



# The Yeshiva University OBSERVER

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## Student Council Rejects Funds for Mission Gaza New Club Agrees to Spearhead

By Aviva Balk

This year's Israel Club presidents, Hindy Poupko and Shaya Lerner, have transformed the YC/SCW Israel Club from a small group to one of the highest profile and most influential student forces on both the Beren and Wilf campuses.

However, it is puzzling that a year so full of passion for the Holy Land has thus far been lacking in what would seem to be a crucial annual element for Yeshiva: a mission to Israel.

After a disappointing cancellation of the mission planned for this past winter intersession,

Yeshiva's golden opportunity came along just a few months later.

\$50,000 was recently offered to YSU President Yummy Schachter by philanthropist Dr. Joseph Frager, the primary funder behind Torah Shields I and II as well as the recent protest at The Hague, for a mission to Israel.

"He's a tremendous *tzaddik* and the work he does is beyond words," Schachter noted. But he refused the offer when he understood that Frager's intention was for the students to travel to Gaza. "I didn't think it was the best idea," he said. "[With] all other missions in the past, we've

basically gone to show our support and solidarity. He basically wanted to use us to make a political statement. I don't think Gaza is the best place to be hanging out right now, I didn't think the time was right and there were just too many things that didn't make sense."

However, not all students agreed with Schachter's verdict. Shmuel Sokol, head and co-founder of Yeshiva's chapter of Mission Israel, a right-wing political Israeli activist group that has sprung up in a handful of college campuses throughout the United States. When Frager

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Director of Communications and Public Affairs Peter Ferrara

## PR Launches Department at Stern

Long Awaited Division Set to Open in May

By Rachel Cyrulnik

Reflecting a continued realization that SCW occupies a unique niche within the Yeshiva community, often necessitating an independent body of administrators and personnel, the Department of Communication and Public Affairs plans to open the doors of a satellite PR office at the Beren Campus no later than next month. "In what is a

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long overdue strategic positioning, the communication and public affairs work for the undergraduate school at the Beren Campus is being reorganized," Director of the Department of Communication and Public Affairs Peter Ferrara told *The Observer*.

This groundbreaking move will entail the repositioning of current Director of Communication at Yeshiva's Cardozo School of Law Susan Davis to the newly-created role of Deputy Director, as well as the hiring of a new full time Communications Associate to round out the SCW departmental staff. Davis will serve in her new capacity at both SCW and Cardozo. Davis was unavailable for comment.

Although the branch is scheduled to open in just a few short weeks, several crucial aspects of the plan remain undetermined. A location for the new office has yet to be worked out and the identity of the communications associate is still unknown. "I expect we are going to walk before we run," cautioned Ferrara. However, the new team is expected to tie together the final arrangements during the summer months.

## SCW Hopes to Grant First Graduate Degree Talmud Program Seeks Master's Accreditation



Women learning in the advanced Talmud program may qualify for a master's degree

By Esther Flaschner

In an unprecedented move, the SCW administration confirmed plans to seek master's accreditation for its Graduate Women's Talmud Program. Administrators are hoping to make the two-year Talmudic and halakhic textual curriculum, which currently offers a certificate of completion upon conclusion, will become a New York State affirmed academic program. "We are currently pursuing the possibility of giving a master's degree," said Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel, chair of the Rebecca Ivry Department of Jewish Studies. "The process takes a long time, and we have begun the process."

If administrators are suc-

cessful in obtaining academic recognition, the result would be revolutionary not only for SCW but for Yeshiva as a whole. If the Graduate Women's Talmud Program gained state affirmation, it will be the only program that confers an academic graduate degree purely for yeshiva-style study using the traditional methodology of Judaic studies. Additionally, the master's degree would be awarded by SCW, making it the only undergraduate body in Yeshiva's network to offer graduate level degrees.

And although, according to Kanarfogel, the accreditation process has already been initiated, the vast amount of paperwork and documentation necessary to gain educational credit makes it hard to estimate when the effort will be completed.

New York State enforces strict rules and regulations and will take a significant amount of time to assess the substantive material SCW presents.

Currently, the Graduate Women's Talmud Program serves 17 graduate students. The women, the bulk of whom largely plan on entering the field of Jewish education, focus on Talmudic and halakhic texts in a rigorous curriculum of study. The program functions much like traditional yeshiva with *chavruta* learning, the traditional method of study whereby a pair of students analyze texts together. The program also includes *shiur sederim*, the lecture portion of the program taught by an instructor. As is the case in most Talmudic programs, *bechinot*, or

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## Censorship Impedes Student Play at Arts Festival

By Rebecca Rosenberg

Less than a minute after the student written and coordinated play "Chiasmus" commenced during the Arts Festival Drama Night, YC Dean Joyce Jesionowski brought the performance to an abrupt end, refusing to allow an edited version of the play to continue, in keeping with a long standing rule for prohibiting men and women from acting together on stage at any Yeshiva dramatic event.

"A girl went up on stage and was about to start her monologue when the boys started setting up for the next scene behind her," described SCW junior Emilia Cataldo. "Then Dean Jesionowski ran up onto the stage in front of the audience waving her arms and said the

play couldn't go on."

Aaron Roller, the Wilf Campus chair of the event, explained that the students did not in fact violate the guideline, since both sexes are permitted to appear in the same play as long as they are not together in a scene.

Roller believed that it was an oversight to have the actors set up while the actress performed. He contends it was due to disorganization and was not a deliberate decision. "I was nervous about allowing the play to happen because he [Chai Hecht] had just finished the script that week and didn't have a full cast until the day of the show," said Roller. "What happened was due to lack of preparation."

Had Jesionowski waited a few seconds before taking

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### I N S I D E



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Israel Program Student Participates in Dominican World Cup  
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## Yeshiva Sponsored Missions

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SCW Students Form New Band  
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Yeshiva Co-sponsors Maimonides Conference  
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Shayndi Raice  
Editor in Chief

Missions seem to be the latest trend for us Yeshiva undergrads. Traveling to The Hague, Israel and Gaza no longer engender the wow-factor that perhaps they should. These missions have become so basic to our experience at Yeshiva that for a winter break to pass without a subsidized visit to Israel seems disorienting to those of us who started at Yeshiva three years ago and have been on a mission every year since.

While many jokes ensued Purim time about numerous missions that were planned by our student leaders, this should not be shocking to us. The Jewish community is generally incredibly well-mobilized when it comes to political protests. Solidarity missions, particularly to Israel, have been a traditional way for Jewish organizations to show the world, and their fellow Jews, the extent of their support. However, while Jews have been astute mission planners from the time of Moses, why has Yeshiva seen a proliferation of missions over the past three years?

The obvious answer is that the Intifada began three and a half years ago. As Jews, we feel that it is our responsibility to support our brothers and sisters who face terror daily. In a world that seems to be growing smaller by the day, hopping on a plane to protest the withdrawal from Gaza seems like a reasonable idea. However, in this age of missions, we have to be careful of what type of mission is appropriate for Yeshiva students and what types of missions, even when offered money, we should stay away from.

Jews have a responsibility to help other Jews, no matter where they are in the world. If the State of Israel is being tried by an international court, gathering in her defense along with thousands of others is an incredibly worthy cause. As students of the only Orthodox university in the country, we are showing not only the world, but the entire Jewish community, that Yeshiva fights for Jews. It is an incredible testament to the power of our school that only one university in the country sent a delegation of over 100 students on a 48-hour trip to the Netherlands to

defend the right of a Jewish government to make decisions on self-defense without the interference of other countries.

However, when it comes to American students protesting a policy that is being carried out by the Israeli government, perhaps then, we have overstepped our bounds. In my opinion, a mission to Gaza to protest the Israeli withdrawal would be just such a step. It was right for YSU President Yummy Schachter to turn down \$50,000 to plan a mission to Gaza. It was not right for an even admittedly right-wing club such as Mission Israel to accept the funding.

Moreover, Mission Israel's acceptance of the funding represents an internally inconsistent position. While claiming to believe in revisionist Zionism, Mission Israel is rejecting the policy of a Likud prime minister who is pushing for the withdrawal from Gaza. While I recognize that the version of revisionism espoused by Menachem Begin and his Likud descendants is different from pure Jabotinskyist revisionism, I would nevertheless strongly caution American students against protesting policies that are being supported by the right-wing government. For members of Mission Israel this caution applies twofold because this government is the political baby of their philosophical forefathers. Essentially, how can Mission Israel, supposedly of the revisionist camp, actively campaign against the official policy of the revisionist camp in Israel. Campaigning in this fashion represents a remarkably active role in the narrowest detail of internal Israeli politics. As Americans, do we think we know better?

I realize that I am treading on thin ice when I warn Jews to stay out of Israeli politics. And I honestly don't believe that we should not have strong opinions when it comes to our ancestral homeland. What I fear is the right-wing knee-jerk response that American Jews often feel when it comes to Israeli politics. Even if we disagree with Sharon's policy of withdrawal, does that mean that we should pick ourselves up, protest in Gaza, that has a population of approximately 1.2 million Palestinians, and then get back on a plane "so we can be home in time for Pesach."

I don't object to someone picking themselves up and moving to Gaza or Hebron or any other territory if they plan on living with the consequences. What I strongly object to is using the university's name to protest policies that will not affect our daily life but will severely affect the country we are so eager to leave before Pesach.



Rachel Cyrulnik  
Editor in Chief

Two prospective students sat in on my historiography class this past Monday afternoon. From the looks on their faces, they seemed somewhat perplexed when the professor began the lesson by asking the students to pinpoint the difference between a shift in paradigms in the history of science and such a shift the history of gender. I suspected that the observing students had pictured a different type of classroom experience taking place at Stern College, their expectations leaving them bored and uninterested with the topic at hand. And I grew even more confident about the accuracy of my conjecture as I saw the pair simultaneously stretch, stand up and quietly sneak out the back door of the classroom, only a half hour after the class had begun.

Each semester, I continue to discover that Yeshiva is not the only birthplace of the Torah U'Madda approach to Jewish education and life, a bastion of Jewish values, one of the State of Israel's closest friends, and a wellspring of academic opportunities, but that SCW is all of these things as well. With its rigorous Honors Program, edifying conferences and lectures and unique rapport between faculty and students, I strongly believe that SCW has the capacity to produce extremely well-educated, refined and confident individuals that aspire to make a difference in the world.

Evidently, our university now holds the same belief as well. By choosing to place both satellite Public Affairs and Max Stern Division of Communal Services offices at SCW, Yeshiva administrators have made a statement about the significance of SCW in its own right and as a vital member of the Yeshiva culture. Both of these branches promise to be valuable tools in the ongoing development of SCW's image and success.

It is past time for the student body to believe it as well. Stereotypes of "the Stern girl" have been promul-

gated throughout the Jewish community. Admittedly, this stereotype does have its basis in a fair percentage of SCW students who rush to complete their college education, register for classes that virtually guarantee an A and dash to 34<sup>th</sup> Street or Cedarhurst's famed Central Avenue to purchase the latest must-have item, be it Shoox, Harvey Chapelier tote bags or UGGs.

It is the "stereotypes" of our institution that stand to learn the most from the recent moves that Yeshiva has made. I implore this faction to help transform the image of SCW, following the lead their university has set for them. We have been fortunate that the Offices of Public Affairs and MSDCS have realized the value of our unique school; but I cannot help but imagine that had students realized this as well, these offices might have been in place and functioning for years already. The administration can do plenty to position SCW in the highest ranks, but the ability to alter the perception of SCW ultimately rests squarely on the shoulders of our students.

This revolution has indeed begun to take place. SCW is replete with intelligent and well-spoken students boasting diverse and meaningful interests and passions. These students, whether or not they realize it, are waging the battle for SCW's image. Each interaction with Yeshiva outsiders, or even insiders, brings about a gradual dispelling of the stereotypes that have been so debilitating to the advancement of our institution.

After discussing the incident with my classmates and professor, I reflected on how satisfied I was that those perspective students had observed such an intellectually engaging discussion, even prompting me to reevaluate my original hypothesis. After all, it is possible that the students bailed out of our discussion early in favor of joining another class to, hoping to discover that what they had just heard was really the norm at SCW. They must have been pleasantly surprised.

The Yeshiva University

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# EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

## Letters to the Editors

### Hear Ye, Hear Ye: The Arts Festival was Publicized

To the editors:

In response to the article "Annual Arts Festival: It's Time to get the Audience Involved," (February 2004) I want to first thank you for pointing out certain things that could have added to Arts Festival, such as having dancers perform. As one of the coordinators this year, I will be sure to pass on that idea to the upcoming Arts Festival Chair.

I would like to add that I am slightly offended and upset to see that an article was published without having me, or for that matter my co-chair, Michael Chiert, interviewed. It is also disconcerting to see that the students still continue to complain that they do not know specifics about events. They should start to pay more attention to bulletin boards in school and the dormitories. Not only has the Arts Festival staff posted signs on bulletin boards, but we have also put flyers on the tables in the cafeteria and made announcements in classrooms and the cafeteria.

So, to the student who mentioned "it would have been nice to know who was performing at each event," they would have been pleasantly surprised to see that some of the events did advertise featured performers, such as the opening concert and the photography gallery. And for this student, and others who think this way, Arts Festival is intended for you to support and appreciate not only your friend's performances and participation, but also those of your fellow peers.

The article seemed to focus on one event as well, Kol Shira, dismissing the plethora of events that span the two weeks of Arts Festival. It would have been nice to hear feedback from the other nights.

Lastly, I would like to say that Arts Festival is a unique event. It takes a lot of time to

plan since it is a festival that lasts two weeks and not just one night. Also, it is student-run, and my staff this year did a stellar job. They were extremely organized and cooperative, and they deserve more credit than they were given. We do not have anyone above us delegating. We, the students, are given a budget, and of course certain guidelines by the deans for the Festival, but the rest is left up to us. Finding a venue and equipment needed for each event, publicizing the festival and getting the food is all done by the student coordinators and chairs. It sounds simple on paper, but we have to work in cooperation with the administration, facilities, security and the students.

Thank You.  
Sincerely,  
Michelle Amini  
SCW'04

### A Bathing Suit is Still a Bathing Suit on Purim

To the editors:

I would like to compliment you on a generally well written and informative newspaper, and a particularly enjoyable Purim issue.

Although the Purim holiday allows us to take many liberties that we aren't generally accustomed to, I felt *The Observer* went too far in its Purim issue. It's inclusion of pictures of women that wouldn't be acceptable in any regular issue came as a shock ("Poupko Crowned Miss Israel").

Why the standards of *tzniut* (modesty) should be any more lax for satirical purposes does not seem quite clear. Your readership's sensitivities (and your editorial mission in Yeshiva's Torah U'Madda environment) should always be safeguarded, no matter how attractive Israel Club presidents might look in one piece bathing suits.

Thank you.  
Josh Goldman  
SSSB '04

### Speaking Out About Mental Health

To the editors:

Your skilled journalist Esther Flaschner interviewed me on the topic of mental health in the Yeshiva and at-large Jewish communities. The interview was in response to my article "We Are Not Alone," which was published in Columbia University's Hillel student newspaper, Kol Columbia. The article was then published in *The Jewish Week* in mid-January in the opinion section.

I have not yet had a chance to thank Esther for her courage; the topic of mental health, especially the most tragic product of the many permutations of mental illness, the plague of suicide, is perhaps the most difficult and controversial area of debate in the larger Jewish community. Esther's willingness to have my personal story of survival be shared with the Yeshiva community, and the bravery shown by your publication, should be commended as exemplary.

It is my belief that one of the most important functions of a newspaper is to fulfill a role that is not too different from other mediums like film and theater; that is, to tell a story. And what stories are more worthy of our attention, whether at the movie theater, on Broadway or in the pages of our sacred journalistic print, than the stories that, once told, may very well help us keep the most important mitzvah of all: *pikuach nefesh* (saving a life). Thanks to Ms. Flaschner, my story was narrated and hopefully communicated to others suffering in our communities that they are not alone.

Keep up the outstanding work and to all those suffering from depression, remember that all of the world may seem like a rickety, narrow bridge; but the essence we must remember is that we must not fear, for God and his healing messenger, Science, is always with us. Keep the peace.  
Sincerely,  
Yigal Scher  
Hunter College

## Arts and (Yeshiva) Culture

Due to unclear regulations enforced by the YC Office of the Deans, student creativity was put to an abrupt halt at the Arts Festival Drama Night. When students inquired about the reasons behind Yeshiva's ruling prohibiting men and women from being onstage simultaneously, the deans not only failed to cite any substantial grounds for the guideline, but refused to even comment on the entire issue of censorship.

While *The Observer* encourages the university to pay heed to the various religious and cultural sensitivities of its student body, we appeal to the administration to recognize the possibly unnecessary restraints placed on students involved in cultural events. If after careful consideration, these restraints indeed must be enforced, it seems only fair to offer an explanation to the students involved.

However, we recognize that it is impractical to expect artists to be given free range under the auspices of the university. Student publications and organizations do not accept funds from the university because of possible censorship and undesired restraints. Organizers of the Arts Festival should consider breaking from university-bestowed funds and entering the world of student-managed organizations. Only then can Arts Festival coordinators expect for its participants to be able to express themselves freely.

## An Education in Politics

*The Observer* applauds Yeshiva's recent attention to world politics in the forms of expansion of the political science department at SCW to include many more courses on the Middle East and the creation of the Arthur S. Schneier Center for International Affairs.

As the only American university in complete support of Israel, it is imperative that Yeshiva students be educated in the political issues in the Middle East and Israel's relationship to the United States. Too often students at Yeshiva senselessly spew their support for Israel, backed by biased accounts from Israeli Hebrew school teachers and the like. Classes focusing on the Middle East strengthen our university's commitment to Israel by ensuring that our loyalty is based on an informed and honest perspective.

Furthermore, such courses introduce students to a wider world of opinions from which they are often sheltered in a religious Jewish community.

In addition, the establishment of the Arthur S. Schneier Center for International Affairs, coordinated by YC and SCW's political science departments gives Yeshiva an academic platform from which support for Israel can be espoused and also acts as a tool for encouraging greater dialogue between our institution and those in Israel.

The Observer  
welcomes all letters to the editors.

We reserve the right to edit letters for grammar, length  
and content. No unsigned letters will be printed.

Letters should include the writer's address, as well as  
his or her school and expected date of graduation,  
if applicable. E-mail us at [observer@yu.edu](mailto:observer@yu.edu)

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Anat Barber,  
SCWSC President

The month of March, aside from its wary ideoles, is a month dedicated to women's history. As a women's college the connection is obvious. Women's history is something that should concern both men and women alike. We felt the best way to commemorate this month on campus was not to focus solely on what women have accomplished in the past but to conduct programming that will strengthen women for the future.

This month we hosted a one woman, dramatic performance called, "Flowers are not enough". The show starred Naomi Ackerman, a young mother from Israel, who wrote the script of the show after meeting with myriads of women from various shelters and abuse counseling programs. The monologue follows the development of an abusive relationship from the dating stages to the eventual divorce. The show was followed by a short question-answer session. Overall, women left the program with one of the most important tools a woman can acquire: knowledge.

Each of the women who attended is now better able to deal with potentially hazardous situations in their own lives and in those of their friends. This will have a permanent affect on the future of women's history.

The second program for Women's History Month dealt with the issue of clinical depression. A much ignored though pervasive problem in our community, depression was demystified. Depression and suicide on college campuses has become more prevalent and it was an

issue that would be irresponsible for us to omit from our focus on women. Rabbi Nati Helfgot, personal survivor of depression, shared with us his first-hand experiences dealing with mental illness. Subsequent to Rabbi Helfgot's account, Dr. Rochelle Ausubel of Stern College for Women Student Affairs Office gave a clinical overview discussing signs of depression and ways of dealing with it. From the questions that were posed to the panel, it was self-evident that the students were learning invaluable lessons that could help save lives. This will have a permanent affect on the future of women's history.

Our final event for Women's History Month took place on Rosh Chodesh Nisan. Rabannit Chana Henkin from Nishmat Advanced Torah Study Center for Women delivered a *shiur* to 50 women on campus. As a SCW graduate Rabannit Henkin truly exemplifies the torah ideals of Yeshiva University. Her commitment to nation's history and historical tradition are unyielding, while her vision for the future of women's Torah study is inspiring. She succeeded in sending a message of encouragement and opportunity to the women of Yeshiva to continue their commitment to Torah values for the sake of our nation's future. This will have a permanent affect on the future of women's history.

Women's history is a product of the actions and ideals of the women of the past. We reap the fruits of their commitment and therefore must reciprocate in kind. It is our dedication to today's women's issues that will affect the way our daughters and sons live their lives. So I encourage you to do what you can and hopefully, this will have a permanent affect on the future of women's history.



Rachel Moss,  
SSSBSC President

I'm sitting here at 2 a.m. after the Pesach Palooza, and I had such a great night. Dancing back stage and watching all the bands play was unbelievable. I was thinking that I will never have a chance like this to dance carefree with my friends again. Next year at this time I will have the daily responsibilities that have been so foreign to me all my life. It's crazy to think that in about 2 months from now I'll be in the work force (wherever that may be) making money that I will have to, dare I say it, SAVE rather than spending it on the things that I've liked to in the past. I'll have to deal with rent, phone bills, food bills, health insurance; it's scary to think about it.

I have one piece of advice for all of you readers out there: STAY IN COLLEGE FOR AS LONG AS YOU CAN!!!! Do what ever you have to do, if it means failing all your classes - so be it. Or taking on a second major or even a third-it's worth it. I've had so many great experiences in SSSB and in SCW.

There are a lot of things that I will miss. Before I go into rolling credits of memories, I'll stop myself. But I'll have you know there are a lot of them. There is such a plethora of knowledge encased in the institution we like to call Yeshiva University. There are so many opportunities out there for all YU students if they would only open their eyes and see all the resources they can utilize and make not only the university better but the Jewish nation as well. I've made it a point to say from day one, it's so easy to make things happen in this school because it's so eager. All it takes is a little bit of effort and it will happen.

How many colleges will allow the student bodies plan a trip to Amsterdam in a matter of days for an excursion that will last no more than 35 hours? It's unheard of.

In any other university students would have nothing to do with facility expansions. I can't tell you how many times Mr. Rosengarden has approached students about what they think of having flat screen TV's or bar stooling in the soon-to-be 215 cafe.

Administration is here for you and to make your experience here so much better. I mentioned in my past article that the office of student affairs is a major asset to the women of the newly named, Beren Campus. They continue to help students everyday, as they have helped me the past 3 years.

A lot of people have approached me from various communities saying that they've seen me around. They say "aren't you in *The Observer*?" I only wish I understood how many people outside of the Beren Campus read this newspaper. So I'll take advantage of it right now. To the readers in the surrounding communities and beyond: don't let go of the relationship you have with Yeshiva University - there is so much you can do for it and there is so much it can do for you.

Again, just make a small effort and so much can come out of that.

For those of us who have failed at staying in college, we will be leaving the halls of the Beren Campus to walk the isles of Madison Square Garden only receive the much anticipated letter of achievement we like to call a diploma.

I've gained a great deal from Yeshiva University. I think it's because I believe in it so much. I have such a huge respect for the foundation of this great institution. Torah U'mmada- the integration of Torah and general studies. It seemed so unattainable in the past, but with a little effort, ok maybe a lot, from people such as Dr. Revel, Dr. Belkin, Dr. Lamm, and President Joel - look at what they have created. I'd like to give all of you a blessing - may you take advantage of all that is given to you and make it count.



Lisa Grunman,  
TAC President

Thoughts to ponder, or just really good away messages...

They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.

Andy Warhol (1928 - 1987), *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*

Things do not change; we change.

Henry David Thoreau (1817 - 1862), *Walden* (1970)

It's not that some people have willpower and some don't. It's that some people are ready to change and others are not.

James Gordon, M.D.

To accomplish great things, we must dream as well as act.

Anatole France (1844 - 1924)

You see things; and you say, 'Why?' But I dream things that never were; and I say, 'Why not?'

George Bernard Shaw (1856 - 1950), *'Back to Methuselah'* (1921), part 1, act 1

Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.

Abraham Lincoln (1809 - 1865)

Generosity is giving more than you can, and pride is taking

less than you need.

Kahlil Gibran (1883 - 1931)

Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.

John F. Kennedy (1917 - 1963), speech prepared for delivery in Dallas the day of his assassination, November 22, 1963

In my first column as TAC President, two years ago, I quoted this poem. I would like to insert it here again, as we began the new month of Nissan. It is especially during this time of year that we should reflect upon ourselves and realize the essence of time as well as the choices that we make as we go throughout life.

To realize the value of ONE YEAR, ask a student who failed a grade.

To realize the value of ONE MONTH, ask a mother who gave birth to a premature baby.

To realize the value of ONE WEEK, ask the editor of a weekly newspaper.

To realize the value of ONE HOUR, ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.

To realize the value of ONE MINUTE, ask a person who missed the train.

To realize the value of ONE-SECOND, ask a person who just avoided an accident.

To realize the value of ONE MILLISECOND, ask the person who won a silver medal in the Olympics.

And remember that time waits for no one. Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift.

# Op-Ed

## Playing the Censorship Game

By Rebecca Rosenberg

As a student who chose to attend Yeshiva for the religious environment it provides, I believe that the administration should exercise censorship of artistic expression when it violates halakha. But also as a student interested in exploring all facets of the world around her, I also believe in supporting the arts as long as halakha mandates its permissibility.

I myself am not clear whether the case that presented itself at the Drama Night Arts Festival is one in which halakha was violated. The administration refused to address the issue of the halakha acceptability of males and females performing together on stage.

Another component of the problem at this event was charging a dean with overseeing such rules. Many felt that it was an unfair position to put Dean Joyce Jesionowski, who is not a halakha authority by any stretch of the imagination, in a role that determines appropriate behavior for Yeshiva students. It is unusual to place a gentile dean in a position of such import. We are a religious university. It seems far more appropriate to appoint a rabbi, not a faculty member, to monitor the event as the definition of decorousness at a religious institution is largely determined by halakha.

The play was canceled

though men and women were not acting on stage together, so the halakha injunction discussed above did not even come into play. The men were setting up while a woman gave a monologue. This oversight on the part of the cast hardly seems to justify such a dramatic decision as to cut the play altogether. Even when the cast approached the deans to try to reschedule a performance, promising to be more careful about observing the rule, the administration adamantly refused. It is true that the cast was aware of the rule and transgressed it inadvertently, for which they took full responsibility. Probably the students were not given a second chance because the dean, having little knowledge of halakha or religious sensitivities, could not make a decision about the weight of the offense.

Consequently, the play moved to a venue unaffiliated with the University, the Bowery Poetry Club. Many cast members were upset that they could not contribute this play to the artistic culture on campus due to such rigidity.

However, the University, not the cast of the play, was the real loser in this conflict. Yeshiva has been trying to establish a vibrant artistic culture on campus and has been successful, attracting more students to the Arts Festival this year than ever. Part of the success can be attributed to many adminis-

trators' open minded attitude toward artistic expression. For instance, the Arts Festival Gallery displayed partial nudes; a boy sniffing cocaine and a couple kissing. All these pieces passed through the halakha authorities - Rabbis Shalom Carmy and Yosef Blau - and were approved. Though many people would choose not to hang such works of art in their homes, it is important for students to be able to express themselves. It is this attitude of accommodation that makes students feel they can explore different venues of artistic expression within the context of Modern Orthodox Judaism without being condemned for it. The difficulty is that the line that divides decency from indecency shifts for every individual, making it extremely subjective. In a religious community, that line is further to the right. Ultimately, the rules governing events at the Arts Festival are going to be more stringent than those at a secular university and those standards should not be considered an infringement but rather an enhancement. Even still, censoring should not be exercised thoughtlessly, but should be the result of thought-out decisions based on more than an individual's immediate reaction. The censoring of this play with no discussion undermined the University's attempts to develop a thriving artistic community on campus.

## PhD: The Survivor's Account

continued from page 20

graduate program, Gross notes that at times it can be extremely frustrating and tedious. "When things finally work out as they should, its wonderful," said Gross.

Indeed, Dean Karen Bacon, herself a graduate of UCLA's graduate program with a doctorate in microbiology, notes that one of the greatest learning experiences in graduate school was learning how to accept failure - for most scientific experiments do not yield the desired results. According to Bacon, only the individual who possesses the emotional and intellectual stamina to continue in spite of failure will be able to succeed.

Students who love science, Gross notes, may truly enjoy the experience of attending graduate school to obtain a doctorate in the biomedical sciences. According to Gross, students learn critical thinking skills, and performing experiments teaches students a new way of thinking.

Rena May, also a graduate of SCW and AECOM is currently a research Fellow at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in the department of molecular pharmacology and chemistry, where she helps run clinical trials for patients with hematopoietic tumors. She is currently developing new vaccines for these tumors. As a graduate student at AECOM, May studied in the department of cell biology in the laboratory of Dr. Matthew Scharff. Her thesis was on the use of antibodies for the treatment and prevention of fungal diseases.

May, like Gross, notes that she truly enjoyed her experience as a graduate student. AECOM's open application system allows students accepted to the institution to rotate through labs in various departments, until they find their niche. When she applied to AECOM, May thought she knew her field of interest, but after a rotation in a lab, she reconsidered. According to May, the laid back atmosphere at AECOM was also conducive to learning; the professors are willing to help graduate students when approached. In other grad schools often the competition is so intense that individuals working on similar projects are reluctant to help each other out. This was never the case at AECOM, May noted.

According to May, a doctoral program is not the easy alternative to medical school. "There were often times when I would be in the lab until one or two in the morning - weekends included." In some institutions, it is possible to obtain a job. However, institutions offering jobs with 8-hour work days are often less reputable. Part time jobs are also available - but May warns that they are often not much more than glorified technician positions.

Despite all the hardships, May emphasized, "I love what I

do. Every day I come home so excited about what I am working on. Having chosen an area of work that has very specific clinical applications, I can see the end results of my labors all the time."

Students interested in pursuing a doctorate need a strong background in biology and chemistry. They need to take at least two semesters of biology, physics, inorganic, and organic chemistry, one semester of biochemistry (including lab), as well as ancillary biology courses, such as genetics, microbiology, immunology, cell biology and molecular biology. It is imperative that the laboratory portions of the aforementioned courses prepare students using the latest techniques and instruments. While the classes themselves are important, it is essential that proper lab techniques be learned as well.

Doctoral programs vary from one school to another, but in general, the first one or two years are spent in various laboratories, where the student rotates until she or he identifies a laboratory in which she wishes to carry out her doctoral dissertation under the mentorship of a faculty advisor. Once the student has chosen a laboratory in which to perform her investigations, she performs research there for the next four or five years. After the completion of a major research project, the doctoral dissertation is written. Once the doctoral dissertation is completed and reviewed by a committee comprised of faculty members, the doctoral degree is conferred.

For a successful graduate career, it is important to start reading and critiquing scientific papers as an undergraduate. While many of the articles may be tough reads initially, it is imperative that students with an interest in attending graduate school be able to critically read these papers and understand the implications of the science reported therein.

Students with doctorates in the biomedical sciences are open to many career opportunities. Many choose to pursue academic positions involving both teaching and research. With the advent of biotechnology, however, more and more scientists are entering industrial research positions. Some scientists are employed by the government or agencies concerned with scientific ethics or environmental protection. Some graduates become science writers or editors for scientific publishing companies.

For more information about pursuing a doctorate in the biomedical sciences, see Dr. Brenda Lowey, pre-health advisor, or visit the American Institute of Biological Sciences online at [www.aibs.org](http://www.aibs.org).

artitorial by chaya glaser



# SCW Students Don't Wear the Pants

## Students Choose Not to Participate in Jewish Feminist Conference

By Shoshana Weinberg

Despite the lack of interest at SCW, Orthodox women convened for the fifth time since the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance (JOFA) was established in 1997.

SCW would seem to be a natural membership pool for an organization like JOFA. However, very few SCW students attended the President's Day weekend conference. Shifra Landowne, an SCW senior, felt that SCW women must be aware of the responsibility of keeping up with women's issues in the Jewish community. "As someone who goes to a women's college, I think the ideas are relevant to my life," she explained.

Elysia Rothenberg agreed that women's issues are particularly relevant to the women of SCW. "Women can have a role (in Judaism) and still be within the parameters of halakha," said Rothenberg. Rothenberg added that although she did not attend this year's conference, she has been to previous JOFA conferences as well as the Edah conference. Edah is an organization whose slogan reads "the courage to be modern and Orthodox." Edah and JOFA share the goal of enhancing the role of women within Orthodox Judaism, however, Edah's focus is not limited to women's issues but spans a variety of issues facing the

Orthodox community. "It is important for people who have never gone to go," said Rothenberg.

Other students disagree. Diana Benmergui, an SCW senior, opposed Rothenberg's view. "I don't think women are misrepresented in our world," she said. "We have our role and don't have to try and be everything that a man is."

JOFA president Carol Kaufman Newman wonders if students with Benmergui's mentality are thrown off by the word feminist. She admitted that more

than once the board considered taking the word feminist out of their name. "Feminism is a scary word," Newman conceded. "We have to get the word out that it's not an ugly word but about women taking their place in Jewish society."

agunah crisis and the singles problem.

Several other issues were discussed that, though not life-threatening problems, were meant to help redefine women's roles in the Jewish community.

Prayer was an important theme. Presenters and attendees - both male and female - voiced frustration with prayer "as a spectator sport" and suggested various solutions.

Rabbi Dovid Silber, founder and dean of the Drisha Institute for Jewish Education, a learning center for women, emphasized that all "woman's issues" are issues that affect and should be confronted by the entire Jewish community. Silber clarified that "If we had more female spiritual leaders, and yes I'd call

them rabbis, who'd benefit? We all would."

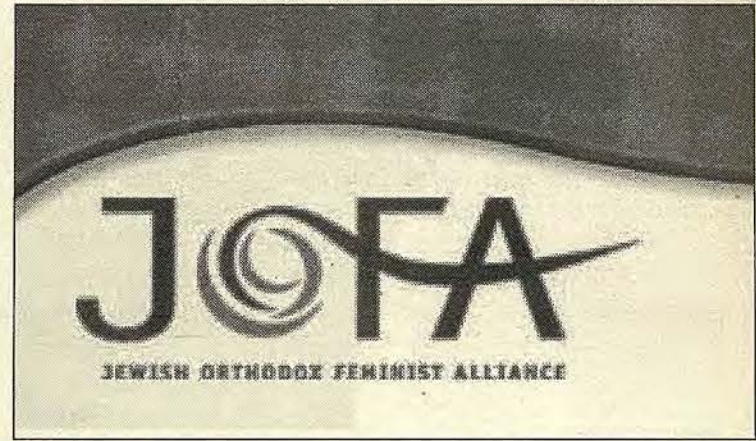
In a panel about rabbis and change, Rabbi Yosef Kanefsky, rabbi of B'nei David-Judea, espoused similar ways of dealing with women's issues in the Orthodox community. Regarding prayer, Kanefsky suggested whispering the prayer where men thank God for not having created them a women, instead of proclaiming loudly. He also suggested offering the option of reciting the names of both parents when calling someone to the Torah. When asked about his position regarding ordaining women rabbis, Kanefsky hedged for a moment before declaring that "actually

*"Actually the stupidest thing about Orthodoxy today is that women are not rabbis."*

more about like the agunah issue and wife and child abuse."

Newman described the JOFA women as "the most wonderful women young and old, scholars, PhDs, doctors, lawyers. They are mothers and wives and sisters and a group of women who fit the role of doing the ordinary while doing the extraordinary."

Inadvertently, she also described the probable future of many current SCW students. As future leaders of the Jewish community - women who are highly educated in Torah studies, articulate and passionate enough about their Judaism to attend an Orthodox college - SCW women will undoubtedly encounter women's issues and will ultimately be forced to confront them from time to time whether in the guise of feminism or day care for their young children, or being able to speak up about their synagogue matters.



the stupidest thing about Orthodoxy today is that women are not rabbis."

Although it's highly unlikely that all of the conference attendees agreed with Kanefsky's statement, the cheering that followed may point to why so many SCW students stay away from JOFA. The fact is that many Orthodox women, SCW students in particular, don't seem to see JOFA as an organization that caters to them - or as an organization that they need in any particular way.

Dr. Roberta Rosenberg-Farber, a professor of sociology at SCW, believes that certain issues that JOFA deals with are important even for non-feminists. "Feminist issues affect the entire community because they have to do with men and women together and family which is the bedrock of Jewish society and all societies." Although Farber said that SCW students should only go to the conference if the issues interested them, she did emphasize that "there were certain issues that the students should know about like the agunah

## Woman to Woman Lecture on Halakhic Leadership

By Sarah Kupferstein

On Sunday April 18, Rivka Lubitsch and Shani Taragin will speak on the topic "Breaking New Ground: Orthodox Women in the 21st Century." This lecture is the second in the yearlong series of lectures that celebrates the 50th anniversary of SCW.

The lectures, made possible by the generosity of SCW board member Dr. Marcia Robbins-Wilf, are slated to run from February to December 2004, and are organized by Cali Orenbuch '85, and Debbie Niderberg '86, co-chairs of the lecture series.

"[Lubitsch and Taragin] will talk about what their job entails on a day-to-day basis," remarked Orenbuch. The lecture will take place at Yeshiva University Geraldine Schottenstein Cultural Center.

The opening event, which initiated the Jubilee series, took place on February 29. The keynote speaker was David Makovsky, former executive edi-

tor of *The Jerusalem Post* and senior fellow at the Washington Institute who directs its Project on America, Israel, and the Peace Process.

"We were very pleased with the turnout," said Orenbuch

also enjoyable," added Niderberg. "There were only positive comments afterwards."

The next event promises to be just as inspiring. "Both of these women, in a quiet way, are at the forefront of change in the

women to be in such positions is extraordinary."

Lubitsch is a *Toenet Rabbanit*, or legal advocate. She works for the Ohr Torah Stone's Yad L'Isha, a legal aid center in Jerusalem. Yad L'Isha specializes in assist-

from their husband. "What Yad L'Isha is doing is unparalleled. It's amazing; they [the institute] work with cases that floundered in the system for four to five years. The cases have legal and psychological obstacles and they resolve those issues. They work with the Rabbinate and have a 90 percent success rate in freeing these women-and 60 percent of them are not religious. It's extraordinary that they move these cases off the docket."

Taragin serves as a *Yoetzet Halakha*, religious advisor in matters of family purity, for which she underwent a rigorous training program in Israel. The fact that she was accepted by the Israeli Rabbinate is unusual and significant. In addition, she is a teacher and *RaM* (head instructor) at Midreshet Lindenbaum and a lecturer at *Matan*, the Women's Institute for Torah Studies in Jerusalem, both institutes of scholarly reputation.



Rivka Lubitsch, right, and Shani Taragin, left, will speak about new opportunities for women in Halakhic leadership



of the first lecture. "The gentlemen did a great job; they were informative, interesting and dynamic. It was also very current, especially with The Hague trial and the fence being built now in Israel."

"It was a thoughtful discussion and an in-depth analysis, yet

Orthodox world in different ways and in different frameworks," said Niderberg. "Both them and the institutions they represent are making enormous contributions to Orthodox Jewish life and to women. They're modest but doing extraordinary things, and for

ing agunot in acquiring a *get*, a religious divorce, and Lubitsch works with the Israeli *Bet Din* to obtain *gittin* for women.

"Lubitsch deals with an area that has been troublesome for many years," Niderberg observed, referring to the issue of women who have difficulty receiving a *get*

# Political Science Department Experiences Rapid Growth

By Rebecca Rosenberg

Overall enrollment of students in political science courses at SCW has doubled from an average of approximately 75 students two years ago to 140 this spring, said Professor Joseph Luders, head of the political science department, due to a plethora of developments in the department. In response to the increase in enrollment, a full time faculty member, Bryan Daves, a specialist on Middle East politics and economics from Columbia University was hired for next year.

"Thanks to strong support from the administration, things really are getting better all the time," said Luders. "To me, the rise in enrollment signals not only a dramatic surge in general interest in the outside world but also a growing awareness that exciting things are happening in the political science department at Stern."

Many students attribute the department's increasing success to the signing on of Luders as the only permanent political science faculty member, back in 2002. "There was not a professor for the Political Science department only for Stern," said SCW junior Beth Katz, a political science minor and president of the J.D. Dunner political science society. "The fact that there is now at least one professor whose job it is just be the political science professor at Stern creates an atmosphere of permanence."

"I came into SCW when Luders came and every semester I took a class with him," said junior Rebecca Kartin, a political

science major. "You make a connection with a teacher, and you want to continue with that teacher next semester."

Kartin also suggested that the department's increasing popularity is related to the courses that have been offered. "I think a lot of it has to do with Professor Luders who has offered a larger variety of classes...and kids who are coming in have a broader range of classes to take," said Kartin.

To respond to the rising demand for topical courses, the department has arranged courses dealing with international terrorism, Middle East politics, media and politics and international relations. Next year the department plans to offer courses on Israeli politics and religion in American politics.

Concurring with students' desire for more permanent faculty, the political science department at SCW has hired Daves. In addition, the Wilf Campus has also hired two new full-time faculty members that will not be teaching at SCW, but there is a possibility of more cooperation between the departments in the future. This signals a positive trend at Yeshiva. Part of the problem, suggested Luders, is that adjuncts often teach at several institutions and cannot devote themselves to SCW in the same way a permanent faculty member with benefits can.

Luders explained the advantages of the new, permanent faculty. "This means that the combined departments [SCW and Wilf campuses] will have five full-time faculty members [in the political science department]," said Luders. "This is a big change

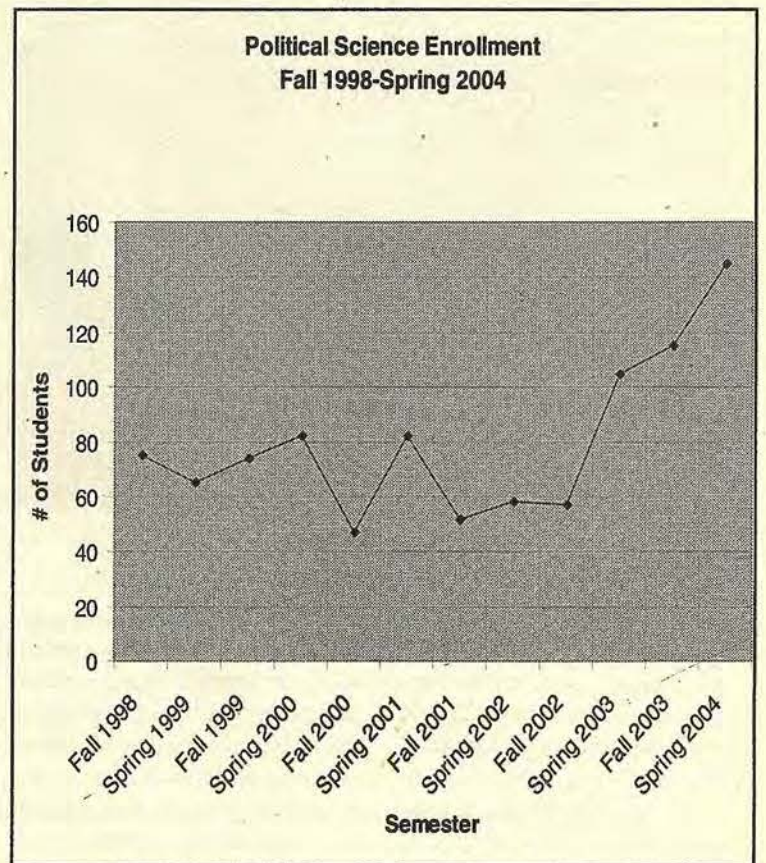
and will significantly enhance the quality of the undergraduate curriculum, especially in the areas of Middle East politics and international relations."

Complementing the increase in enrollment and the department's growth, Luders is in the process of starting an online social science journal for SCW titled *Insight*. "The journal is meant to furnish students with the chance to participate in what social scientists actually do and obtain a publication credit that will help them after graduation, especially if they go on to graduate school," he explained.

In an effort to provide further opportunities for students in the Political Science department, Dean Karen Bacon and Luders have created two Public Affairs Summer Fellowships. They will pay each of the two students chosen a \$2,000 stipend during their low-wage or unpaid summer internship. The application date passed February 28. Recipients have yet to be announced.

The more visible presence of the political science department has paralleled a more visible presence of student organizations related to it, such as the J.D. Dunner Political Science Society (JDDPSS). The JDDPSS organized a Shabbaton with the College Democrats and the Young Republicans, two new organizations on campus this year. They invited State Senator Liz Krueger as the guest speaker, who lectured on her life and public service.

Katz, one of the primary organizers of the event, asserted that a political presence is extremely valuable for a college



**campus**

"Unfortunately, a lot of students on campus don't know anything about politics or worldly issues, and I think it is important for them to be aware of the world around them," she said.

Luders is excited about the new political fervor on campus acknowledging, "We need more political engagement and debate on campus, and I welcome every bit of enthusiasm that students are showing for American politics, international affairs, and the many pressing issues of our

Semester	Enrollment	
Fall 1998	75	6
Spring 1999	65	5
Fall 1999	74	4
Spring 2000	82	5
Fall 2000	47	5
Spring 2001	82	6
Fall 2001	52	7
Spring 2002	58	5
Fall 2002	57	4
Spring 2003	105	6
Fall 2003	115	5
Spring 2004	145	7

time." "We still have a long way to go but I am thrilled with the changes that have already taken place and those that are on the horizon," he added.

## Center for International Affairs Commences



Rabbi Arthur S. Schneier will be funding the program

world for students, exposing them to leading personalities who will be at the center to lecture, hold seminars and to be a part of conferences," she explained.

Many students are enthusiastic about the center and its potential impact on SCW. "I'm really excited about this institute and think it will bring a new dimension to Stern," said SCW senior Sarah Richstone. "I hope eventually students can be involved."

There is discussion of establishing an Israel studies center that would ultimately collaborate with the Center for International Affairs. "It is certainly possible that an Israel studies center and the Rabbi Arthur S. Schneier Center for International Affairs would work together," Bevan said. "We shall see what the future holds."

Bevan hopes the center will become central for all Yeshiva students providing them with an

indispensable resource. "The center fills a void at the university," she stated. "It will give the university an international persona and enable us to be an intellectual forum with world-wide relevance."

Many administrators, such as Dean Karen Bacon agreed with Bevan regarding the importance of a center for international affairs. "I'm very excited because it represents the coming together of greater interest from students in international affairs and a desire for the University to have a more public presence in exploring issues of international affairs," said Bacon. "In addition, it fills a very public need to shed more light on controversial topics that deal with war and peace and state autonomy that are in the news every day."

In light of these priorities, the chosen speaker for the inaugural event is highly appropriate. Haass is president of the Council on Foreign Relations, a presti-

gious think tank dedicated to disseminating ideas to enable people to better understand the world and the foreign policy choices facing the United States and other governments.

Until recently, he was director of policy planning for the Department of State where he was a principal advisor to Secretary of State Colin Powell. From 1989 to 1993, he was special assistant to President George Bush and senior director for Near East and South Asian Affairs on the staff of the National Security Council. In 1991, Haass was awarded the Presidential Citizens Medallion for his contributions to the development and articulation of United States policy during operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Haass will deliver a lecture entitled, "The Greater Middle East: Present and Future - Iran, Iraq, Israel/Palestine and Reform in the Arab World" at 8:00 pm at Park East Synagogue. Joel and

Rabbi Arthur Schneier will also speak.

Schneier, a Yeshiva alumnus, and namesake of the center is a longtime advocate for religious freedom and human rights. Joel praised Schneier for his humanitarian work and is proud to have the center bear his name, according to Yeshiva's Department of Communications and Public Affairs. Schneier has been the rabbi of the historically liberal and activist Park East Synagogue since 1962 and is funding the project. He is the founder and president of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, an organization that works on behalf of human rights and religious freedom throughout the world.

## Dressed in Costumes and Armed with Candy, YU Students Bring Purim to Hospitals



Yeshiva students bring costumes and laughs as they visit hospitals on Purim

By Melodie Balarsky

This year Purim was not just one day of fun. From Ta'anit Esther on Thursday, March 4, through Purim on Sunday, March 7, the mood of bringing food-baskets and laughter seemed to many, to last the whole weekend. And while this bonus time for partying has its merits, it could potentially leave one with some time to fill.

Capitalizing on that lull, Yeshiva students organized a city-wide hospital visit on Purim day. Armed with the traditional food gift baskets - *mishloach manot* - distributed on the holiday, more than 100 students visited Jewish patients in hospitals and nursing homes throughout Manhattan and the Bronx.

"Often, people aren't very busy Purim morning," said YC senior Ariel Bayewitz, one of the organizers of the Purim visits. "Bringing happiness to others through *mishloach manot* and *matanot lievyonim* (donating money to the poor), is what Purim is about. So we thought this would be a nice idea."

In preparation for the visits, student organizers contacted the chaplains of hospitals and nursing homes to obtain names of Jewish patients in each facility. In order to meet everyone's physical needs, care was taken to pack regular and diabetic food packages. Sarita Gober, coordinator of the Lenox Hill Bikur Cholim Inc. Volunteer

Visiting Program on Manhattan's Upper East Side, oriented volunteers regarding appropriate behavior when visiting hospital patients. "The orientation provides volunteers with the knowledge and confidence they need to be an effective visitor for patients and their family members," said Gober. "It means so much that these volunteers chose to spend their Purim visiting others; they accomplished so much through their kindness. Many hospital patients are disconnected from activities and events outside the hospital therefore may not be able to celebrate the joy of Purim. However, the volunteers made the joyous holiday attainable for everyone."

Organizers from both campuses worked on making the program a multi-dimensional event. The day began with a lecture from Rabbi Meir Goldvicht, Rosh Yeshiva, while students enjoyed breakfast. Goldvicht discussed the importance of kindness on Purim and emphasized that bringing joy to others conveys the essence of Purim.

After Goldvicht's lecture, students proceeded to the hospital or nursing home they were assigned to visit. Although some students faced initial hesitation over visiting the hospitals, their fears were quickly allayed thanks to the overwhelmingly positive responses they received from patients. "Normally hospitals and nursing homes intimidate me, but my intimidation immediately vanished as soon as I start-

ed speaking to the nursing home residents," said Ilana Lieberman, an SCW junior.

However, students were enthusiastic and eager to entertain and visit hospital and nursing home patients, according to organizers. "We mostly talked to people, handed out *mishloach manot*, and for those who had musical instruments, sang and played as well," said SCW junior Shifra Cooper. Donning a variety of costumes, students dressed as Marvel Comic's Spiderman and Dr. Seuss' Cat in the Hat accompanied by other students who brought musical instruments. "Many people wore fun, creative costumes," said SCW sophomore Estee Metzger. All volunteers received jester hats decorated with a Yeshiva pendant.

Several Yeshiva volunteers were warmly thanked for their efforts. Lieberman recalled an elderly woman explaining that she had recently moved from Israel to New York. She lamented that when she lived in Israel, Purim was always festive, but since she had come to New York and began living in the nursing home, she had not had the opportunity to celebrate Purim. Ehud Sasson, a YC junior, recalled a man crying because the Yeshiva students were the first Jews to visit him since he entered the nursing home.

In a thank-you letter to the Yeshiva volunteers, Assistant Director of Admissions Daniel Morris praised everyone for their hard work, dignified effort and exuberant enthusiasm, emphasizing that not only were the patients spirits uplifted, but the hospital staffs as well. "Without your visit, we would not have remembered the day and now we are celebrating it," said one patient, according to Morris.

Pleased with the turnout, students hope the event will become a Yeshiva tradition, according to Tirza Schlanger, an SCW junior and an organizer. "The outpour of students interested in volunteering was tremendous," said Schlanger. "By the number of people who were involved I am sure that this can become a YU tradition."

## Talmud Program Seeks Master's Accreditation Some Question the Effort

continued from page 1

tests, are given to students to test their comprehension and knowledge.

Where the program veers from traditional *yeshivot*, however, is in its enrollment of women and its confirmation of a certificate rather than rabbinic ordination.

The immediate benefit of attaining master's status will be to bestow official recognition on SCW scholars who complete the two-year Talmud syllabus. Currently, no authorized certification exists in the United States for Orthodox women who complete advanced *yeshiva-style* Talmudic study. Universities offer academic secular doctorates in Talmud, and men who complete religious tracts of study receive rabbinic ordination. Yet the unique combination of women pursuing advanced religious Talmudic study fits neither mold, and remains largely undressed in American Jewry. For Orthodox women, rabbinic ordination is not a possibility as it is not permitted in the Orthodox community. And if Orthodox women desire a traditional Talmudic-style learning program, an academic degree would not fulfill that role either.

The only relatively analogous program to SCW's is The Scholars Circle at the Drisha Institute in Manhattan. The Scholar's Circle is a three-year curriculum of advanced textual Talmudic and halakhic study. Upon completion, students receive the Drisha Scholar's Certificate.

The lack of official recognition poses particular challenges for women entering the workforce upon completion of advanced post-bachelors Talmudic study. Without advanced conferment, women's knowledge can be easily overlooked and disregarded.

This problem is especially acute in regards to women's salaries compared to men's, at institutions of Jewish education. According to Devorah Zlochower, Director of Full-Time Programs at the Drisha Institute, the issue of recognition and salary has remained a prime concern for the Scholar's Circle graduates. "We wanted to have it instituted that graduates of the Scholars program would be paid equivalent to those that have *smicha* [rabbinic ordination]," clarified Zlochower. "I'm very happy to hear that Stern wants to do this. Anything that helps very qualified people get ahead is good."

Yet SCW's plan for accreditation is not without its detractors. Some worry that becoming an academic graduate program will undermine the intensity of the current Talmud tract. Students now engaged in the Talmudic course of study often

pursue it solely for the sake of learning; offering a master's is a pragmatic incentive that may permeate the purely intellectual quality of the Beit Midrash.

Furthermore, some see the accreditation effort as patronizing to learning women. "We don't get *smicha* - so give us a certificate," said Shana Schick, a second-year student in the Graduate Women's Talmud Program. "They have lower expectations of girls. They're saying 'We'll give you a master's for the same thing the boys do.' They should give us religious acknowledgment."

The option of giving an academic master's degree for the *yeshiva-style* Talmud learning is in itself enigmatic. Traditionally, Jewish *yeshivas* promulgated analytical textual approaches to rational Talmud study. The relatively recent development of secular Talmudic doctorates, prevalent in many American universities, focuses on the critical academic study of Talmud.

"The more academic approach is a complementary way of looking at Talmud," explained Rabbi Moshe Kahn, a professor of Judaic Studies at SCW. "It introduces a historical perspective. It takes the *Gemarah*, *Tosefta*, *Mishnah*, *Braissa*, *Yerushalmi* [various Talmudic works], and compares texts. It's about the why, finding the historical event existing at the time that brought about certain opinions." According to Kahn, *yeshiva-style* Talmudic students focus on what the texts actually disclose, attempting to garner information from rational analysis. "Knowing the 'why' from a social, historical perspective - I'm not tuned into that and for me it's interesting, but a tangential issue to what's actually being said."

Kanarfogel avoided defining an exclusive dichotomy between secular academic and religious analytical Talmudic studies. "There are different types of academic Jewish studies," he explained. "The moment you have clear course structure, examination and structured learning, then we are eligible for a degree."

The desire to seek accreditation for non-traditional academic study - although intellectually rigorous study - may explain why SCW, as opposed to Yeshiva, would decide to grant the degree. "At Stern we have a broad definition of academic Jewish studies," clarified Kanarfogel. "The nature of delivering Judaic studies is as a '*yeshiva l'banot*' (traditional Jewish school for Women). We invented the concept of academic Torah studies for women on the college level. Now we're inventing the next phase."

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## PR Branch to Open at SCW

*continued from page 1*

The move comes in the third year of Ferrara's reign over the university's Public Affairs Department, a tenure that has seen significant reorganization of the department and a commitment to reinvigorating public relations efforts at Yeshiva. Ferrara stressed the integral role that President Richard Joel played in expediting the process. Although the possibility had been considered in the past, according to Ferrara, it was brought to the fore through "lengthy conversations with President Joel."

Sources confirm that the move has been disclosed to the Yeshiva Board of Trustees and members of the Public Affairs department at its main Wilf Campus headquarters and its Cardozo office, but that official

publication of the decision has yet to be issued. Insiders have speculated that the new satellite office has not yet been formally announced because of a fear of backlash from Yeshiva graduate schools that covet the focus of an individualized public relations department and their disappointment with the creation of one at SCW.

Regardless, SCW administrators are expected to embrace the change, viewing it as a recognition of their own unique needs and an opportunity to channel much of their public relations with an individualized focus. SCW Dean Karen Bacon applauds the move, calling the announcement "very exciting." Bacon confirmed that this department was indeed "something that we [at SCW] wanted for a long time."

One of the first chores to be tackled by the new team will be an audit of SCW's programs and activities in hope of identifying the prospects that demand immediate attention, according to an eager Ferrara. And according to Bacon, those programs and activities are indeed abundant. "There is so much going on on campus," she remarked. "We have an expanded faculty, an expanded campus and a multitude of worthy activities." After that, the department will immediately set out to take on those tasks, as it becomes integrated into the university's overarching public affairs campaign effort.

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## New Position Brings New Addition for Major Gifts at YU



Kitey, above, will be joining the Yeshiva development team as the senior director of major gifts.

By Shifra Landowne

Earlier this month, Yeshiva appointed Joyce C. Kitey to the newly created position of Senior Director of Development for Major Gifts. "We are delighted to have Joyce Kitey on our development team," said Vice President for Development Daniel T. Forman. "She is a highly respected professional whose experience and background with leading Jewish organizations will be invaluable to the University's growth and success in the years ahead."

Kitey's position will consist of developing and pursuing strategies to attract major philanthropic support for education and research at Yeshiva's undergraduate, graduate and professional schools, as well as the boys and girls high schools, and affiliated theological seminary and museum. "Kitey will work with and assist Jewish and non-Jewish philanthropists and communal leaders in Palm Beach, Dallas, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and New York," said Forman. "YU has a number of initiatives underway or on the drawing boards which should be exciting to potential donors. We recently concluded a successful \$400 million capital campaign and anticipate that Joyce will help us build on the momentum from that campaign." Kitey will be work-

ing closely with President Richard Joel, Forman, and each school's respective development and alumni teams.

Kitey has begun orienting herself with the various Yeshiva institutions, meeting with the deans at SCW and other Yeshiva schools. She looks forward to working with the schools and being in the academic atmosphere as part of taking on her new task. "It is a top notch school that's only going to reach greater heights," she said. "Richard Joel has some dynamic, innovative dreams. I hope through increased funding I can help make some of those dreams possible."

Kitey previously served as the national director of major gifts for the American Committee for Shaare Zedek Medical Center. She was also their Southeast region director. She brings additional experience from her time as associate executive director for the Jewish Community Center in Manhattan, where she led a development team in raising \$19 million for the construction of a 10-story, 135,000 square foot building. As senior vice president for development for New York City's Center for Jewish History from 1997 to 2000, Kitey directed a \$32.5 million fundraising campaign.

Kitey is a graduate of Temple University and also studied at Pennsylvania State University. She is a member of the honorary council of Hadassah and serves on the executive committee of AIPAC. She is currently living in Palm Beach, Florida and will conduct her position from there, traveling both to New York and all over the country on behalf of Yeshiva.

## A Lesson in Synthesis: Psychology, Judaism and SCW

*Alumna Profile of Sharona Cunin-Benoff*

By Marissa Parker

While most SCW students do not recognize the name Sharona Cunin-Benoff, they have heard of the club she formed on campus. Before graduating in '91, Benoff formed the SCW Psychology Club. In her career since then, her accomplishments have been numerous.

As the school psychologist at Solomon Schechter for three years, Benoff mainly works with children who have learning or behavior difficulties - a group which has been paid more attention to, only in recent years within the Jewish School system. "I feel very strongly about helping Jewish kids who, either because of cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs, or school resources, do

not have access to the help they need," said Benoff. "I think there desperately needs to be more work done in the Jewish community in the areas of mental health and learning needs in yeshivas and day schools. It is an under recognized problem and under treated." Because of this, Benoff enjoys working in a school where she has the capacity to be instrumental in fulfilling her goal to bring greater awareness about childhood problems within the Jewish community. Her position as the school's liaison to the committee of special education division of New York's Board of Education, is therefore, a very important role to her.

While she has been out of SCW for quite some time, she still remembers her time at college as being very focused on her major. "I came into Stern already knowing that I wanted to be a psychologist" said Benoff. Aside from starting the Psychology Club, she also produced the first Psychology Club Journal which

currently is a popular publication for psychology majors at SCW. During her senior year she was president of the club and organized a lecture series featuring well-known figures in the field of psychology. Always with her eye on the future, Benoff organized a forum on graduate schools that provided psych majors with information on various programs.

Benoff credits SCW with instilling in her the need to synthesize psychology with

with pursuing my doctorate was definitely a challenge, but I got through it with support of my husband," she explained. Benoff recalls advice she once received: "You may be able to have a lot of what you hope for or even everything you're aiming for but maybe not all at the same time." She has tried to keep these words in mind throughout her career.

As the daughter of two clinical psychologists, her parents exposed her to ideas about psychology at an earlier age than the average high school student. While the children of psychologists can often be the brunt of bad jokes, some people do find it hard to separate their career as a psychologist from their family life. But Benoff puts a more positive spin to this interplay. "I think being a psycholo-

gist has helped me become a better parent and being a parent has enabled me to become a better psychologist." Benoff says that she observes what works in both arenas and then applies things accordingly. "My psychology training made me more attuned to my children's needs, from organizing their backpacks to dealing with their social issues with friends," she explained. It has also granted her the insight into seeing the strengths and weaknesses of each child as opposed to generalizing based on one example.

While most graduate programs for psychology can be a long and tiresome process, Benoff notes that psychology research shows that passion leads to success. This balancing act can be difficult - being a successful psychologist, advocate for the Jewish community, wife and mother - but with her background at SCW and driving passion, Benoff has seemingly mastered the task.

*"You may be able to have a lot of what you hope for or even everything you're aiming for but maybe not all at the same time."*

Judaism. As president of the Psychology Club, Benoff planned a number of events that intertwined psychology and Judaism. Benoff recalled a lecture with Rabbi Reuven Bulka, a psychologist from Canada, and editor of the *Journal of Psychology and Judaism*. "Aside from being well known in the field of psychology and Judaism/geriatrics, he represents broadly what I wanted to do with my life which is bringing together Jewish needs and values with psychological principles and methods of treatment," said Benoff. "That mix between psychology and Judaism is extremely meaningful to me." In retrospect Benoff feels that "Stern was an important growing time for me as a person, a member of the Jewish community and as a leader."

After graduation, Benoff attended the Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology, Yeshiva University, and in '98 and was married to Baruch Benoff, a Yeshiva and AECOM alumnus. "Balancing marriage and kids

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## Mission Israel Cancels Mission Gaza

continued from page 1

heard about Sokol through his nephew and RIETS Rosh HaYeshiva Rabbi Hershel Reichman, the match was a perfect one. "They found each other," Poupko observed.

In fact, Sokol had just contributed a piece on Sharon's decision for removal of families from Gaza to *The Commentator*. "I oppose the Gaza pullout, but its ramifications for the rest of the land overshadow even the worst aspects of this ill-conceived maneuver," he wrote. "Until we show backbone in response to terror and stand firm on Gaza, we will never get the respect or support that America would provide, given the chance."

And so, Sokol agreed to spearhead the mission, which would run from March 28 to April 3, leaving students enough time to return home before the Pesach holiday.

However, the mission was cancelled due to safety precautions after the killing of Hamas leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin.

While Schachter, reflecting the general ideology of Yeshiva and the Israel Club, viewed Frager's intention to send a mission to Gaza as extremist, Sokol saw it as an opportunity he could not pass up for Mission Israel and student activists. "A chance to do something good like that...I mean, think of the [public relations]," he noted.

When an email was sent to the Yeshiva student body, however, there was no mention of Gaza at all. "Plans include going to such places as Hebron, Yerushalayim, Beit El (to visit Arutz Sheva), and many, many more places!" the e-mail said. Those who knew the intentions of the trip were uncomfortable with what one student considered, "false advertising."

However, Schachter said he was confident it was an innocent mistake. "I told him right away [that he should include the Gaza information] and I believe he sent out another e-mail correcting it to people who had answered," he recalled. "I think he had never done this before and had just wanted the e-mail to sound as exciting as possible."

The goal of Mission Israel, according to the organization's website, is "to ignite a love for the land of Israel so strong that even Jews who are completely unaffiliated will feel a part of the Jewish Nation."

The organization currently has campus chapters in Georgia State University, Yeshiva, both at the Wilf and Beren campuses, as well as at Lander's College for Men.

It hopes to raise awareness about the State of Israel with the ultimate goal of 'national identification,' through which Jews from all backgrounds can personally identify with their homeland.

"We are deeply politically conservative, nationalistic, [and have a] revisionist Zionist, Jabotinsky ideology," Sokol stated. The organization stands for keeping territorial integrity, going against any peace process they "don't think will work," and promotion of *aliyah*, according to Sokol. "We get involved in political issues that some of the other clubs won't touch," he said.

The YC/SCW Israel Club, on the other hand, aims to maintain a relatively impartial political position, instead striving to act as what Poupko describes as "the Israel Club umbrella."

"The Israel club has two primary goals," she explained. "One, to increase awareness about the State of Israel, its current situation and what it needs from us.

Two, running pro-Israel activities, whether that's fundraising for an organization, hearing a speaker which will make us more interested when it comes to advocacy, and things like that. We are interested in both educating and making the students feel more involved while giving them avenues to be active."

She emphasized that by nature of the fact that the club is part of Yeshiva, it is naturally more right-wing. However, the Israel Club will not turn away opportunities for events of a more leftist nature, as long as it corresponds to the decisions of the Israeli government. "We're pro-Israel—that's what we advocate and that's what we support," she said.

When controversy abounded in November over the Israel Club's decision to cancel left-wing refusenik Guy Grossman from appearing at a planned debate, the Israel Club responded that its guidelines are modeled after that of the Israeli government itself. The decision was made in light of the policies of President Richard Joel, who had preserved a policy of only advocating events that were in concurrence with the Israel government from his days as director of Hillel.

"Generally, we like to be apolitical in a right wing school," Poupko concluded. "We don't like to associate with any extremist party."

Consequently, when Mission Israel approached Poupko and Lerner at the beginning of the year to partner with the Israel Club, they declined. "We didn't want to alienate groups," she said.

But the ramifications of two Israel organizations on campus could become problematic, she said. "I do feel that in order for



Frager was impressed with Sokol, above, and hoped to sponsor a trip of Yeshiva students to Gaza. Due to security concerns, Sokol was forced to postpone the mission but is planning to reorganize for Shavuot

Israel advocacy to be successful on campus [it] needs to be centralized to one address. When you have a million different clubs claiming to be pro-Israel, nothing gets done."

Sokol said that the mission to Gaza is now being considered for Shavuot.

Schachter pointed out that while the mission is not affiliated with Yeshiva and might deflect precious funds from Yeshiva-sponsored events, he praised Sokol for his efforts. "I personally did not want to get involved," he said. "I can't say I thought this happened the way it should have happened. But I give him all the credit for trying. He believes in something and he's going to try to do something about it."

Aside from his work on campus, Sokol's words of admonition regarding what he considers American complacency towards

the situation in Israel can be found on various websites and in *The Commentator*. In a post on *manhigut.org*, Sokol wrote, "We do not want to be seen as being against the 'multi-cultural/everyone is morally equal' world of contemporary American culture...they forget that this type of thinking led their grandparents to be silent as Europe's Jews were being baked in ovens."

Sokol, with the help of his Mission Israel partners, has already organized three lectures on the Wilf Campus and was in charge of publicity and sales for the recent Pesach Palooza, from which proceeds will go to help Jews living in Hebron. He mentioned that one of their next "missions" is to transform the organization's newsletter, *L'aretz*, to a bona fide newspaper.

## Mission to the Hague

continued from back page

"The bus they brought is so sterile," she said. "It's nothing like after the bomb...you look down and you realize your boots are covered in blood, you see children's organs and you can smell the flesh."

Over 3,000 protesters were in attendance, according to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Among them were many prominent leaders of world Jewry. Many were pleased with the large turnout. "This has surpassed our expectations," said Joel Kaplan, the president of B'nai Brith. "The outpouring of emotion is exceptional. Some attributed the large numbers at The Hague to the disappointing numbers at the Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa in 2001. "This particular rally and [these] pictures are a response to the inactivity of Durban," said Judy Palkovitz, the

national secretary of Hadassah. "I went to Durban and this is entirely different. In Durban, there were thousands of Palestinians."

Rabbi Avi Weiss, former professor of Bible at SCW and rabbi of the Hebrew Institute in Riverdale, shouted toward The Hague "shame, shame, shame." The man who has become an icon of Jewish activism had much softer words for Yeshiva students. "God bless you for coming here," said Weiss. "It's an extraordinary statement. This is one of the most terrible days that will live in infamy."

Along with Hillel Davis, vice president for university affairs, Peter Ferrara, director of the department of communications and public affairs, and Beth Hait, coordinator of student services at SCW, students joined Weiss in a circle of singing and dancing.

continued on page 13



The names of victims of terror were read aloud in front of a bus that was blown up by Palestinian terrorists

# Demonstration at The Hague



At times, the tunes were slow and students swayed with their arms around each other. Hindy Poupko, president of the Israel Club and SCW junior, held her arms around Brigitte Kessler, whose teenage daughter Gila had been killed in a terrorist attack. With tears streaming down her face, Kessler held in one hand a picture of her daughter Gila high

said 'Long Live Israel,'" said Hendrick Verhoog, another non-Jewish supporter of Israel. "This is a one-sided action by the Arab world. Israel needs a lot of support so we try to do what we can." Compared to the thousands that rallied for Israel, the demonstration at the Pleine only attracted a few hundred protesters including Jews who identify

going out at night and seeing the town but the day was so exhausting, I went to sleep right away," recalled Moshe Grussgott, a RIETS student.

Before their return flight to New York, students paid a quick visit to the Spanish Portuguese Synagogue, built in the 17th century by Spanish Jews fleeing the Inquisition. The synagogue, with its simple decorations of wood and gold chandeliers, is still lit by candlelight. It is the largest synagogue in the Netherlands.

Finally, students visited the annex that Anne Frank and her family hid in during the German occupation of Holland during the Second World War. "At first, all I noticed was that the rooms weren't as small as I had imagined," said Kraut. "But seeing Anne Frank's room and the decorations of magazine clippings that she pasted on her wall really moved me. I realized how she tried to make it her own." Though the touring aspect of the mission was short, it was meaningful for some nonetheless.

And, after less than 48 hours, Yeshiva students returned to Newark Airport pleased with their accomplishments. "From the time we first entered the airport [gate] we all felt like a cohesive unit," explained Kraut. "We were out to do something important and demonstrate what we believe in."

*"God has given me love for His people,"  
added his wife.  
"You are the Chosen People."*

in the air while with her other arm, she held tightly onto Poupko for support. "I think it was one of the most powerful and unifying experiences that I have had," said Poupko. "While we cried together, it was clear that we both gave each other strength."

It wasn't only Jews who came to support Israel. Theodore and Helen Vanveen, members of Christians for Israel, rode their bicycles the 7 kilometers to The Hague to show their commitment to the Jewish State. "We are Christians and we are always thinking of Israel," said Theodore Vanveen. "God has given me love for His people," added his wife. "You are the Chosen People."

Although police would not allow Palestinian supporters onto the site of the pro-Israel protest, two young men with kaffiyehs holding Palestinian flags watched quietly from a corner. When reporters tried to photograph the young men, they covered their heads and ran away.

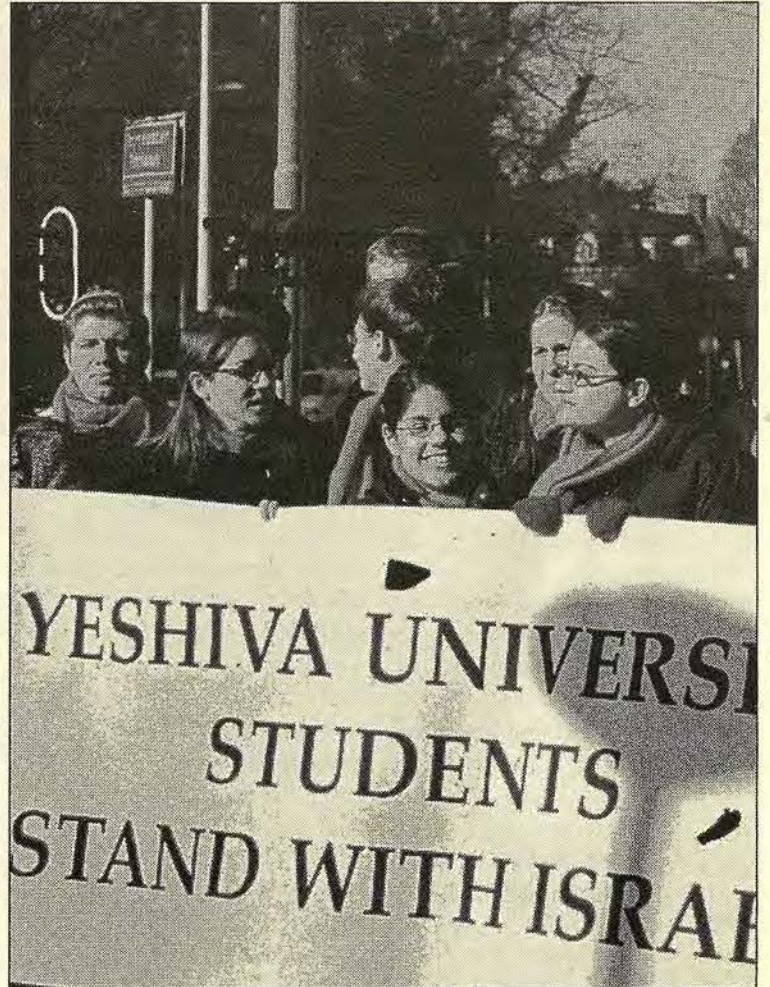
A few miles away, Palestinian supporters gathered in front of the Dutch parliament, the Pleine, to demonstrate against the security fence. "They called me 'you dirty Nazi' after I

with Neturei Karta, an Ultra-Orthodox sect that is against the State of Israel.

Holding a sign in Dutch, "occupation is terror," Dina Veld from Amsterdam, explained that despite the fact that Israel honored her father for hiding Jews during the Holocaust, "what they do to Palestinians is wrong." "More and more, lives of the Palestinians are impossible," she said. "Many are traumatized. When asked if it is wrong for Palestinian terrorists to blow up Israeli civilians, Veld responded "You make those people desperate."

When the protests died down, students returned to Amsterdam, many desperate for sleep after going without out any for two days. "I was thinking of

*When asked if it is wrong for Palestinian terrorists to blow up Israeli civilians,  
Veld responded  
"You make those people desperate."*



SCW students march in support of Israel as the International Court of Justice hears arguments against Israel's security fence



Brigitte Kessler holds a picture of her daughter Gila, killed by Palestinian terrorists



A member of Zaka, above, reads a Jewish prayer for the dead as the remnants of a bombed bus sits behind him



Theodore Vanveen, left, and his wife Helene, right, rode their bicycles from the neighboring village to show their support for Israel. The couple are members of the organization Christians for Israel

## Joint Israel Program Student Performs at International World Cup



Kandel, on the top row, far left, with her team in the Dominican Republic representing Israel

By Orlee Levin

For most students who have spent a year abroad, a unique experience from their year becomes etched in their minds. For Jessie Kandel, an American student studying in Israel for the year, that experience is quite different.

Kandel has recently played the American version of football, with the first Israeli women's team to compete in the International World Cup. During her semester at Michlelet Esther as a participant of Yeshiva's S. Daniel Abraham Joint Israel program, she traveled to the Dominican Republic to participate in the games where she was a member of an eleven-person team representing Israel, whose players' ages ranged from

fifteen to twenty-four.

When Kandel's cousin Meira Harol told her about an opportunity to try out for the first Israeli girls team she immediately seized the opportunity, being that she had always loved all sports, especially football. She grew up playing football with her father and friends and watching Sunday afternoon football on TV. "It was incredible to be able to play football in Israel, even though it is an American sport," Kandel said.

Practices began in September, taking place once a week usually in Gan Soccer, a field in Nachlaot, Jerusalem. "Any female was welcome to come to these practices and usually about fifteen to twenty players showed up," she explained. Around December or January, the team was narrowed down

and the players were informed who would be making the trip to the Dominican Republic to represent Israel in March. Once the players were chosen, the practices were increased to twice a week and were moved to a larger field in Kraft Stadium, a stadium which holds many fields including Gan Soccer.

In order to be able to finance the trip, the team members held a raffle to raise money. They also enlisted financial assistance from Myra Kraft, owner of the New England Patriots. Kraft, for whom the Kraft stadium where the team practiced is named after, attended one of the practices and made a donation of five-thousand dollars. "It was so nice of her to come and watch our practice it meant so much to us and the monetary donation helped defray the cost" Kandel

recalled. The students then paid subsidized prices.

At the end of February the first team of young women from Israel to participate in the International World Cup took off from Ben Gurion airport. The tournament lasted for a week from February 24 to March 2. In the Dominican Republic, they stayed in a beach resort area, and shared a hotel with three other teams, close to the main hotel where the competition took place, located on the beach.

The five women's teams represented America, Canada, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic and Israel. Kandel found the dynamics between the groups to be unusual, and was surprised to have formed a closer bond with members of the Venezuelan team as opposed to the U.S. team. She reported that her team quickly befriending the Venezuelan one, cheering each other on at the matches, while the U.S. team was "obnoxious and full of themselves," she said. "They made fun of us."

The tournament worked in rounds; each team played one round and then the winning team progressed to the next round. The Israeli team won their first game, progressing on to the semi-finals. The next game they played against the U.S. and knew early on that it was a lost cause. "It was obvious from the beginning that they were much better than us and therefore we just did our best," she noted. The U.S. team came in first and the Israeli team came in fourth. Despite their loss, Kandel

has fond memories. "It was a great experience," Kandel said.

There were no major injuries during the tournament, though before the tournament one team member broke her nose and Coach Yona Mishan, an American born immigrant to Israel, broke his leg. "Our coach was amazing," Kandel exclaimed. "He broke his leg and continued practice before being taken to the hospital."

The Israeli team was admired for practicing their religious rituals on the trip, according to Kandel. "Many people asked us about being Jewish and found it fascinating that there were girls on the team who played in skirts." The team gladly explained the reason for their dress. Their food was brought by a caterer in Israel and set up for the different meals in the hotel. "One of the nicest experiences was Shabbat," she recalled. "The hotel gave us our own room for *tefillah*. It was so beautiful how everyone from different ends of the spectrum came together on Shabbat; *davening*, eating, and singing."

Kandel hopes to participate in the competition again next year, even though she may not be in Israel. "It was one of the most incredible experiences of my life," she stated. She will continue to practicing her football skills throughout the coming year, in hopes of bringing the team closer to winning the cup in the future.

## Israel Club Shabbaton Offers Broad Perspectives on the Jewish Homeland

By Aviva Balk

Guest speakers at the Israel Club's annual shabbaton challenged students to rethink Israel's most pressing problem today. Rabbi Binny Freedman, director of the Israelight Institute in Jerusalem; and Aharon Hurwitz, director of Yavneh Olami; and Dr. Stuart Cohen, a professor at the political studies department of Bar Ilan University held workshops and spoke to students about Israel's religious identity.

The Israel Club held its annual Shabbaton March 12 through 13 on the Beren Campus with the attendance of over 100 students. "It was very inspiring to look around the room and see over a 100 YC and Stern students involved in a discussion about the future of the State of Israel," said Poupko.

Titled "Israel: Your Home. Your Commitment. Our Destiny," the event was highlighted with lectures by Freedman as well as three workshops, held Friday night and again Shabbat morning, relating

to current issues facing Israel. "The speakers were very impressed with the questions asked and the issues raised by the students," said Poupko.

"Can Israel survive?" was the title and question posed by Cohen in his workshop. According to Cohen, Israel is currently facing a new challenge that does not include threats from her neighbors. He explained Israel's primary threat as their ability to maintain the Jewish character of the State. The current debate raging in Israel is not over land or the Palestinians,

said Cohen, but rather, whether Israel should become a bi-national state made of Arabs and Jews but without any religious or national identity. Cohen insisted that inherent to the survival of Israel is its ability to retain its Jewish character. He stressed the importance of Jews outside of Israel identifying with the Jewish State, thereby reinforcing the

notion that Israel is the national homeland to all Jews and not merely a nation constituted of Israelis.

Hurwitz led a session questioning the merits and disadvantages of moving to Israel, or making *aliyah*. Focusing on sources that support or reject the reasons for doing so, Hurwitz presented

strengthened my sense of commitment to Israel."

Finally, Freedman's workshop challenged students to assert the need for a Jewish homeland in the Land of Israel—or a land anywhere, at that. According to Freedman, being able to answer that question is of prime importance in the role of a

Jewish Zionist. The Jews are a nation, according to Freedman, and the distinctive characteristic of a nation is a homeland.

Freedman also spoke amidst rounds of song at *scudah shlishit* (the third Shabbat meal).

"He speaks in this way that leaves you wanting more," said Chava Rabinowitz, a freshman at the Fashion Institute of Technology. "He knows how much people need and when to let them digest."

At the conclusion of Shabbat, Freedman concluded the program with a musical *hav-*

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*The current debate raging in Israel is not over land or the Palestinians, said Cohen, but rather, whether Israel should become a bi-national state made of Arabs and Jews but without any religious or national identity.*

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the principles of the State of Israel through the works of early Zionist leaders such as Ze'ev Jabotinsky, Achad Ha'am, Theodor Herzl and others. "It was more of a discussion than a lecture," said SSSB junior Ilana Kahn. "To us it was more about religious issues. It gave me a broader view of what Israel is in the minds of other people and

*dalah* (service marking the end of Shabbat) service, interspersed with personal stories.

Poupko and Shaya Lerner, co-president of the Israel Club, were very pleased with the results of the weekend. "We had a great turn out, and everyone there participated in all the workshops and programs," Poupko commented. "I think the very fact that the Shabbaton was a success serves as testimony to the dedication and support that the students show toward the State of Israel."

The student response to the weekend was overwhelmingly enthusiastic. "The sessions were really interesting," said SCW junior Mor Rossler. "I gained a new perspective on the different aspects of Zionism."

"I thought [they] did a great job of putting together an unbelievable Shabbaton that gave students an opportunity to meet a leader and future leader of the Zionist movement," said SSSB President Rachel Moss. "It was by far the best one I've been to since coming to Stern."

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## After 800 Years of Influence, Scholars Celebrate Maimonides



Hyman, far left, organized the conference with NYU

By Sarah Rindner

From March 21 to 23 scholars from around the world gathered in downtown Manhattan to celebrate Moses Maimonides - legendary Talmudist, philosopher and physician. The conference, which was sponsored by the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies and New York University's Skirball Department of Jewish Studies, was held in commemoration of the 800th anniversary of Maimonides' death.

Dr. Arthur Hyman, the dean of Revel, organized the conference with Dr. Alfred Ivry, the chair of the Medieval and Renaissance Center at NYU. In his opening remarks Hyman explained two primary reasons to study a great thinker: "his accomplishments in his own day and the influence he had on subsequent generations." These two considerations were reflected in all of the sixteen topics addressed at the conference, loosely organized into the categories of "Maimonides and Halakha," "Maimonides and Philosophy," "Maimonides - Science and Medicine" and "Maimonides' Influence."

Speakers hailed from universities ranging from Northwestern University, Hebrew University, University of Chicago, University of Cologne in Germany to the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in France, among others.

Dr. David Shatz, professor of philosophy at SCW and chair of a session on Maimonides and Philosophy, found the quality of speakers an integral part of the conference's success. "This was an exciting, first-rate conference, one of the best I've been to" said Shatz. "The papers were full of interesting ideas, and the discussion periods generated important questions and perspectives. That's not surprising when you see how much thought and effort went into getting the best Maimonidean scholars in the world". Ivry remarked on the "uniformly good" presentations, and "unusually successful" nature of the conference. Ivry explained that it is rare for all the papers presented at a conference to be deemed successful, a large part of why he felt the conference was unique. This was "a very fine conference" said Ivry.

The speakers expressed the belief that, despite the distance of

800 years, the work of Maimonides continues to maintain relevance and intrigue for the modern scholar. Hyman attributed this enduring influence to Maimonides' stance that, "Jews can be faithful in their position and still participate in the culture of their day."

The large audience in attendance also testified to the important place that Maimonides occupies in the Jewish consciousness. Following each presentation, questions were asked which revealed the audience to be highly knowledgeable. "You had to know a great deal in order to follow" said Ivry. There were a number of undergraduate students in attendance.

Dr. Haym Soloveitchik, professor of Jewish History at SCW and Revel, was the only Yeshiva faculty member who presented at the conference. His well-received lecture was titled "Overt and Covert Agendas in the 'Mishneh Torah'."

Soloveitchik's speech involved a suggested solution for a perceived problem in Maimonides' halakhic work, the "Yad Hazaka." Soloveitchik noticed the unusual structure of the chapters devoted to the laws of Sabbath. He proposed that Maimonides had a specific agenda: reacting to the influence of the Karaites. What Soloveitchik found remarkable, however, was not that Maimonides constructed an anti-Karaite polemic, but how he seamlessly integrates the polemic into his general work. Thus, said Soloveitchik, the deceptively simple words of the "Yad Hazaka" operate on two simultaneous levels - the contemporaneous and the universal. Soloveitchik stressed the artistic genius of Maimonides; that without reconstructing the world of Maimonides, a later reader would never perceive the existence of the polemical dimension. Because Maimonides imbued his work with multiple meanings, all operating seamlessly and concurrently, Soloveitchik concluded, "the 'Mishneh Torah' is one of those rare instances where a work of discursive thinking is also a work of art."

The papers presented will ultimately be compiled into a journal in the coming summer. The proceedings are expected to be published by Yeshiva University Press within the next year and a half.

## Censorship of Art at Drama Festivities

continued from page 1

action, she would have realized that the men were not coming on stage to act but to set up, explained Roller. However, "She saw the rule being broken, and she intervened, which was completely within her authority," he admitted.

Although *The Observer* contacted Jesionowski's office numerous times; the dean refused to comment.

YC freshman Chai Hecht, the writer and producer of "Chiasmus," was indeed upset that the play was not delivered, he believed that Jesionowski was put in a difficult position. "Her field of expertise is not halakha," he said. "She was basically trying to make sure that what she was told was upheld." However, Hecht did feel that the administration could have been more forgiving about their mistake. "My problem is not that she did what she did but that I wasn't given an opportunity to explain myself to her and be given a second chance to go back up on stage."

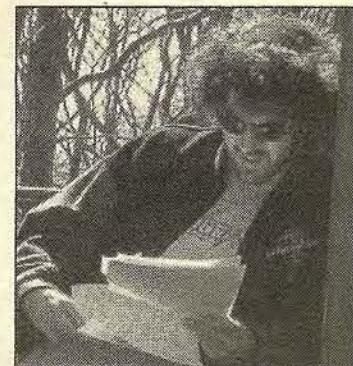
Many students were not as forgiving as Hecht and were enraged by the dean's censorship of the play. "It was completely inappropriate the way the dean interrupted the play," said Cataldo. "The students tried to cater to the rules and were prepared to do anything in order for the play to continue but the dean

wouldn't allow it. I think just because we are a religious school, [it] doesn't mean we have to be tyrannical."

Students intimately involved with the school's dramatic societies and the planning of the Arts Festival have told *The Observer* that according to donors' stipulations, funding for the school's theaters would be provided only if the guidelines for the festival are met. "I have heard that one reason that men and women cannot act on stage together is that funds for the school's theaters were given on the condition that this not happen," a dramatic society insider told *The Observer*.

Other students involved with the Arts Festival belied that theory, calling it a rumor. Instead, they attribute the extreme hesitance toward mixed acting to administrators' sentiment that it is inappropriate behavior for a religious institution.

Still others are unsure of the reason why mixed acting is taboo at Yeshiva, but nonetheless, fear that the repercussions of top administrators. "I think that there is fear that if some rule is broken, that it will be hugely controversial, and they'll never be able to run the festival again," an insider explained. "When Jesionowski saw this happen she thought it might jeopardize the whole festival so it was done



Hecht, above, wrote and produced "Chiasmus"

with everyone in mind."

YC Dean Norman Adler refused to proffer any reason for the rule. "It is the tradition at the Yeshiva College Dramatic Society to only have men performing," was the only comment Adler offered.

In response to the censorship of the play at Yeshiva, Hecht and his cast performed "Chiasmus" at the Bowery Poetry Club March 28, two weeks after the event was originally scheduled before an audience of approximately 60 people. The change of venue permitted Hecht to make several changes for the play, one of them being a scene involving men and women interacting together.

"In the end I think it was good that the play moved," said Cataldo. "It was able to be shown in its entirety to a receptive audience in an atmosphere that supports creativity."

### COMMENCEMENT 2004

# Thursday May 20

5:00

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Madison  
Square  
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You will NOT receive your tickets and cap and gown if you have not filed for graduation with the Registrar on your campus!



# Beren Endowment Sparks Debate Over Choice of Facility Expansion

By Elisha Horen

The requests of throngs of students for several years for a larger beit midrash may finally be answered. A portion of the recent donation by the Beren family to SCW was designated to renovation projects. While none of these projects are currently underway, a meeting with an architect has already been secured and the list of expansion requests continues to grow.

Of the most vocal contestants have been those in favor of an expanded beit midrash. The current sixth floor beit midrash has become increasingly crowded with undergraduate women as well as students of the post-graduate Talmud program. But while the learning that takes place there is indeed at the ideological core of Yeshiva, certain Yeshiva policy makers assert that a renovated beit midrash may not be as critical as the needs of other facilities are vying for space. "We are short a significant amount of space, one being the beit midrash, which is too small but

not a disgrace," said Bacon.

While plans for the Beit Midrash's physical expansion remain inconcrete, steps have been taken to ameliorate the problems resulting from the cramped study hall. Talmud program administrators have created a new position for the coming year which they hope will help facilitate students managing in the overcrowded site. The program has recently appointed SCW alumna Nechama (Friedman) Price (SCW '03) to act as the beit midrash coordinator for the coming year. Price, who is completing her first year in the program, will answer students' questions, set up study partners and give occasional lectures.

"It has to be someone who can deal with the current crowded space until we get a new one," said Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel, chair of the Rebecca Ivry department of Jewish studies, who was involved in the hiring. "If a student is on a level where they need help, or if they are on a high level and need an excellerated shiur."

However, students are not

sure how effective this makeshift solution will prove. "I think its great that they are hiring her but it will not solve the issue of the space, it will still get very crowded," said SCW junior Esti Zitter.

Kanarfogel is indeed interested in seeing the Beit Midrash acquire additional space as well and has been in contact with Vice President of University Life Hillel Davis. "It is of the utmost priority to have more space for the beit midrash," Kanarfogel reported that Davis asserted.

However, physical confines limit the goals of the administration. The space and structure of the 245 Lexington building leave little room for an expanded facility. The possibilities include expanding the beit midrash on the sixth floor or constructing a new one on another floor. Kanarfogel gives credit to President Richard Joel and Davis, since prior to their induction the issue was talked about for a long time, but it is only now evolving into practical plans.

While Kanarfogel strongly feels the beit midrash merited the space, Dean Karen Bacon

acknowledged that it may not be as critical as a main lounge, which is currently lacking in the 245 Lexington building. Additional contestants for expansion are the central office for counseling services, which lacks its own space, overcrowded classrooms and libraries, athletic facilities and a student center. She posed the possibility of remodeling the first floor instead of the beit midrash. "It is not necessary to have the academic offices there," she noted. She espoused a vision of creating an important academic functionary space there in its place.

After meeting with Director of Supporting Service Administration Jeff Rosengarten, Bacon confirmed that they would be meeting with an architect in the near future. The two are trying to gather a group of students and faculty to devise a list of three renovation priorities with which to begin. "The beit midrash certainly could be one of them, and there is the possibility of having it on the first floor," said Bacon. She and Rosengarten envision this to open up more

space as well as create a more functional space. The only project they plan to complete by then is a cafeteria in the basement of 215.

Kanarfogel believes the Beit Midrash has caught the attention of the administration after their recent trip to Israel where they visited yeshivot and seminaries with large study halls. "We are bigger than most of those schools and need a new beit midrash," he reasoned. Students should feel they have a centralized space to learn in which they can always find room in, he said. He is confident that students will take advantage of the expanded space. "If you build it, [students] will be there before you finish building it."

These renovations are not expected to reach completion by the start of the 2004-2005 academic year. The only project expected to have been completed by then is a cafeteria in the basement of the 215 Lexington building.

## Student Council Elections Bring Crowds to the Voting stands

By Miriam Shapiro

With campaign signs plastering the walls of the Beren Campus, the SCW and SSSB student council elections attracted over 500 voters to voting booths on March 23, the largest voter turnout that a student council election has seen for years.

"I thought that the elections were a success and I was motivated and inspired by the interest and involvement on the part of the student body," said president of the Israel Club, Hindy Poupko, and a candidate for student council president.

The voting booths were open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., where students seemed eager to elect the new members of the student council board. "The people who showed up seemed to be happy and excited about the process," observed Poupko.

Student Council President elect Molly Fink, attributes the large voter turnout to the candidates themselves. "I think that it has everything to do with the candidates" said Fink. "Hindy (Poupko) and Devora (Whitman) are outstanding leaders and I think the three of us together rallied all the voices. The mobilization was tremendous, and it is flattering to know that so many students turned out to vote and that I was voted in."

Beth Katz, chair of the canvassing committee, coordinated the voting process and ballot counting. Katz echoed Fink's words, and the voter turnout to

the enthusiasm of the candidates. "There were three really exciting people running for student council president," said Katz. "There were also signs everywhere. This is my third year here and I don't think that I have ever seen so many signs hanging all over the school."

Along with Fink's triumph, Aliza Abrams was voted in as TAC president and Sherene Nili as SSSB president.

Fink, who has already begun to prepare for her administration by conducting a board orientation meeting on March 30, is confident and satisfied with the members of her board and is looking forward to working closely with them. "I really have an unbelievable board and I am especially excited to work with Aliza and Sherene, who are going to be excellent presidents."

More shocked about her win than anything else, Fink is anticipating the coming year and the opportunity to plan successful events and make significant changes. "I want to thank the entire student body for voting me in," she said. "It's going to be an awesome year." Poupko, who will continue to serve as president of the Israel Club for 2004-2005 academic year, is eager to work closely with Fink, and echoes her hopes for making significant changes and hosting quality events. "I look forward to working with Molly next year to help make Stern a better place," she said.

According to policy, the ballots must be counted with the



SCWSC President elect Molly Fink

results in by midnight of election-day. This year, Katz together with her assistant chair, Rachel Levinson, instituted new color coated ballots, to hasten the counting process. "The new method made it much easier for Mrs. Braun and Rachel to count the votes, and we had the results in by six o'clock," she affirmed.

Though the large voter turnout was a pleasant surprise, there are still a significant amount of students that are not showing up to the voting booths, seemingly due to student apathy. "Perhaps there should be some more preliminary programs prepared to allow students to become more familiar with the candidates, such as a debate," suggested Poupko. "I think that this way we will create educated voters who are more likely to go out and vote. Students need to own the voting process."

## The President's Circle

is pleased to announce grants to the following student organizations and programs for Spring Semester 2004:

WYUR - New Radio Console  
Lapid - Stern College  
Celebratory Magazine  
Macslive! - New Macs  
Basketball Website  
Russian Minyan - Event funding  
New Uptown Student Lounge  
Torah Leadership Shabbaton  
Dean of Students' Chesed Fund

### The President's Circle

is a group of alumni committed to the enhancement of undergraduate student life. We strongly encourage students to apply for grants from us for programs or ideas that they feel will improve student life at YC, SSSB or SCW.

For students interested in learning about how to apply for a grant, please contact the Dean of Students Office on either campus.

For alumni who are interested in becoming a member of the Presidents Circle, please contact Susan Meyers in the Development Office at 212.960.0885

*The Observer*

wishes the  
entire Yeshiva  
community a chag  
kasher v'sameach

### Tabori Joins SCW Faculty



Rabbi Binyamin Tabori, RaM (head instructor) at Yeshivat Har Etzion in Gush Etzion, has been hired as a full time faculty member starting September 2004 for his sabbatical year. He will temporarily replace Rabbi Eitan Mayer, who is moving to Israel, in the Graduate Women's Talmud Program. In addition, he will teach three Judaic Studies courses at SCW. Tabori has experience teaching women at Midreshet Moriah, a post-high school seminary. The Jewish Studies department is enthusiastic about his arrival. "Given Rabbi Tabori's vast erudition and meaningful experience as a RaM for many years, we are most fortunate to have him at Stern College and for the graduate program in advanced Talmudic study," said Chairman of the Rebecca Ivy Department of Jewish Studies Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel.

### Yearbook Editors Face Lazy Students

For the second year in a row the Yeshiva yearbook will be a joint project between SCW and YC. The editors, Elysia Rothenberg, Rachel Berger and Josh Haller have been facing some tough problems. Mostly, students are just not handing in the necessary materials. "Not enough students are taking pictures or handing in bios," said editors. According to the editors, this may be due to the fact that students don't know what exactly goes into writing a bio. Typically they include student activity involvement on campus, awards received or positions held. Two photo sessions were scheduled on the Berren campus, with 130 women showing up for the first and 160 for the second. The men have a slightly higher number of final photos taken, but from both there was a minimal number of bios submitted. The editors would ideally like to hand out the yearbooks at the senior dinner. The recent email which circulated inviting students to the dinner was contingent on their submitting both a photo and a bio. This email was not sent from the year book committee, but from the YC senior resident in the hopes of getting more students to submit.

### "The Elephants are Coming!"

Amidst frigid wind and sleeting rain, SCW and a handful of YC students flooded the area outside Brookdale



Residence Hall March 18<sup>th</sup> to watch Barnum and Bailey Circus' annual elephant procession toward Madison Square Garden. As circus trucks, horses, clowns, and elephants advanced down 34<sup>th</sup> street, students and other New Yorkers yelled, "The elephants are coming, the elephants are coming!" Popcorn and drinks were served in the Brookdale lounge, where students swarmed in excitement. The Asian elephants made their way from the east river to Madison Square Garden in just one hour. The circus began the next day, Thursday. "It's good to see something different than New York gridlock outside of our dorm," said SCW junior Mor Rossler.

# CAMPUS BRIEFS

### Five SCW Students Chosen For Undergraduate Research Fellowship at AECOM

A select group of students from both YC and SCW colleges will have the opportunity to join a group of 35 other undergraduate students from across the United States to work and learn in the research laboratories of the AECOM this summer.



The students who were chosen last month to attend the Roth Scholars Program will spend nine weeks in a laboratory in one of ten basic science departments. Under the guidance of a faculty member, they will have the opportunity to develop and perform unique experiments. To supplement the practical laboratory experience, the students will also participate in weekly seminars given by the students and faculty of Einstein on various scientific topics. The program also includes exciting social activities including trips around New York City and dinners with other members of the program. This year's SCW recipients include Esther Flashner, Malkie Krupka, Pesi Porat, Malki Roth, and Debbie Ryback.

### The Red Carpet Comes to SCW

On February 29, SCWSC organized an Oscar Awards viewing party in the back lounge of the 36 Street Residence Hall. Complete with a red carpeted runway at the entrance, forty guests arrived at 7 pm for the pre-show. The menu included hors d'ouvres by Mendy's, mini hot dogs, knishes and egg roles, and the bubbly grape juice and apple cider didn't stop flowing. While some people chose to float in and out, others were there for the long haul, keeping their seats warm until midnight, when the Lord of the Ring's monopoly ended.



### Renowned Art Historian Addresses Students

SCW's Art Department featured a special lecture on March 17 entitled, "Art and the Forger: Quirks and Queries." Dr. Evie T. Joselow, art historian, researcher, lecturer, and independent consultant for museums and private collections designed the lecture and offered it at a different location, but chose to redeliver the speech at SCW when art senior seminar students were unable to attend. "The students said they would pool their resources to bring her here," said Professor Evelyn Cohen, assistant art professor. "She was very touched that they were so motivated." Cohen raised the funds herself and Joselow privately addressed the small group. The bulk of the lecture focused more on the psychological motivations of "the forger" instead of examples of art forgery itself. Joselow mentioned that the lecture was being given in memory of Joseph Gutmann, an art historian who specialized in Jewish art and passed away the previous month. Gutmann himself spoke at SCW in 1999.

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## The ABC's of PhD's: Three SCW Graduates Tell Their Story

By Shevie Moskowitz

Years ago, the devoted and motivated student with an interest in science and medicine most often became a physician or nurse. The MD and BSN degrees still remain very feasible options for many students. However, as the health care industry continues to grow ever so rapidly, there are many new options available. For many students, these options provide more intellectually than the MD or BSN degrees.

The basic medical sciences encompass a wide variety of areas, including: biochemistry, bioinformatics, biometrics, cell and developmental biology, epidemiology, experimental pathology, human medical genetics, immunology, microbiology, molecular biology, neuroscience, pharmacology, physiology, biophysics and toxicology. Most graduate programs in the biomedical sciences, through which a student can obtain the doctorate degree, are located on a medical school campus with each basic science represented by a specific department. Very often, students enrolled in doctoral programs receive full-tuition scholarships, and sometimes stipends and living allowances as well.

Anya Sedletcaia, SCW '03, is currently in her first year of study at the Sue Golding Graduate Division of Albert Einstein College of Medicine (AECOM), studying for a doctorate in the field of molecular genetics. At the beginning of her senior year, she decided to get her doctorate after spending her summer doing research at AECOM, as well as research during previous school years with

Dr. Harvey Babich, chair of the biology department. While performing research with Babich, she published an article in the "Journal of Pharmacological Toxicology" titled "In vitro cytotoxicity of protocatechuic acid to cultured human cells from oral tissue: involvement in oxidative stress," in conjunction with Babich and a third co-investigator. The article discussed how protocatechuic acid acts as an anticarcinogenic agent, but also as a promoter of tumor formation when found at higher cellular concentrations.

Although she has found her first year of graduate school to be quite a challenge scholastically, with the expectations being much higher and the subjects being taught in a completely different manner, she is glad she took the route she did. SCW, being a small school, "is one of those places where you can accomplish as little, or as much, as you want," said Sedletcaia. "You can take the easy way out - or you can challenge yourself." Sedletcaia said she tried to challenge herself throughout her four years at SCW. With five years of graduate school ahead of her, Sedletcaia has not made up her mind about her future plans. "Doing research is a lot of fun," she said, but she might explore teaching as well.

Sarah Gross, a native of Ottawa and a '98 graduate of SCW with a major in biology, is like Sedletcaia, in the process of completing her doctorate at AECOM. Her research interest is the herpes virus. As a self-described enthusiastic student with a strong passion for science, Gross initially toyed with the idea of attending medical school. However, after analysis, she real-

ized that as a medical student, she would be learning how to diagnose and treat various illnesses, and would be "missing out" on so much of the basic science that she loved. Gross decided that while in medical school it is possible to study why various diseases and disorders exhibit various symptoms, as a graduate student, she would be able to study why those very symptoms cause such diseases - which she found far more intriguing.

In the fall of 1999, Gross began her first semester as a graduate student at AECOM, performing research in the department of developmental and molecular biology. Over the past five years, Gross has published numerous articles in various scientific journals. Her most recent article was published in the *Journal of Virology*. It is titled "The cytoplasmic tail of Herpes simplex virus glycoprotein H binds to the tegument protein VP16 in vitro and in vivo," and describes various molecular interactions occurring during the process of viral "budding." Viral budding is the process by which a newly-formed virus exits a cell. Gross is currently in the process of writing her thesis.

Although married with a child, Gross notes if your mentor is amenable, and if the conditions in your laboratory allow, life during grad school can be much easier for doctoral students than medical school students. "There are no real deadlines," said Gross, "until the due date for your thesis just seems to arrive out of nowhere, so graduate students must be prepared to be self-motivated."

With all the benefits of a

*continued on page 5*

## Physics Minor a Major Move

By Shevie Moskowitz

In the past, SCW students interested in the sciences traditionally studied biology, biochemistry or chemical science. However, physics has indeed become increasingly popular at SCW, so much so that a minor in the subject is currently in the works.

"Physics truly is an attractive subject," said Associate Professor of Physics and Head of SCW's Department of Physics Anatoly Frenkel. Since 2000, the number of students enrolled in advanced physics courses has increased dramatically. Four years ago, there were three students enrolled in the five-credit calculus-based physics course, whereas this past semester, enrollment in the course was more than triple that number. As a result of the increased student interest in the study of physics, Frenkel has designed a physics minor. Requirements for the minor include one year of general physics, two semesters of intermediate physics, as well as either quantum mechanics, quantum chemistry, or two semesters of research, totaling 19-20 credits.

The ultimate goal in creating the physics minor is the eventual formation of major in the subject at SCW. "The establishment of a minor is a huge step in the right direction," said Dr. Donald Estes, Physics and Chemistry faculty member.

Students have already expressed their interest in obtaining the new minor. "There's no question in my mind," said SCW freshman



Louisette Sousson. "I am so pleased with this new opportunity at Stern. I love studying Physics and am very excited about the availability of this new option for students." Sousson is enrolled in SCW's joint program with Columbia University in Engineering.

Both Frenkel and Estes explained that careers in physics today are astoundingly diverse and wide-ranging. Physics, of course, has applications in many areas of medicine, such as optometry and ophthalmology, as well as interventional and noninterventional radiology and radiation oncology. Students interested in careers in architecture may wish to consider obtaining a minor in physics, as would those students enrolled in the joint Engineering program. Students interested in computers or computer programming may also find this minor to be helpful. Obtaining a minor in Physics is helpful, and in many cases essential, if one wishes to pursue a career in any of the aforementioned areas, according to Frenkel and Estes.

## Bio and Chem Departments Rev Up for Fall with New Courses

By Shevie Moskowitz

This coming fall, four new science courses will be offered: three courses in biology and one in chemistry. The courses planned include bioinformatics, introduction to forensic biology, human embryology and analytical chemistry.

The bioinformatics course will study the structure and function of genes and proteins through the use of computational analysis. Both in terms of breadth and scope, computer technology has been and continues to be applied to the management of the vast technological information available, and thus, bioinformatics, as a field, continues to grow and develop quite rapidly.

The course being offered at SCW will provide an overview of how computer science is being applied to biological science. Exploring the computational management of biological information and the application of information technology toward

the analysis and organization of biological information, the course will primarily focus on the area of molecular biology (i.e. DNA, RNA and proteins) due to the large amount of data in this area. Practical areas such as drug discovery will also be explored. Throughout the semester, students will be introduced to the bioinformatics tools currently being used in cutting-edge laboratories. Guest lecturers will share their knowledge and practical experiences in the field throughout the course. The course will be taught by Dr. Philip Listowsky, assistant professor of computer science at YC.

Introduction to forensic biology will deal with topics such as DNA typing and analysis, histological investigation, quality control and regulation and Short Tandem Repeat (better known as STR) analysis. "I am so excited to take a course that will introduce me to the basic techniques and skills used in forensic science," said Michelle Faber, an SCW junior majoring in biochemistry. "Forensic Science is

such a great way to apply what is learned in Biochemistry." The course will be co-administrated by Zoran Budimlija MD, PhD, and Paul Goncharoff, PhD, both of whom work for Dr. Charles Hirsch, the New York City chief medical examiner. There will be a number of guest speakers who will also present the class with information dealing with many different areas of forensics.

Human embryology will also be taught for the first time by Dr. Richard Weiss who plans to discuss, through lectures and visual aids (including multimedia presentations such as ultrasound videos), reproductive physiology, fertilization and conception, embryonic and fetal development, with a focus on the development of the organ systems and their function in utero, as well as mechanisms of embryogenesis. Clinically relevant applications will be addressed in terms of both normal and abnormal fetal development. The interaction between the fetus and the mother will also be discussed, as will topics related to assisted repro-

ductive techniques, such as in vitro fertilization (IVF). Ethical issues will be incorporated into the course, as will Talmudic analysis of relevant topics. This course will be especially helpful to students who wish to pursue careers in genetic counseling, as it is a prerequisite for master's in genetic counseling. Embryology will provide any woman planning on pursuing a career in medicine with a foundation for a course that is generally considered one of the more difficult basic sciences in medical school. Those interested in pursuing careers in fields such as genetics, neonatology and pediatrics, may find this course especially attractive. "An understanding of how a human being becomes a human being is basic to science majors, and particularly to us as religiously observant and thoughtful Jews who believe in G-d as the ultimately perfect Embryologist," said Weiss.

The Chemistry Department is offering a four-credit course this fall - analytical chemistry. This course has not been offered

at SCW since 2000. Analytical chemistry deals mainly with methods used in the identification of the components of substances. It also deals in the instrumental analysis involved in this determination. Laboratory techniques to be utilized in this four-credit course include potentiometer, spectrophotometer and chromatography. Analytical chemistry serves the needs of many fields. For example, in medicine, analytical chemistry is the basis for clinical laboratory tests which help with the diagnosis of various diseases. The nutritional value of food is determined by chemical analysis of the macro and micronutrients present in the given substance. Analytical chemists also make important contributions to other fields such as forensic science and archaeology. "I am very excited about teaching this course and introducing students to analytical techniques that can be applied in all sorts of laboratory situations," said Cecily Dobin, who will be teaching the course.

## Dor Yesharim Returns to SCW for Genetic Screening

By Dinah Zaghi

For the second year in a row, Dor Yesharim will be available on the Beren Campus the week of April 26 to perform genetic testing. An information session explaining the importance of genetic testing in the Jewish community will take place on both campuses on Wednesday, April 21. The services that Dor Yesharim provides for the Jewish community at large are extremely important and we are fortunate to have the opportunity to partake at them at Stern College," said Leora Cohen, an SCW junior, and organizer the event. Blood testing normally costs \$200 but for Yeshiva students a reduced fee of \$150 will be charged. Dor Yesharim is an organization that provides confidential genetic tests to Jewish young adults who are ready to meet their potential spouse. Dor Yesharim, roughly translated as the "upright generation," was established in the 1970s under the auspices of experts in genetics, medicine and Jewish law, with its primary focus being to prevent individuals from marrying and producing offspring with fatal genetic diseases. Over the years, the organization has grown tremendously, and they now test for up to nine diseases found commonly among Jews, including Tay-Sachs disease and Gaucher's disease.

Many genetic disorders can be identified through carrier screening. A carrier is a person who has a recessive gene for a particular disease but does not actually have the disease. Tests can screen prospective parents to determine whether they are carriers. Problems can occur in a child whose mother and father both carry a recessive gene for the same disease, although neither parent has the disease. A child who receives the recessive gene from each of the parents will have the disease. If both parents carry the recessive gene, the chance of passing the disease to their child is one in four for each pregnancy. The disease is common among Ashkenazi Jews, occurring in one of every 3600 births.

Tay-Sachs disease is a heredit-



itary disorder caused by inactivity of the lysosomes, in which gangliosides, which are a product of fat metabolism accumulate in the tissue. This disease is most common in families of Eastern European Jewish descent. At an early age, children with this disease often become progressively developmentally disabled and ultimately develop paralysis, blindness and cherry red spots in the retina. These children usually die by age three or four. Tay-Sachs disease can be identified in the fetus by amniocentesis, but it can not be treated or cured.

Gaucher's disease is a hereditary disorder that leads to an accumulation of glucocerebrosides. Glucocerebrosides are a product of fat metabolism. Like Tay-Sachs disease, the genetic abnormality that causes Gaucher's disease is recessive. An affected person must inherit two abnormal genes to develop symptoms. This disease leads to enlargement of the liver and spleen and brownish pigmentation on the skin. Accumulation of glucocerebrosides in the eyes cause yellow spots called pingueculae to appear. Accumulation in the bone marrow can cause pain. About 1 in every 1,000 Ashkenazi children is born with Gaucher's disease.

Most people who have Gaucher's disease develop Type I, the adult chronic form, which results in an enlarged liver and spleen and bone marrow abnormalities. Type II develops in infancy. Infants with this disease have enlarged spleen and severe nervous system abnormalities. Their neck and back may become rigid and arched because of back muscle spasms. These infants usually die within a year. Type III, the juvenile form, can begin at any time during childhood. Children with the disease have an enlarged liver, spleen bone

abnormalities and slowly progressive nervous system abnormalities. Children who survive to adolescence may live for many years.

Bone abnormalities may cause pain and swelling in the joints. Severely affected people may also develop anemia, an inability to produce white blood cells and platelets, which results in weakness, paleness, susceptibility to infection and excessive bleeding. A fetus can be diagnosed before birth by testing cells in an amniocentesis.

Many people with Gaucher's disease can be treated with enzyme replacement therapy; however, such treatment is quite expensive. Blood transfusions sometimes help in relieving the anemia. Sometimes a splenectomy (removal of the spleen) is performed to relieve the pain and discomfort.

Through a simple blood test, one can prevent fatal disorders, including the two common diseases elucidated above. Results are kept on record, and when ready for marriage, those tested can call Dor Yesharim and are told whether or not they are "genetically compatible." For various reasons, the organization does not disclose individual results, rather if they are both recessive for a particular disease, the organization would advise them to seek genetic counseling.

"I recommend it," suggested SCW junior Leah Angerman. "Hashem gave us this technology and He wants us to use it. It is important to realize that love does not conquer all. One should consider this before getting emotionally involved with a man. If we can help prevent these diseases and help their elimination from society for the sake of future generations, then why shouldn't we?"

## Pesach Perils: Does Pesach Bring Injuries?

By Shevie Moskowitz

Spring has sprung. Pesach season is upon us and we now, no doubt have begun our spring-cleaning process. After scrubbing, washing and blow torching, as well as cooking and baking, we are truly prepared for the holiday. But technology has brought a new millennial twist to the ancient holiday - Pesach Perils. If you never thought about the potential hazards of the holiday, read on. These cases were actually reported in peer-reviewed medical journals.

We all know what a chore cleaning for Pesach can be. Most holiday observers are unaware of the dangers involved. A few years ago, a group of researchers at Hadassah Hospital in Israel noticed that around Pesach time, there was an increase in the number of children brought to the Emergency Department due to poisoning. After performing an extensive analysis of 5,583 cases of poisoned Israeli children reported to the Israel Poison Information Center (IPIC) over a period of five years, for the six weeks prior to and the six weeks following Pesach, they noted that there was a 38 percent increase in the frequency of poisoning cases per week in the two weeks before Pesach.

This phenomenon was observed consistently six years. After extensive analysis of the history of each of the forms of poisoning, the researchers concluded that the increase in poisoning was due to the extensive cleaning of homes in preparation for Pesach, which exposes children of all ages to various poisonous substances, the most dangerous of which include bleach, detergents and oven cleaners.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, orthopedic surgeons at Hadassah noticed that in the weeks prior to Pesach, the number of men who had cases of hand trauma, such as crush injuries and burns, increases significantly. The reason for the

increase lies in the fact that there are so many potential dangers involved in baking matzos in matzah factories. The article discusses a specific case of a man who has hand trauma and suggests various means that can be used to prevent such accidents from occurring in the future.<sup>2</sup>

Obviously, there are specific injuries that are unique to this particular yom tov. Consider the potential hazards that can occur on any Shabbat or yom tov. Due to the prohibition against performing melacha on Shabbat, and to a lesser extent, on yom tov, Orthodox children are more susceptible to acquiring unique scald burns from household water heaters or urns, which can easily be tipped over and inadvertently injure young children, often times quite severely. In an article published last year in the journal "Burns", two Israeli physicians employed at Shaarei Tzedek presented their experience with such cases, and offer the reader their recommendations, based on experience, as to how to decrease the incidence of such burns.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Amitai Y, Bentur Y, et al. Poison exposure in children before Passover. *Isr Med Assoc J*. 2000 Feb;2(2):142-4.

<sup>2</sup> Ashur H, Mushayov R. Passover hand injuries. *Harefuah*. 1994 Apr;126(7):413-5, 427.

<sup>3</sup> Shoufani A, Golan J. Shabbes burn, a burn that occurs solely among Jewish orthodox children, due to accidental shower from overhead water heaters. *Burns*. 2003 Feb;29(1):61-4.

## SCW Students Gather for Presentations on Cancer Research

By Shuli Farrokhpar

A group of students and faculty members recently gathered at SCW to learn about the research performed by two of their peers this past summer. SCW sophomore Frida Fridman and senior Deena Weissman presented their research at this past month's SURGE meeting. Fridman, a biology major, is planning on attending medical school after college, and Weissman, a Biochemistry

major, will begin her studies at the Sue Golding Division of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the fall.

SURGE, the Student Undergraduate Research Group Exchange, meets periodically throughout the semester. At their meetings, students present research that they worked on in summer internships, usually in a laboratory in a university setting, to their fellow peers.

Both Weissman and Fridman's research involved cancer. Weissman's presentation

focused on EGCG (epigallocatechin-3-gallate), which is the most potent antioxidant form of Green Tea extract. The antioxidant properties of EGCG may someday prove helpful in preventing some forms of Cancer. Weissman performed her research this past summer at SCW under the tutelage of department chair Dr. Harvey Babich.

Fridman's presentation focused on the pathology of gynecological cancer and the formation of various tumors.

Fridman's research group at Cornell University focused on the relationship between two microorganisms: *Ureaplasma urealyticum* and *Mycoplasma hominis*, (both sexually transmitted), and the development of various forms of gynecological cancer. As they hypothesized based on a growing body of epidemiologic evidence, prolonged infection with the two aforementioned agents may be one of the risk factors for gynecologic cancer. "I very much enjoyed working in a lab this summer

researching cancer, and I was so glad to be able to share my experiences with other students through SURGE...I hope they enjoyed hearing from me as well," said Fridman.

The next SURGE meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 30. In addition to a student speaker, Debbie Friedman, SCW's only student who went on to obtain both an MD and a PhD, will be presenting her research as well.

## Yeshiva Students Attend Boston Hillel Conference

By Miriam Shapiro

For the first time ever, Yeshiva sent a delegation of eight students to the Charlotte and Jack J. Spitzer B'nai B'rith Hillel Conference, due to President Richard Joel's close affiliation with Hillel, according to the department of communications and public affairs. The students hand-picked by Joel attend the conference on public policy in Boston, Massachusetts from February 22 to the 24.

The three-day forum on social justice, which was attended by college students from all over the United States, hosted discussions addressing the issues of public policy and social action.

"The students were really excited when they returned," said Deputy to the President Edward Fox. "It was a wonderful experience for them."

Students participated in active group discussions ranging from topics such as poverty, education, literacy, environment, pro-Israel activism to the upcoming U.S. presidential elections. In addition, students engaged in workshops, where they were encouraged to build skills and were taught how to prepare and respond to future issues in the Jewish community.

At the culmination of the conference, students participated in projects throughout the Boston area. They packaged food for needy children, assisted children in an after-school program at the YMCA in Boston, and went door-to-door registering voters through the Dunk the Vote in Dorchester committee.

"I learned so much about political and social issues," said SCW junior Rebecca Stone. "I enjoyed interacting with stu-



Students gather at Hillel conference in Boston

dents from all over the spectrum that are of concern to all of us."

The 350 participants at the conference were addressed by world renowned speakers, including Representative Barney Frank, democrat from Massachusetts, executive president of Seeds of Peace and a former State Department Middle East negotiator Dr. Aaron Miller, *The Simpsons* writer and producer Mike Reiss; Timberland CEO Jeff Swartz, chair of the Democratic National Committee's Women's Vote Ann Lewis and executive director of Tuft University's Hillel, Rabbi Jeffrey Summit, who discussed the Jewish community of Uganda.

"The Spitzer Forum enables us to teach college students that social and economic equity is a fundamental value of Judaism," said Hillel President Avraham Infeld. "The students will return...better informed and better equipped to make an impact on their campuses and in their communities."

Speakers emphasized that it is incumbent on students to become involved and search for the root of social injustice instead of attempting to provide

short term solutions. In the opening session, Frank encouraged students to make significant changes at the core in the best way possible.

Students were satisfied with the conference and left with strong messages surfacing at the forefront of their minds. "I really made a difference," said University of Maryland student Yael Kletter. "I was taking action and encouraging people to influence change instead of restoring to the band-aid solution," she said.

In addition, Dani Arielle Schneider, secretary of the Hillel Student Board at the University of Colorado, explained that the students were taught how to be responsible citizens and take accountability for the privileges allotted to this generation. "We didn't just learn about social activism," said Schneider. "We learned how to access the political system, and how to make real changes."

## Archeology in Israel Added to Summer Honors Offerings

By Aviva Balk

This summer, SCW and YC students will become archaeologists and learn the secrets of the underwater world. The SCW honors program will offer two interactive courses in archaeology and marine biology, open to all undergraduate students. "Yeshiva undergraduates can study a wide array of courses, on three continents, that have never been offered before," said Cynthia Wachtell, director of the S. Daniel Abraham Honors Program.

A co-ed archaeology and ecology field course in Israel will take place July 6 to August 6. The course will be stationed at Tel es-Safi/Gath, an archaeological site in the biblical city of Gath. Under the tutelage of YC biology

professor, Vincent Chiappetta, and sociology/archaeology professor, Jill Katz, students will gain both academic and practical experience in recovering and analyzing material remains as well as methods of ecological research. Students will hear lectures about relevant topics and will take field trips to museums and local archaeological and ecological sites. SCW students will receive honors program credits for a more intense version of the course that will include an in-depth research paper; YC students can fulfill the summer experience requirement for YC honors participants.

YC students will be able to study in Europe as part of its Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein Honors Program. From June 1 to July 6, students will bring to life the works of James Joyce and other

literature giants in New York, Dublin and London. Over the five-week period, professors Nadine Kavanaugh, Gillian Steinberg and guest lecturers Joan Haar, a professor at YC, Will Lee, director of the YC honors program, and Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Rosenblatt, a James Joyce scholar and the rabbi of the Riverdale Jewish Center, will teach a variety of lessons encompassing the literature and culture of the three cities the group will visit. Torah learning will also be incorporated to further enhance the otherwise secular program.

"The students stand to gain much from what should to prove an unforgettable experience," Orlian said of all the programs.

A two-credit marine biology and oceanography course, led by assistant professor of biology Dr. Joseph DeSantis, will begin in

Manhattan and end along the coast of Maine. The two-week course will be offered from May 31 to June 13. On the Beren Campus, students will be instructed in marine biology to prepare them for the hands-on experience they will be encountering. At the Darling Marine Center, the marine laboratory of the University of Maine, students will comb the ocean coasts to collect species for live analysis.

"Students will meet with local marine biologists familiar with Maine's coastal environment," said DeSantis. "They will learn what it takes to design an experiment and carry it through."

Accompanying DeSantis will be Associate Dean Ethel Orlian, and her husband Rabbi J. Mitchell Orlian, associate professor of Bible at YC.

"When I first learned that such a trip was being planned, I was truly excited," Orlian remarked. "I mentioned that...I wished I could join them. The response was, 'Why not?'"

Such a program for SCW students is unique in that it will be virtually the only Torah-abiding trip of its kind for university students. "This kind of experience, tailored to our students' needs, would not be possible elsewhere," Orlian stressed.

Past summer courses offered through the SCW and YC honors programs have included Arts and the Jewish Experience in Medici Florence, Great Ideas and Experiments in Modern Physics, a trip to Amsterdam, and exploration of the South through the lens of Jewish history.

The Student Association and Student Council of Yeshiva University's Sy Syms School of Business cordially invite you to attend their Annual Awards Dinner

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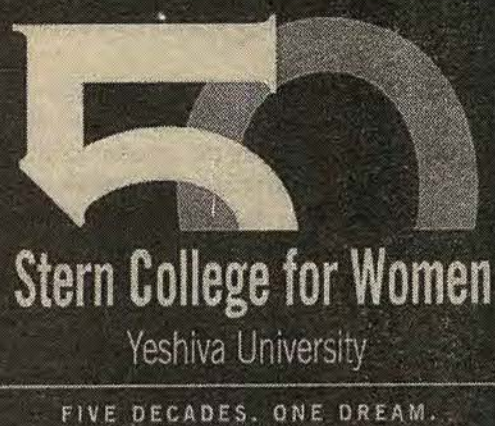
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# The Passion: To See or Not To See, That is The Question

By Dodi Lee Hecht

Mel Gibson's much anticipated "The Passion of the Christ" came to theaters on February 25, Ash Wednesday. By 10:30 pm the next evening, I was sitting in a nearby theater with a notebook and pen in my lap ready to be a movie critic – someone with the important task of watching a movie, not only for herself, but for anyone and everyone who might read her review and be influenced by it.

This role generally has two important results in my eventual article: One- It is never written in first person narrative style and Two- It discusses the movie, and though this may mean the movie as a work of art, as a philosophical or social or political statement, and as a source of controversy, the primary focus is the movie as a movie. Approximately five minutes into my viewing of "The Passion" the pen in my hand dropped to join the equally ignored notebook resting precariously on my knees. The critic inside me died, and I sat through "The Passion" as no one more than myself.

It is for that reason that, despite my particular habit of writing my reviews immediately after seeing the film, I was unable to compose any response at all for over a week. I contemplated the majesty of the film. "Could I talk about the cinematography?" a weak voice inside me asked, but I responded with the first of my many powerful moral dilemmas – how could I placidly discuss the cinematography when I had been witness to the repre-

sentation of the brutal murder of a man and when I was aware that that man was the namesake for so much Jewish persecution through history? The sheer paradox of this bloodiness left me without words with which to write. So I told myself that I would have to avoid the visual details of the movie. I argued that Gibson's subject matter was so philosophically complex that he could not possibly expect any critic to naively stick to the scenery and cinematography.

Could I discuss the acting? How does one mildly critique the performance of someone who has agreed to play his deity? Do I know what Jesus was really like that I can actually claim James Caviezel was less than lifelike? The man had to die for two hours. Personally, I think he did that excellently. I just felt horrible watching it. I can say that he and Maia Morgenstern, who played Mary, did an exceptional job of convincing the audience that the death of Jesus was a tragedy. They convinced the audience to cry unbearable tears while witnessing the torture and murder of a man. Yes, "The Passion" was well-acted. Yet, I wonder how much people needed to be con-

vinced to find scourging and crucifixion abhorrent?

This line of attack abandoned, I was forced to confront the most pressing question, the one I had tried desperately to

implications even more difficult. Yet, I knew that this article must inevitably be written so I asked myself if I believed, as a movie critic, that Modern Orthodox Jewish college students should

see "The Passion." Then I asked myself, as a Jew and an individual college student, the same question. In both instances I answered the same. Yes. And no. They must see it. They must stay away.

For some, "The Passion" is the story of a God and they can feel comfort in this film despite the difficult imagery and subject matter. However, these Christians were not my intended audience and I could not promise any comfort to my readers. Instead I could only tell those who must face the unwavering belief that

"The Passion" is the fictional story of a man, that there is no comfort and there is no escape from the unceasing cruelty depicted in the film. If one does not believe that "The Passion" is a personally religiously significant film, because of its violent nature and sadistic theme, that purpose better be earth-shatter-

ingly essential and unique.

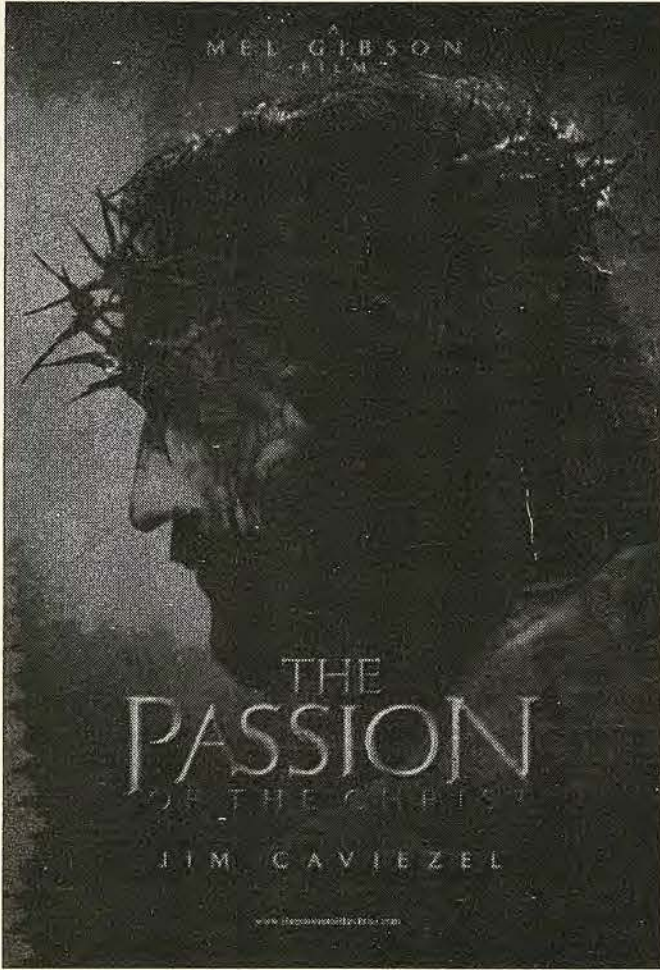
Reason must also take into account the emotional intensity with which the Jewish community has challenged this film. If any part of me thinks that other Jews should see this movie, I better have something to say about the reports of anti-Semitism and the fear that this movie will stir up tidal waves of anti-Jewish sentiments which will sweep across North America. So I began to consider the phrases "son of God" and "anti-Jewish" and I finally returned to the first thought I had written after seeing the movie:

"Many have called 'The Passion' an anti-Jewish movie. This is not exactly true.

The movie is not anti-Jewish; it is non-Jewish. Jews do not contain in their collective consciousness the necessary folklore to appreciate, or even understand, this film." When I had written those words I had meant to elucidate that, just as Christians turned Jesus into a God, Jews have, in response to countless blood libels and centuries of suffering, deified their version or non-version of Jesus into a dark icon of sorts. So, not only could a Jew not appreciate Jesus as a hero but it would be impossible to even fathom the heroic nature of Jesus.

That was why I was shocked to realize that I had cried for Jesus while watching the movie. Jews aren't even sure if he existed and, if he did, he was most probably an enemy of the Sanhedrin, but I still shed tears for this individual. In contrast, no matter how sympathetic a perspective

*continued on page 27*



## It Takes "Wit" to Pull This Off:

### SCW Drama Society Succeeds in Delivering Play with Two Weeks Practice



SCW students succeed with "wit"

By Marisa Parker

The SCW Drama Society has managed to once again deliver an entertaining and professional performance.

The play starred SCW Junior Yael Dubrovsky, who shined as Vivian Bearing PhD, an intellectual and renowned college professor suddenly diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Dubrovsky skillfully portrayed

the multi-faceted character and made talented transitions between the gravity and levity of her dialogue. Ironically, the script, which details Bering's quick demise, still manages to produce many humorous lines, which were sharply delivered by the cast.

What is even more impressive is that after various obstacles preventing the crew from continuing with their original play choice, the cast and crew

selected *Wit*, a play by Margaret Edson and directed by Director Jackson Gay who received an MFA from Yale School of Drama, merely two short weeks before the scheduled production.

Although the cast had limited time to practice, they pooled their energy under the leadership of Josh Scher, drama professor at SCW. However, there were signs of a rushed job. Some of the costumes were indeed shoddy. The nurse wore black, clunky

shoes, causing the audience to take her less seriously. Her hair was not tucked into her hairnet. And how hard is it to buy white pillow cases for a scene including a hospital bed? When working and investing so much time and effort on a project, why should minute and easily remediable details take away from the otherwise meticulous performance?

The cast included some superb individuals who should be mentioned. In truth, I could expound and elaborate upon Dubrovsky's performance for another five pages, pointing out her incredible depiction of the character, body language and detailed facial expressions, but other actresses deserve credit for their talented performances as well. SCW senior Chaya Glaser delivered a solid performance as Dr. Jase Posner, a former-student and current physician of Bearing. She was extremely convincing as an emotionally cold and narrow minded doctor. Her conversation slowed smoothly and naturally. SCW junior Joanna Landau who was a treat to watch and listen to. Landau had the difficult task of portraying five different char-

acters, which she did with grace and poise. The most endowed role she delivered was that of E.M. Ashford, a college professor of Vivian Bearing; she had excellent presence and articulation.

The scenery was both appropriate and creative; it was a depiction of various types of cancer cells. Furthermore, I was extremely impressed with the creative additions of the crew. For example, x-rays were represented by flashing the lights of the Geraldine Schottenstein Cultural Center on and off, which exuded a realistic effect. Furthermore, the wheel chair choreography was extremely professional. The lighting and sound were also superb.

Despite the nominal attendance, the play was extremely successful. However, if the drama society received larger support, they could invest in microphones, scenery and more advanced lighting technology. Student support plays a large role in the continuity and success of the drama society.



## More than Blue Fringe For Girls: Finally, SCW Has Its Own Rock Band

By Tikva Hecht

Picture this: two university students meet while practicing drums and guitar and decide to start a band. Doesn't sound like much of a novel idea? Try adding skirts. Long skirts. In the Modern Orthodox world, where the average musically-inclined female is strumming an acoustic guitar and singing *negunim*, melodies, Sara Jacobson, SCW senior, and Sarita Filler, SCW sophomore, had something a little different in mind: the first ever SCW rock band, temporarily known as the Stern Band.

"You play drums, I play guitar and bass," said Filler to Jacobson when they met in September of this year. "Let's start a band." For Jacobson this was a dream come true. "Music is my background for life," remarked Jacobson, when asked why she wanted to be a part of a band. "It brings joy, it influences your emotions, and it helps you look into yourself." For Filler, it was a logical outgrowth of her already extensive relationship with music. A Music major, Filler began her musical career with a violin in fourth grade and has since then mastered upright bass, guitar, cello, trumpet and sax guitar. She is considered the musical leader of the group.

Conversely, Jacobson's intense passion drove her to work immediately and accepted upon herself most of the managerial responsibilities associated with the band. Within a week of the students' meeting, Jacobson started distributing flyers looking for additional members.

As anticipated, the responses were not plentiful; only a handful of SCW students

showed interest, commitment and skill to be considered. Besides Jacobson, on drums, and Filler, on bass, the band now includes Sarachaya Bogart on backup guitar and Emilia Cataldo as the lead vocalist. While actively searching for a keyboardist and lead guitarist, the band is still open to other types of band additions as well.

The band is trying to produce at SCW what bands like Blue Fringe have done at YC, namely combine quality secular music with Jewish themes and words. Original material is a goal, but right now the group is just focusing on getting used to playing together and forging bonds among the very diverse group. "We all have very different styles," explained Cataldo. "So far what we've decided for our priority is for our individuality to come out in the music."

Despite their lack of practices prior to their debut performance, the band played at the SCW Rosh Chodesh Adar Chagiga with great success. Fans waved encouraging signs and there was an overall sense of excitement. "I think a Jewish girl band has seriously elevated and uplifted the level and status of our school," SCW senior Diana Benmergui exclaimed. The student enthusiasm was powerful encouragement for the band members. Cataldo was greatly inspired by a comment she heard as she walked offstage. "When I walked down after the Chagiga, I heard a girl say 'It's like a whole new high.' We're hoping this is going to represent us."

Although the students in attendance at the Chagiga enjoyed the band's performance, it was mostly a chance for the band to proclaim its existence,

not a reflection of the band members' personal standards and they do not plan to perform live again until next year. "I saw an opportunity and grabbed it," elaborated Jacobson. "[The performance was] not perfect: we made some mistakes, mics weren't set up correctly, but we sounded like a band and that was worth it."

The single gender nature of the audience at the Chagiga is indicative of the band's intentions not to play in front of mixed crowds, a reflection of the members' commitment to halakha. They recognize that by limiting their audience, they are creating a glass ceiling for themselves. It will not be a simple matter to record a CD, if the band ever makes it to that level. To succeed they will have to fight the fact that restricting themselves by only playing in front of women could potentially lessen their appeal, even among their female audiences.

Filler is honest about the situation. "People like mixed concerts. We're cool and [all-female events are] nerdy." But she sees the barrier in its proper perspective. "We have a glass ceiling; that stinks. I [also] can't have skittles; that stinks."

"At the same time we're proud to follow Jewish halakha - this is the level of modesty we want to uphold." Jacobson added.

It is important to both founders of the band to stress that they are in no way trying to be rebellious or make a political statement although they do see their initiative as a big step for Orthodox female students. Filler and Jacobson want to send out the message that Orthodox students can excel in their fields of



The Stern Band had its first performance at SCW's Purim Chagiga

interest. They see this as an opportunity to encourage other students, who would never have thought it an option, to do something different.

Thus far, the band has seen immense support from SCW faculty and administration. Associate Dean Ethel Orlian was instrumental in arranging for Jacobson's drum set to be kept in the school building. When Jacobson and Filler approached Zelda Braun, assistant dean of students, for general advice, Braun responded with great excitement about the new endeavor. "I am thrilled at this initiative," raved Braun. "And I am going to do everything I can to help it succeed. I think it's fantastic. We just need all of our talented musicians to get involved."

YC Dean Ephrem Nulman, Dean Karen Bacon, Dr. David Glaser, visiting professor of music, and professor of music Chris Buchenholz have also shown an interest in the band and offered their support. "SCW has been working with us as a team to support us and help make us a reality," Jacobson

expressed. "For that we owe them tremendous gratitude. We hope we can give back to SCW much more than we have gained and bring music to SCW."

The first SCW rock band has embarked on a future with no precedence to guide them but, for now, two things are certain. Firstly, the possibility of diverse musical experience and expression has emerged at SCW in an innovative way. Secondly, if one hears the crisp sounds of modern music seeping into the hallways of the Beren Campus at some off-hour, most likely one is hearing the efforts of Jacobson, Filler, Bogart and Cataldo because, for these SCW students, life is the background for music.

Any SCW students who are interested in joining the band or wish to get involved can reach the band at [sternband@yahoo.com](mailto:sternband@yahoo.com). The band is currently considering a permanent name and welcomes any suggestions.

## How to Find Mr. Right: A Guide to Navigating the Seferim Sale

By Devorah Heching

At first glance the Seferim Sale seems like an innocent fundraiser, an annual event with purely monetary objectives. There is a wide range of books selling at discounted prices; an ever-eager staff ever willing to aid in the discovery of an obscure text and a diverse customer-base whose sole source of funding is their parents' credit card. It has all the makings of a lucrative fundraiser.

Upon closer inspection, however, the true nature of the sale is revealed. Under the guise of the dissemination of religious texts what is in fact occurring is *teshiva's* answer to the prom - a semi-formal for the Modern Orthodox if you will. While there is a notable absence of pastel dresses and all things floral, the discerning bystander will observe that the dance itself is actually in full swing.

**Pre-dance:** Like a prom, the

seferim sale consists of three elements; preparation, the dance itself and, of course, the after-party. Although the male attendees may be able to reduce their preparation time to five seconds or the time it takes to spray one's entire body with deodorant, their female counterparts tend to spend slightly more time, somewhere in the range of, say, three hours. Disclaimer: this number does not include the painstaking application of light pink nail polish.

For those males who doubt the veracity of this number, refer back to the time you came to the Beren Campus for what was most probably an accounting interview. Walking into the Sy Syms building and glancing around at the student body you might have been struck by how...different all the students appeared. Were these the same female students seen exiting the inter-campus shuttle just a few nights prior or their vastly less attractive fraternal twins? This disturbing scene provides some insight as to what



Students use the annual Seferim Sale as a place to meet

constitutes "prep time" for the average female before her prom.

**The dance:** Arriving at Belfer Hall after what can only be termed an obnoxiously long shuttle ride, the female students sweep up to the third floor in giggling groups or alone - what is formally known as going "stag." And the dancing begins. Some misguided males are under the false impression that the most effective flirting techniques involve corny one-liners incorporating a seferim sale theme. For example, "Have you seen the book *Thirty Days to Find Your Spouse?* I'm hoping it will only

take us one." This boy will never be prom king. Another ineffective technique used by the male is approaching anyone holding a copy of the bestseller, *The Secret to Femininity*. Trust me, rejection will follow.

The females tend to employ a more subtle form of flirtation. Read persistent hair flipping. While to an outsider this technique may seem a mere grooming mechanism it is, in fact, the female's most obvious dance move. If the female in question has been the victim of an unfortunate haircut and lacks the hair length necessary for an effective flip, she may choose to express interest by complimenting a male employee on the seferim arrangement in his section. Contrary to popular opinion, all arrangements appear identical to the unpracticed eye and this seemingly innocent observation is, in fact, blatant flirting on the part of the female.

The most effective way for two unattached attendees to leave

the sale as a pair can be put into effect before making one's exit from the sale. By this I refer to the seemingly innocent request for a customer's telephone number in the checkout line. Although the claim is that these seven digits are necessary for "seferim sale records," I think we all know the truth.

**The After-party:** What is a prom without an exclusive after-party? Well, the seferim sale has its own rendition of the classic after-hours party replete with vats of spicy chicken and an invitation-only guest list. After the formal sale has concluded, the chosen male and female guests linger on in the back room until, well, the use of the inter-campus shuttle is no longer an option. While what actually goes on at this party remains a mystery to the uninitiated (i.e. myself), rumor has it that a revolving video camera on the twelfth floor keeps the revelers entertained for hours. Luckily, Security's watching.

## YCDS's "Biloxi Blues" a Stunning Success

By Dodi-Lee Hecht

The lights slowly fade as the audience is plunged into darkness. The sound of Bette Midler, crooning an up tempo number reminiscent of the big band era, fills the theatre. The sound of a train punctures the air. These are the first moments of YCDS's rendition of Neil Simon's classic, "Biloxi Blues." The lights go up and suddenly, the audience is flung into the thoughts and commentary of one Private Eugene M. Jerome as he and his platoon suffer through basic training in 1940's Biloxi, Mississippi.

The cast and crew of this play had the fundamentally difficult task of doing justice to a poignant and, at times, hilarious script composed by a master playwright. Without generating further suspense, let it just be said that YCDS succeeded in an exceptional fashion. The set, sounds and lights created the perfect atmosphere and flung the audience, wholeheartedly, into WWII Biloxi. Each character came to life on that stage and each actor, despite some stumbling, managed to convincingly portray his role. The scenes which featured the majority of the cast benefited most from this group's aptitude; the actors played off each other and the magnificent result was a unified supporting cast who seamlessly mimicked the camaraderie and distinct natures of the characters.

As Jerome, the narrator and central figure in "Biloxi Blues," Elliot Schiff had, most likely, the most intricate mental responsi-

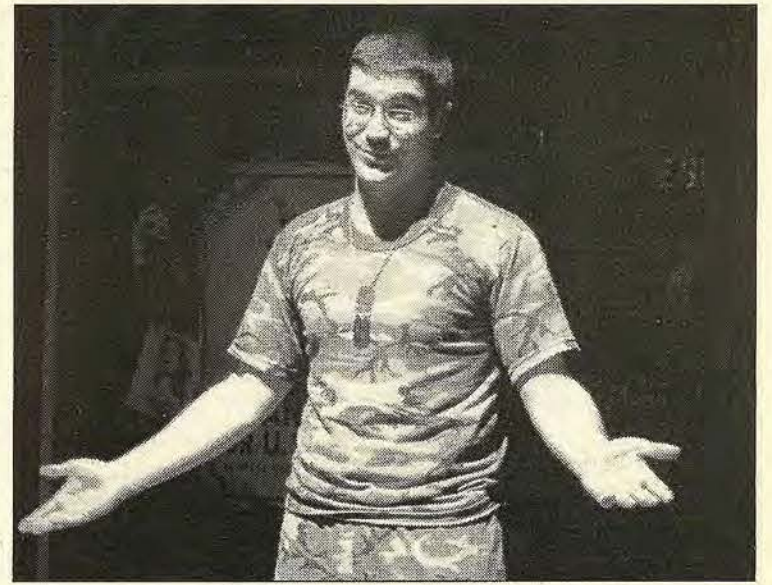
bility on stage. As the narrator, Jerome delivered many monologues throughout the play, often interjecting his observational comments in the middle of dialogue. This constant fluctuation between active participant in a scene and narrator outside of it, forced Schiff to consistently shift his character's state of mind; it was almost as if Jerome was comprised of two characters, not one.

In both states, Schiff perfectly captured his character's emotional turbulence. Throughout the play, Schiff's facial expressions and body language are so indicative of Jerome that one cannot help but believe the intensity of this character and his moral dilemmas. However, perhaps to assist in differentiating one Jerome from the other, Schiff employed an exaggerated tone whenever he stepped into the spotlight. As a result, it was often hard to believe that Jerome, the narrator, actually meant the words coming out of his mouth. It was only by the grace of his non-verbal communication that Schiff succeeded in those moments of monologue.

The bane of Jerome's existence and the character with the most amusing speeches, Sergeant Merwin J. Toomey, the platoon's instructor, was wonderfully played by Dov Medinets. The irony of Medinets' performance was that it was the scenes in which Toomey was most maniacally one-dimensional that the audience was witness to Medinets' talent and capacity to embody a role. Those first scenes, replete with Toomey's rapid-fire wit, demanded an actor who could enter the stage and auto-

matically control the aura in the theatre just as the character theoretically controlled the aura in the barracks. Medinets, from the first moment he stepped onstage, achieved just such control in every scene which demanded it. However, it was when he was forced to play a broken Toomey, in one of the last scenes of the play, that Medinets too readily relinquished his hold on the audience. Although one could argue that the loss perfectly reflected the transformation of the character, the charisma which Medinets had so impeccably fabricated was Toomey and without its presence, the character seemed a faded version of itself. Medinets did act well in that scene but it was only apparent because, in every scene prior, one was unaware that it was an act.

Similarly, the part of Arnold Epstein, Jerome's closest friend in the platoon, demanded a capacity to fully embody a role. Zalman Abramchik who played Epstein flawlessly accomplished this embodiment. Proof of Abramchik's skill was in his ability to convince the audience that, despite his own healthy frame, his character was a weakling and someone easily bullied. Yet, the greater indication of Abramchik's talent lay in the fact that he not only made the audience believe in his character's physical disadvantages, but he managed to take a character that can be potentially disjointed and presented a cohesive and complex individual. Epstein's shifts from comical to tragic to unlikable to heroic are not effortlessly presented even with the crutch of Simon's spec-



Elliot Schiff plays Jerome, the central figure in "Biloxi Blues"

tacular writing; in fact, this character, if not well-acted, can easily revert to a two-dimensional collection of well-worded dialogue. Still, Abramchik rose to the occasion with such flair that one is never left suspecting that Epstein is anything less than an actualized and whole person.

Although, as mentioned above, all the minor roles were performed well, it is important to make mention of one more actor who contributed greatly to the illusion. The character of Joseph Wykowski is not complex; he is a racist, a bully and a good soldier. Yet, Dov Friedman had the unbelievable task of proving to the audience that he could be a racist, a bully and a good soldier. In the same moment that Abramchik had to prove to the audience that Wykowski could easily beat him to the ground, Friedman had to make it clear to the audience that he could actually accomplish this feat and, even more so, that he would if

provoked. It is not a simple achievement to maintain such a mask of tough bravado for two hours and still make it believable. Friedman was Wykowski every moment he was on stage.

Without a doubt, YCDS exceeded all expectations with its astounding production of "Biloxi Blues." It was not a perfectly executed production. As previously mentioned, there were some actors who clumsily tripped over a few lines. The choreographed fighting was often too choppy to be realistic. Still, one cannot criticize this production for too long before one is forced to recall, through pangs of guilt, how thoroughly enjoyable "Biloxi Blues" actually was. And, it was just that - an entirely entertaining two hours filled with truly incredible performances.

"Biloxi Blues" was expertly adapted and directed by Dr. Anthony S. Beukas.

## The Art of the Cantor: A Struggle to Reconcile Modernity and Tradition

By Dodi-Lee Hecht

On March 18 the Yeshiva University Museum (YUM) and Belz School of Jewish Music presented "The Cantor as Composer: Treasures of Viennese Liturgical Music" to honor and celebrate this underappreciated and necessary art of the Jewish world. The concert featured the Belz School Choral Ensemble and two guest soloists, Cantor Seymour Rockoff and Cantor Moshe Weiss. Although the event was in direct conjunction with the exhibit "Vienna: Jews and the City of Music," now on display at YUM, the concert was also the first official event in a series intended to commemorate Belz's fiftieth anniversary. This unification between the history of the cantorial arts and its future was most aptly captured in the selections and performances which comprised the concert.

Most of the compositions performed during the concert were the work of one musician, Solomon Sulzer, a cantor in 19th century Vienna. Although his name may not be known to every Jew, Sulzer's musical contribu-

tions to Jewish liturgy are still an integral part of most Jewish prayer services. His tune for *En Komocho*, the prayers accompanying the Torah Reading, is arguably the most famous piece of composed music among all Jewish liturgical music. Weiss, the featured soloist who performed this piece, elucidated prior to his performance that many cantors in Sulzer's time were attempting to compose tunes for various prayers which simulated the nature of the traditions for those prayers. However, this effort became even more difficult when faced with sections of prayer without known traditional tunes. *En Komocho* was one of these unassigned prayers and, yet, explained Weiss, Sulzer's tune, despite its relatively young age, is regarded by many Jews today as the traditional tune.

The irony inherent in Sulzer's rise to fame was best expressed in the opening comments made about him. In his introductory remarks, Cantor Bernard Beer, the director of Belz, declared Sulzer to be the "father of the modern Cantorate" and yet, to the Jews of his own era, predominately in Eastern

Europe, "his music...was not at all Jewish." Although Sulzer himself was quoted as saying "Jewish Liturgy must remain Jewish," his usage of modern musical rules related to harmony left many Jews feeling that he was renouncing the melodies of their ancestors. Despite *En Komocho's* acceptance as tradition today, it is not impossible to recognize the revolutionary nature of Sulzer's work.

In the choral ensemble's performance of *L'cho Dodi*, the first piece of the evening, with solos by Weiss and Shalom Cukier, a student at Belz, the haunting and passionate nature of the music did seem, at first, to resemble a Catholic hymn more than a Jewish prayer. The skill of the performers themselves appeared more like those of an opera singer than a *Ba'al Tefillah*. However, the heart of the melody was perfectly constructed to reflect the words and sentiments of the prayer and it soon became clear that the artistry of the work only enhanced its holiness.

Despite the emphasis on the era of the birth of modern Jewish liturgical music and its obvious leader, Sulzer, the concert also

featured original compositions by Rockoff, which he performed accompanied on piano by Cantor Eric Freeman, choral director. As his final piece, Rockoff performed an original version of *Ano Avdo* which he had first performed in his own synagogue in memory of the first cantor he had ever been audience to on a regular basis, Cantor Martin Horowitz of Riverdale, New York. The tune for this rendition had been adapted to the prayer from a piece composed by Horowitz's daughter, Sharon Horowitz, prior to her premature death. This beautiful composition, highlighted by its dedication, encapsulated the difficulty all cantors, not just Sulzer, face in attempting to reconcile the history of cantorial music with its unknown future.

Rockoff later explained that the role of the cantor has changed drastically since Sulzer's time; whereas it was once a performance without audience participation, today many congregants desire to add their voices to the cantor's song. As a result, Rockoff has found, in his own community, that melodies with a modern feel to

them are more readily accepted. Although he admitted that Sulzer's world famous *En Komocho* is still in use at his synagogue, Rockoff employs more recently composed melodies for all other prayers. Beyond the three pieces Rockoff performed at the concert, he has composed a couple hundred pieces of liturgical music in his career.

The concert concluded, as per tradition, with *Adon Olam*. However, the melody chosen, composed by Sulzer, was not a "traditionally" upbeat melody but a darker, richer piece of music. As the audience filed out, the splendor of this final melody seemed to hover in the air. Although Sulzer's music has become, to a large extent, outdated, his struggle to bring a rigor to traditional Jewish liturgical music has not been in vain. This was most clearly evidenced by the performers themselves, trained cantors and students who have dedicated their professional life to the same revered duty as Sulzer did almost two hundred years ago and who, like Sulzer, must succeed in intertwining the role of an opera singer with that of a *Ba'al Tefilla*.

# Up And Coming In The Big Apple

An Evening with Writer/Director/Actor Dani Levy

92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y  
 April 8  
 7:00 pm  
 Steinhardt Building  
 35 West 67<sup>th</sup> Street  
 Admission: \$15  
 www.92ndsty.org

Whitney Biennial  
 The Whitney Museum of American Art  
 March 11 through May 30  
 945 Madison Avenue at 75<sup>th</sup> Street  
 Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday 11 am-6 pm; Friday 1 pm-9 pm  
 Admission: \$12  
 www.whitney.org

Chuck Close Prints: Process and Collaboration  
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
 January 13 through April 18  
 1000 Fifth Avenue  
 Sunday, Tuesday-Thursday 9:30 am-5:30 pm,  
 Friday-Saturday 9:30-9:00pm  
 Admission: Free  
 www.metmuseum.org

Archie Rand: Iconoclast  
 Yeshiva University Museum  
 February 25 through August 15  
 15 West 16<sup>th</sup> Street  
 Tuesday - Thursday, Sunday 11 am-5 pm  
 Admissions: adult-\$6, students and children-\$3, with valid YU ID-free  
 www.yumuseum.org

Reconstructing Vilne, "the Most Yiddish City of the World"  
 Maria Salit-Gitelson Tell Memorial Lecture  
 YIVO Institute for Jewish Research  
 April 29  
 7:00 pm  
 Center for Jewish History, 15 West 16<sup>th</sup> Street  
 Admission: Free  
 www.yivo.org

## A Look Back in Time at SCW: Yeshiva University Museum to Showcase SCW Retrospective

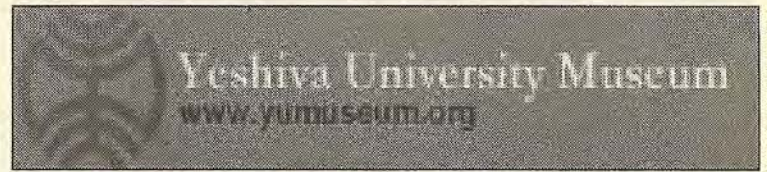
By Sarah Kupferstein

A museum exhibit chronicling and celebrating both the 50-year history of SCW and the school at present will be featured in the Yeshiva University Museum from September to December 2004 as part of SCW's Jubilee celebration. The portable exhibit will be circulated around Yeshiva's schools.

"We're presenting it to students and showing them, this is a part of your history," said Joan Apple, director of development at SCW. "It...was considered radical at the time, an innovative idea to combine secular learning with Torah. Films and three dimensional material will be used. It will also be available to all feeder schools."

The idea for the exhibit, which has yet to be named, began when students at SCW created a patchwork quilt for former Associate Dean Esther Zura, currently in Israel. The quilt will be on display at the museum, including other memorabilia such as the original shovel used at the groundbreaking of SCW and pictures of Eleanor Roosevelt visiting the school.

"The goal of the exhibit is to show that Stern College does not put out cookie-cutter women," said Dr. Jill Vexler, who has been appointed the curator of the exhibition. "An affinity to Orthodoxy and a Torah way of life doesn't mean we're not hip and trendy." SCW students excel in their "sophisticated intellectual vigor and study of texts formerly relegated to the roles of



men, and the general Jewish community doesn't realize this."

Vexler obtained her PhD in cultural anthropology from the University of California. She was the curator of the exhibit "Yahrzeit: September 11 Observed" at the museum of Jewish Heritage in New York, of which she observed that "Stern was a wonderful part." That exhibit drew attention to the SCW students who did *shemirah* (keeping watch over dead bodies until burial) at Ground Zero.

She was also curator of "Auschwitz, Oswiecim, Oshptizin: Portraits of Memories," an exhibition on pre-war Jewish life set up in a restored synagogue in Oswiecim, a town adjacent to Auschwitz. Out of 30, it was the only synagogue in the town to survive the Holocaust. "It was an extraordinary learning experience, working with Polish people who were empathetic and knowledgeable of Jewish culture and horrified by what happened," she remarked.

In addition, Vexler has just completed an exhibit at the Miami Children's Museum called "Ports of Call: Brazil," which is a presentation for children about Brazilian culture, food, home life and celebrations that she described as "very fun."

Jucian J. Leone, who has been chosen as the designer, was a senior designer on the staff of the Metropolitan Museum of Art from 1972 to 1980 and then estab-

lished his own firm, Leone Designs. He has designed exhibits for The Jewish Museum, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and Hebrew Union College. He is also the chief designer for "A Perfect Fit: The Garment Industry and American Jewry" which will open at the Yeshiva University Museum in the fall of 2005.

Vexler is looking to current and former SCW students for assistance with the exhibition. "We need 3-D artifacts, since the show is very flat, such as something from the basketball team, something funky," she stated. "It will be a peek at what it's like to live on campus, especially for international girls."

She is also interested in having students become part of the research process, particularly seniors, and plans on having reflective discussions with students about their impressions. "We want students to be in touch," she explained. "We want to know what's important to them now and concerning the future. What's great? What's not great?"

"We are especially on the lookout for women of earlier classes," she noted.

Students interested in being contacted for group reflections should email Dr. Jill Vexler at cultural.crossovers@att.net.

## "The Passion" Continues

*continued from page 24*

of a Nazi might provide, I highly doubt I would ever cry for any representation of Hitler in a movie. (And if I did I would probably repent fully right afterwards.)

It is this confusion that led part of me to feel that no Jew should see this movie; what can be gained from two hours spent watching torture if the whole point is incomprehensible? Why must a Jew be put into such an uncomfortable position - watch the name so equated with Jewish pain in history portrayed as so deserving of sympathy and sadness? No, it would be better to ignore "The Passion" and let it be what it should have been from the beginning - a low-budget film for devout Christians to complement their faith.

However, "The Passion" was already in my consciousness and it was changing my thoughts so rapidly I had no chance of keeping up. I began thinking about Jesus and Christianity as a sect of Judaism, like Hassidism or the

Reform movement. Each time history introduced a rival philosophy within Judaism the response of the core was different. What it depended upon told me something about my religion; this I had always known. But what had forced the sect to emerge was a question I had not asked about Christianity until after seeing this movie. It is for

*If I learned on thing from this film it is that we must all bear our own crosses. However, if it makes any difference at all, the cinematography was breathtaking.*

the sake of that question that I recommend this movie. It is not easy to confront a religion that has denied Judaism so vehemently and try to glean wisdom from it. I would not suggest that Christianity has much wisdom to offer in the way of philosophy, however Christianity's origins do lie in Judaism and "The Passion" offers Jews an opportunity to see that obscure historical era through the eyes of a Christian, not to adopt it or integrate it, but to understand it and thereby understand Judaism's

vision a little more clearly.

As well, if we can finally understand why centuries of Christians hated their Jewish brethren despite the fact that the former religion is directly founded on the latter, then we, as Jews, might be a little closer to understanding our own faith. The line in the sand tells more about one's own boundaries than the boundaries of those who drew the line.

Thus, "The Passion" offers Jews an unbelievably confusing glimpse into the religion which has been our nemesis for two thousand years but it is a glimpse. I, personally, am glad I saw it despite all the horror that came with it but, as a critic, I cannot do my job. To see "The Passion" or not is too personal a decision for me to make for anyone besides myself. If I learned one thing from the film it is that we all must bear our own crosses. However, if it makes any difference at all, the cinematography was breathtaking.



A young girl holds a picture of an Israeli terror victim while demonstrating at The Hague

## Yeshiva Joins Thousands in Demonstration Against International Court

By Shayndi Raice

As Yeshiva students crowded into gate G36 at Newark Airport, some on chairs, other opting to spread out on the floor, they anxiously awaited their chance to board the plane to the Netherlands. "I was very excited," said Sefi Kraut, an SCW senior. "I was also very excited about doing this with YU. I felt like we were a cohesive unit, like this institution became something I belong to."

After the International Court of Justice announced that a hearing would take place from February 23 through 25 on the "Legal Consequences of the Construction in the Occupied Palestinian Territory," student leaders organized a mission within a matter of days to The Hague. The trip itself was similar to its planning; fast and intense.

When students arrived in Amsterdam they were ushered

onto buses that would take them directly to The Hague. After an hour-long journey, at approximately 11 a.m. a sea of faces greeted students; faces of terror victims plastered to poster boards and the faces of the protestors who held them.

While the posters conveyed the horror of terrorism, the visual center of the protest was even more horrific: the mangled and twisted metal remnants of a bus that had been blown up by a homicide-bomber. Surrounded by members of Zaka, an organization that prepares the victims of terrorism for proper Jewish burial, the protestors solemnly answered *amen* to the *el maleh rachamim*, a traditional Jewish prayer for the dead. While for many the shredded and twisted metal of the bus was shocking, for Aviva Schuster, an Israeli paramedic with Magen David Adom, the sight was not unusual.

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## MSDCS Looks to Expand to the Beren Campus

By Shifra Landowne

The Max Stern Division of Communal Service (MSDCS), a Yeshiva office which operates from the Wilf Campus, has recently begun pursuing a move downtown. "I would like to see an MSDCS office at Stern and have made preliminary inquiries to see if it will be possible next year," announced Rabbi David Israel, director of MSDCS. MSDCS, which is a division of Yeshiva's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS), "serves as the vehicle to transmit the inner vision of Yeshiva to the Jewish community," according to their website. MSDCS is mainly recognized for its programming outside of the immediate Yeshiva community, including Eimatai, a high school leadership program and Counterpoint, a summer outreach program in Australia.

However, there is another side of MSDCS which is little seen on the Beren Campus.

MSDCS is heavily involved in programming at YC, but has little effect at SCW, due to the lack of MSDCS staff on the Beren Campus.

Over the past several years, MSDCS has made inroads at SCW, taking on at first one, and now two SCW students as interns and MSDCS liaisons on the Beren Campus yearly.

Last year, MSDCS initiated a *mishmar*, learning program for SCW and yeshiva high school students which was jointly sponsored by the office of admissions and TAC. The program has continued this past year, bringing Yeshiva's *roshei yeshiva* to the Beren Campus for lecturing opportunities.

"The women are a large part of communal service," said Shani Libin, an SCW senior who serves as one of this year's interns. "Without involvement at Stern, MSDCS and the community at large are losing out on a large pool of great women. We try to keep a foot in the Stern campus, but without an office

base, it's just not the same thing."

According to Libin, MSDCS has felt the need for a larger presence on the Beren Campus for awhile but has only begun acting now. "With the new administration coming in, this is the first time that an office at Stern could be a real possibility," she said. "And I hope it happens. I don't think there is enough of a focus on communal service at Stern. People aren't aware of all the programs that MSDCS runs, and they don't have access to the greater vision." Israel expressed a similar sentiment. "The students of SCW are a vital part of our programming, and we can't possibly expect their equal involvement and contribution without being a presence on the Beren Campus," he said.

A location for the new office has yet to have been produced. MSDCS hopes to have the new office in place for the upcoming academic year.

## International Affairs Center Debuts at Yeshiva

By Rebecca Rosenberg

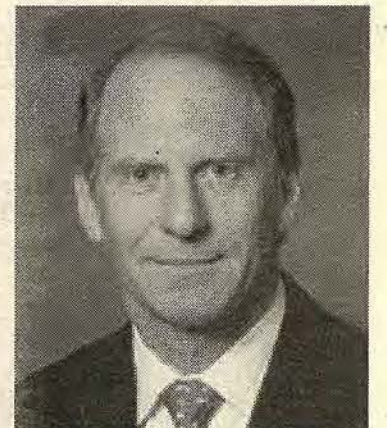
On March 31, the Rabbi Arthur S. Schneier Center for International Affairs sponsors its kick-off event, beginning with an inauguration and featuring keynote speaker Richard N. Haass, said Dr. Ruth Bevan, who has been appointed as director of the center. Bevan holds the David W. Petegorsky Chair in Political Science at YC.

"We envision the center as becoming a major forum for discussion of international issues, for sponsoring conferences that will enhance our curriculum and for connecting students with internships," said Bevan. However, the manner in which the center will achieve these goals has not yet been determined. In fact, many details about the center have yet to be finalized, such as its location.

The center has a wide-ranging purpose and few limitations

thus far. "The goal is to utilize faculty and research from Yeshiva University undergraduate and graduate schools in areas such as medicine, law, social work, history, Bible and political science," according to a statement released by Yeshiva's Department for Communications and Public Affairs. While details remain murky, however, according to Bevan ultimately representatives from the various Yeshiva schools will establish the center's agenda. "International Affairs will be broadly defined, meaning we shall not deal only with political issues," said Bevan. "We might, for example, have a conference on world health in which Einstein would play a major role in helping to organize or a conference on international intellectual property rights in which Cordozo, for example, could be involved."

Within the next few months, deans from The Benjamin N. Cordozo School of



Haas, above, will speak at the Rabbi Arthur Schneier Center for International Affairs inaugural event

Law, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Wurzweiler School of Social Work, SCW and YC will select faculty members to sit on the center's board. Board members will be responsible for establishing the center's agenda. In addition, both the YC and SCW political science faculties will participate in the center.

Ultimately, SCW and YC

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## Student Council Election Results

### SCWSC

President - Molly Fink  
Vice President - Lea Benguigui  
Treasurer - Miriam Kahn  
Recording Secretary - Elissa Kempin  
Corresponding Secretary - Rivka Kahn

### TAC

President - Aliza Abrams

Vice President - Riva Preil  
Vice President - Ariella Marcus  
Secretary - Chavie Schwartzbard  
Treasurer - Jen Schulman

### SSSB

President - Sherene Nili  
Vice President - Racheli Fox  
Secretary - Ilana Kahn  
Treasurer - Aliza Schuman

### Sophomore Class

President - Lauren Pietraszka  
Vice President - Melodie Balarsky  
Secretary - Rachel Marguiles  
Treasurer - Aliza Weg

### Junior Class

President - Deena Hassan  
Vice President - Malki Twersky  
Secretary - Shani Fruchter

Secretary - Eliana Rudolph  
Treasurer - Mindy Guttman

### Senior Class

President - Avigayil Rosen  
Vice President - Sigalit Glaser  
Secretary - Lenore Ribalt  
Treasurer - Leora Sarna