be a Jew" scene. This innocent enough question was answered with a resounding silence. "I don't know," he finally responded weakly. "There is no one film that comes to mind." Almost a century long affair between Jews and the movie industry and, according to Goldman, Jewish pride has yet eluded the screen.

Goldman asserted early on in his speech, "Jews, more than any other ethnic minority, have been involved in moviemaking." However, as he also pointed out, this relationship was fueled mostly by the difficulty a Jewish immigrant had in finding a job in turn-of-the-century America. To that effect, the relationship between Jews and movies, though smooth enough a marriage, in no way implied that the relationship between Jews and movies about Jews would be as comfortable a union.

To broach this issue, Goldman structured his presentation to lead the audience through the history of Jews as a subject in films, specifically by dividing this evolution into four primary eras. Each era was accented by a clip from a movie



Peninnah Schram introduces Dr. Eric Goldman, respected Jewish film critic,
at annual Morris Epstein Forum on the Arts

of that time, after which Goldman would elaborate upon the subtle cinematographic tricks used to enhance the message of that particular film.

Of course, Goldman chose to begin with the era of the Jazz Singer, the first talkie. This 1927 film featured Al Jolson in a semi-autobiographical role of a cantor's son who abandons the traditions of his youth to pursue a life on Broadway. Although the film was decidedly anti-tradition, it had a very distinct ethnic feel. This, Goldman explained, was the norm in early Hollywood. Movies were made for immigrants and their subject matter was meant to appeal to this audience's sense of self while, at the same time, it served to illustrate the belief of these immigrants that the goal was to "achieve America." Mostly immigrants themselves, the early filmmakers who were perhaps already aware of the power of media, were intent on showing the message that it was better to be an American than a Jew.

By the 1930's, the ethnic nature of early movies had disappeared entirely and Jewish Hollywood wrote the Jew out of movies completely. However, by the second half of this decade, these filmmakers, obviously distraught by the persecution of their brethren in Nazi Germany, decided to use their craft to raise awareness of this tragedy and the Jew was reintroduced. The United States government immediately responded with fear that the Jews were using their influence over movies to wrongly sway the American people into getting involved in a conflict from which Congress desperately wished to stay away. This negative response was so frightening to the Jews of Hollywood that they, once again, hid their Jewishness and, with it, the issues that their people were facing.

This timidity would continue into the post-war years and it would take 20th Century Fox, the only major studio at the time which was not run by Jews, to tackle the issue of anti-Semitism in the 1940s. Fox would do this through the movie, "Gentlemen's Agreement" and it would be made, Goldman averred, despite

the Anti-Defamation League's attempts to stop it. This movie featured Gregory Peck as a reporter who disguised himself as a Jew to research anti-Semitism in America. The clip which Goldman discussed centered on Peck's discovery that, as a Jew, he would not be welcome at certain "restricted" hotels. "Anti-Semitism was very much a fact in the 1940s," affirmed Goldman.

Through clips from "The Young Lions" and "Avalon," Goldman brought the audience through the final two eras in which anti-Semitism relaxes and finally, as symbolized in the Thanksgiving dinner scene in "Avalon," when he declared, "We, the Jews of America, have been invited to the table."

Still, Goldman does not see the struggle to have ended. When later asked to comment on "The Passion", Goldman expressed fear that the changes Mel Gibson was asked to make, although momentarily comforting, have a potential to prove devastating if Gibson later implies that the Jews forced him to change his movie. The fear that Jews run Hollywood is still a touchy subject.

In a question-and-answer session following the lecture, Goldman also commented on the lack of pro-Israel films to balance out the pro-Palestinian vibes resonating from a liberal Hollywood. He also affirmed the opinion that Orthodox Judaism is still a misunderstood, often absent, element in the modern representation of Jews in movies. Goldman closed with the declaration that, although the generic Jew has been invited to the table, it is in the hands of the next generation to change the view of the Orthodox Jew in movies.

While this task, assigned to the next wave of Jewish Hollywood by Goldman is daunting enough, it might be a pleasant bonus to get in a "Proud to be a Jew" scene, if not simply for Goldman and Schram and the American Jewish audiences who go to the movies with them, then maybe as a centenary present to the Jew and the Movie. After all, it's been quite an affair, even by Hollywood standards.

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YCDS' "Two Shakespearean Actors": They Can't Polka but They Sure Can Act

By Dodi Lee Hecht

Despite the fact that the three lead actors were sick, YCDS' rendition of "Two Shakespearean Actors" is a show that is more than worth the stray germs. The set, lighting and musical score were a delight. It is the smallest of details that wins the viewers' attention, from the first notes of the opening Irish ballad to the detailed workmanship that highlights the dressing tables of the two main characters.

Honestly, the actors have a difficult task wresting the attention of the audience from these magnificent accents back to the plot of the play. This was a task that rumors suggested were quite beyond any YCDS actor's capacity. Rumors have been wrong before. The inflections of the wry narrator (played powerfully by Oren Litwin) carried the opening and hinted at the skill to be demonstrated later in the play. The scene is a powerful combination of melody, narration and a well-timed succession of outbursts and overwhelmingly overshadows the fact that these are college students on an extremely small stage in the middle of Washington Heights.

The polka in the next scene quickly dispels the illusion. The actors are slightly off and some seemed unsure as to who was partnered with whom. The audience must wait uncomfortably while the actors fumble to regain the confidence of men who actually know the polka. It is a short wait but not a vain pursuit because by the time Bradshaw, played by Aaron Cohen, is flung over a piece of furniture, the audience can safely settle back into enjoying the performance.

"Two Shakespearean Actors"

takes place during the Civil War, mostly in an unfashionable New York tavern. It takes place in a time period when men knew how to dance the polka together and would get into the types of brawls which featured such well-choreographed throws as are demonstrated in this play. Still, once the play thankfully gets past this strange display of classical manliness, the actors are allowed their more professional instances.

The three leads each have stronger and weaker moments on stage, which can only be partially excused by their strained voices. Yet, each still manages to harness the complex nature of his role.

From his first moment on stage, Dov Medinets, as William Macready, embodies the part of this disillusioned British thespian without respite. Medinets must convey this character's sorrow upon realization that his talent means nothing to the anti-British Americans who threaten his performances and very life. And Medinets must do this while maintaining the illusion of a drunken stupor which stays with Macready throughout the play. Medinets is the only actor in the production who never slips outside his mask; however, he is also the only actor to have the assistance of a flawlessly executed accent.

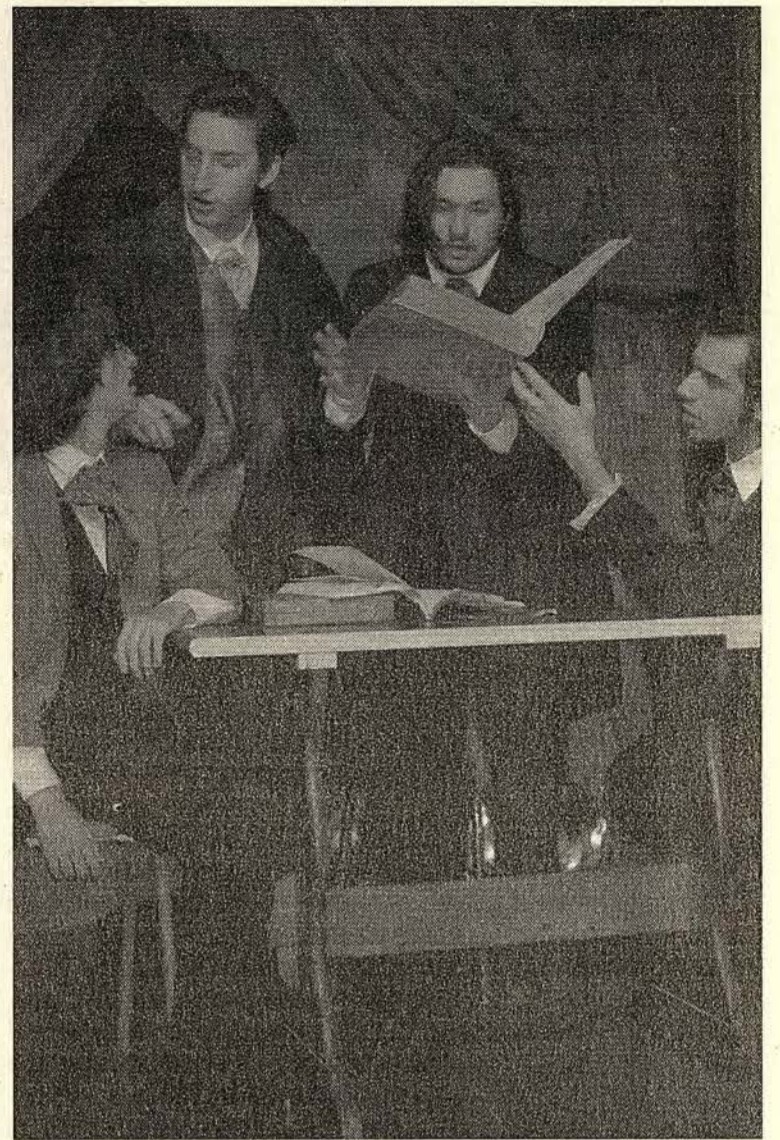
Although John Ryder, played by Zalman Abramchik, is also supposed to be a British character, Abramchik either avoids an accent or employs one so subtle that it is hardly recognizable. This causes some confusion at first when Ryder takes certain anti-British comments personally. Though he gets off to a slow start, Abramchik more than compensates for his missing accent as he begins to actually

reflect his character's anguish in his every movement. Abramchik's Ryder is a character doomed to be interrupted, ignored and left in second-rate roles but Abramchik finds subtle, emotionally-charged ways to let the audience know what Ryder may have been had he been the star.

Edwin Forrest, played by Eli Guterman, is the character who suffers the most as a result of the actors' illness. Although Guterman perfectly portrays the insane love of the theatre which drives Forrest, it is quite clear that there are lines that should be shouted. No maniacal gleam in the eye, though well-executed and impeccably larger-than-life, can make up for a theatre-shaking cry. Still, when it really counts, in the final scene, Guterman lets loose the powerful calls needed for his character's final moments.

Shakespeare made it clear that no play, especially a tragedy, could be complete without moments of overwhelming humor. Since "Two Shakespearean Actors" is quite clearly a tragedy, its humorous moments are most excellently crafted. It is especially important to follow the characters of Charles Clark and Tilton, played respectively by Benzion Chinn and David Mikofsky. Both actors throw themselves recklessly and bravely into their roles resulting in the only moments that intentionally allow the audience a brief respite from the intense subject matter contained in the main plot. It is especially nice to watch Chinn and Mikofsky try to save that dastardly polka fiasco.

It may not be a Broadway production, but this talented group of actors provides a comparable level of entertain-



YCDS actors performing in "Two Shakespearean Actors"

ment. From the drama that is, for the most part, played out successfully between the main characters to the comic antics at the hands of the very competent supporting cast, this play promises and delivers. There are moments when the audience is, unfortunately, very much aware of the skull on Macready's dressing table instead of the witches huddling on the stage, but the actors triumph in the end. "Two Shakespearean Actors" teaches of the power and majesty inherent in the world of theatre. YCDS

made it clear that it deserves to belong to that world.

"Two Shakespearean Actors" was most skillfully adapted and directed by Dr. Anthony Beukas. This production marks the eightieth collaboration between YCDS and Beukas.

"Osama:" More Than its Film and Less Than its Script



Marina Golhari, above, plays Osama

By Dodi Lee Hecht

"Osama" is the first movie to come out of a post-Taliban Afghanistan. It shows. Although there is much which is great about this film, what is great about it has very little to do with the movie itself. It is a movie

about suffering through an era of oppression, and the actors are people who suffered through an era of oppression. Therefore, they do not tell the story well because they are talented at their craft, they tell the story well because it is their story.

The greatness of the movie lies in the fact that it exists. It is a testament to a future that is now possible. It is a beacon for those unborn or undiscovered Afghan actors who will be able someday to summon the level of emotion which Marina Golhari, who played the title character, has only attained through such suffering. The greatness of this movie lies in the fact that, instead of America telling the story of another persecuted third-world country, it is the most singular voice of a nation narrating its own tragic history.

The question that must be asked upon viewing this movie is: who is the intended audience? It is quite clear who is telling the story, but who is meant to hear the story? The title alone makes the audience quiver. Is it a hint towards the perpetrator of this audacity, the symbol of its existence - Osama bin Laden? The North American moviegoer must wonder at the provocative use of such a name, a name that has become almost synonymous with Hitler or Stalin. However, an Afghan viewer would recognize the true irony of this title is found in the common sexual ambiguity of this name. The movie's official website clarifies that, in Afghanistan, the name Osama is asexual as is the name Terry in Western society.

So, perhaps the movie "Osama" is meant for the people who lived through it. Certainly,

it's presence on the screen does not envelop the North American viewer as other movies do. It does not speak the visual aesthetic language of Hollywood and therefore, in this age of desensitization, "Osama" appears more like a fictionalized documentary than a feature film.

Yet, that too is the greatness of this movie. It is not Taliban and it is not American; it is solely the cultural property of Afghanistan. North American viewers need not see this movie. It is painful to watch and does not offer even the remotest glimpse of entertainment which we Hollywood-addicted moviegoers have come to expect and need from even the most sorrowful tragedies. Its tale is an important one but it is one that can be, and must be, found in the pages of history alongside other such travesties of mankind. Still, this

movie is great because of what it means. It means that a nation is free to find its own Hollywood, its own entertainment and its own way to mourn for those stolen childhoods which haunt its newfound future.

"Osama" was written and directed by Siddiq Barmak.

"Osama" is currently playing at United Artists Union Square Stadium 14 and the Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

Hundreds of Yeshiva Students Join Together in Israel Over Winter Break

By Aviva Balk

The strong Yeshiva presence in Israel over winter break was enhanced by a student-organized trip to Chevron and a packed concert. Hundreds of Yeshiva graduate and undergraduate students had spent their winter breaks in Jerusalem and their alma mater yeshivot. On January 13, they joined together for a day of prayer and touring in Chevron, the holy and historical city which is acutely effected by the current intifada. The last official night of Yeshiva winter vacation boasted a 1,000 plus attendance at a spontaneous concert, which was arranged by Yeshiva students in collaboration with One Family Fund, an organization that provides financial and psychological assistance to families of terror victims.

SCW Israel Club President Hindy Poupko, YC Student Union President Yummy Schachter and SSSB junior Jonah Rechnitz organized the trip. Poupko received phone calls nonstop in the days leading up to the trip from Yeshiva students as well as students from other universities requesting spots on the buses, but there simply was no room. "It was so frustrating having to turn away so many people who wanted to be a part of this," Poupko commented. "But it's inspiring to see how many people wanted a chance to go to Chevron."

Nearly 100 students were able to participate in the trip on the cold and rainy day in Israel at some of Judaism's most treasured



Yeshiva students gather at Maarat Hamachpelah (Tomb of the Patriarchs) during their Winter break

landmarks of Chevron, Beit Lechem, and Tel HaShomer, a rehabilitation center for victims of terror.

Students met at Jerusalem's Inbal Hotel and proceeded on two bullet-proof buses armed with gunmen to Chevron. At the first stop, Ma'arat Hamachpelah, cave of the patriarchs, a morning prayer service was held, followed by singing in the Ma'arat Hamachpelah's synagogue.

Rabbi Shlomo Hochbaum, teacher in the post-high school institutions Reishit Yerushalayim and Midreshet Moriah accompanied by a resident of Chevron, led the students around the Jewish portions of the city, focusing on its highlights and, unfortunately, often pausing to remember tragic deaths at various landmarks. Highlights included Chevron's ancient synagogue, where students sang together as they viewed its precious Torah scroll. In addition, they visited a kollel, Torah learning center, that

stands in the core of what used to be the Arab marketplace, as well as the trailer of a 16-person family, the bullet holes from Arab shooting clearly visible in the walls of the home.

"The last time I was there, I just visited the Cave of the Patriarchs and left," said Schachter, who had visited Chevron several times before. "But this time, it strengthened me to meet the people who live there and see their courage."

After a visit to Kever Rochel, Rachel's Tomb, in Beit Lechem and an early dinner at a Jerusalem restaurant, the students were taken to Tel HaShomer Rehabilitation Center, where they heard the stories of three Israeli soldiers who were injured while trying to fight terrorism. A concert was performed there by the band of Mike's Place, an Israeli blues club that suffered a bombing last year and whose band members,

Continued on page 19

Graduate Fellowship Program Finalized

By Rebecca Rosenberg

At the Town Hall meeting on the Beren Campus on February 14, President Richard Joel officially announced the details of the Graduate Fellowship Program set to begin in the fall. Eight alumni will be chosen from YC, SCW, and SSSB to participate in a unique leadership opportunity working in various university divisions for one year after graduation.

"You will be in a rigorous and challenging supportive environment in your first year out of school," President Joel said of the program. "It is a serious experience in professional work advancing the Jewish people in a university context."

The selected fellows will receive housing, an \$18,000 stipend for the year as well as medical benefits. In addition, Dr. Sheldon Gelman, dean of Wurzweiler School of Social Work, will teach a mandatory six-credit seminar on institutional leadership. However, fellows are not permitted to have part time jobs or take any classes besides the Wurzweiler course. The fellows selected will be assigned to a university or college office, be mentored by a university administrator and participate in a bi-weekly leadership seminar worth up to three graduate credits per semester.

The application encourages all students who are interested to consider the program no matter their professional goals. "Students should consider this fellowship regardless of their

career objectives if they think that a year of service to the community and exposure to university administration will be of value to them," states the application.

The fellowships will be offered in several departments with varying responsibilities. For the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs under Dr. Mort Lowengrub, the fellow would work on projects to support and enhance the academic enterprise, including the Jewish Studies program. "This will involve working with the academic affairs staff and deans to begin implementation of strategic plans now being developed," states the application. In addition, the fellow would participate in institutional research, in meetings of the University Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee and Student Academic Affairs Advisory Committee.

Other departments where fellows will be placed include the Office of the Vice President for University Life under Hillel Davis, Office of the Vice President for Business Affairs under Sheldon Socol, Max Stern Division of Communal Services and Office of Student Affairs. Also there are the Office of Enrollment Management, University Office of Development, Office of Communications and Public Affairs, Yeshiva College Dean's Office, Stern College for Women Dean's Office and Sy Syms School of Business.

Joel, the program's creator, is

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Yeshiva Students Join the Orthodox Union for a Discussion on "The Passion"

By Miriam Shapiro

In response to the recent controversy surrounding the release of Mel Gibson's "The Passion", the Orthodox Union along with the Rabbinical Council of America held an organized panel discussion at the OU's national office Tuesday morning February 17. The program, which was video taped and is being released to synagogues all over the United States, was attended by various distinguished rabbis as well as 35 YC and SCW student representatives.

"I think that the presentation fell short of the potential responses that could have been offered based on the debate and hullabaloo facilitated by the film," said SCW Student Council President, Anat Barber.

"There wasn't that much insight into the material," commented SCW junior, Yael Karasick. "Most of what was said was information that we were already aware of." The dis-

cussion, which ran for approximately two hours, included 15 minute presentations by Rabbi Dr. David Berger, Rabbi Michael Skobac and Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb, followed by a comprehensive question and answer session. Rabbi Moshe Krupka, the Orthodox Union's National Director, Community and Synagogues Services, opened the session stating that the purpose of this program was not to address the broader concerns surrounding the controversy of this film, rather it was geared to tackle the primary factors affecting our intimate Jewish community.

"This session is for our community...it is for our rabbis and members of our synagogues," said Krupka. Though he added that the symposium was not meant to remove anyone's right to religious freedom, the presentation was designed not to provide all the answers, but to empower our community.

"The Passion", a film about the final 12 hours in the life of Jesus Christ, has been criticized

by Jews and others for its historical inaccuracy, misrepresentation of Jews at the time, and severe brutality, was not viewed by any member of the panel prior to the program. The panelists addressed each of these issues, in addition to discussing the potential psychological affects the film might have on its audience, as well as the possible spiritual repercussions that can be fueled by seeing the film, and the fear of rising anti-Semitism. When answering his own question to the audience as to whether or not one should see the film, Weinreb explained that one shall not willingly relinquish himself to the seduction of the spirit.

"It is not a mitzvah (commandment) to expose ourselves to the falsehoods in this film," he explained. "You can live a full life as Jew without seeing this film." He continued to remark that it is the duty of every member of the Jewish community to actively involve himself in the study of Torah, and understand that

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Torah Shield III Falls Through

By Observer Staff

The mission to Israel planned by Yeshiva's student leaders to have taken place over winter vacation was called off due to a lack of funding, said SCWSC President Anat Barber. "It was unfortunate that it happened," she said. "We just didn't have the money."

Funding was anticipated to be the biggest hurdle when the mission was in its planning stages. University administration cautioned that the concept of a mission was not enough to guarantee funding from donors-student leaders would have to prove that a compelling need for the mission existed. "Times are different now," President Richard Joel told *The Observer* in November. "Showing up is not enough." Director of Community Initiatives at MSDCS agreed. "I'm not sure in the community right now there is a need for a mission."

Student leaders planned



their itinerary with this information in mind, but it did not lead to any substantial subvention. "We thought we'd be able to get the money, [but] the mission isn't what donors wanted to give to" Barber stated.

With the high expectations of Torah Shield I and II in 2002 and 2003, SCW and YC students expecting to participate in the mission were disappointed over the cancellation. "I was waiting until the last minute to see if the trip was going to happen," said SCW Bella Tendler. "I held off on making any other plans."

Although Barber noted that several students saw the mission as a way to travel to Israel at a fraction of the usual price. "A lot of the students who were waiting to find out about the mission

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