

The Yeshiva University

OBSERVER

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Yeshiva Creates Faculty Councils to Remove AAUP Censure

By Rebecca Rosenberg

Dr. Morton Lowengrub, vice president for academic affairs, convened a faculty meeting Friday December 10th to establish faculty councils in an effort to comply with the American Association of University Professor's (AAUP) standards of faculty governance and remove a 23-year censorship against Yeshiva. The AAUP is the most widely accepted organization defining, protecting and defending faculty interests in the United States. The meeting came just months after the Board of Trustees authorized significant senior faculty raises and salary adjustments.

The purpose of the meeting was, "to establish a form of faculty governance at Yeshiva University," said Lowengrub. "The main order of business over

the next few months is the completion of a revised faculty handbook that meets the guidelines of the AAUP so that we can be taken off the censure list."

When the AAUP discovers a campus situation in which there is "a major departure from AAUP-supported standards," it launches an investigation that may lead to censure against that university, according to the organization's website. These standards primarily relate to issues of academic freedom and tenure. Yeshiva is one of 51 universities currently censured by the organization and has been since 1982.

Lowengrub explained the importance of removing the censorship. "Every national research university has representation on the AAUP and follows appropriate guidelines, and we want to do the same thing."

The push for faculty gover-

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SCW Treats NYPD to Holiday Brunch

By Esther Flaschner-Berko and Rebecca Rosenberg

YU hosted its annual Chanukah Brunch December 17th 2004 in Le Bistro for members of the NYPD and high ranking city government officials. Approximately 200 city leaders, including NYC Supreme Court Justice Bruce Balter and Charles Williams of the FBI, enjoyed the buffet meal hosted by Jeffrey Rosengarten, associate vice president of administrative services. "I believe it's important for us to show our gratitude and friendship to the very people who work to improve our environment in New York City and provide vital services to us and all our neighbors," explained Rosengarten.

The gathering serves to strengthen Yeshiva's relationship with city officials by developing

friendships outside of the YU community. "It's always good to bring friends together and people who have things in common," said NYPD Inspector Charles Scholl. "YU often helps the police department and this gives us an important chance to meet on a non-stressful circumstance."

The guests were impressed by the new facility and the lavish spread provided by the University. A sushi chef stood in the café taking orders, while other guests conversed beside counters piled with gourmet latkes and sour cream, among other sumptuous delicacies. "This is a wonderful event," exclaimed NYPD Bureau Chief Joanne Jaffe. "It brings together community components with police personnel. Yeshiva goes so out of their way to have the NYPD be part of their family."

Jaffe is the highest ranking



female in the NYPD and just happens to be Jewish. She is one of seven bureau chiefs of New York City serving as chief of the NYC Housing Bureau. In this capacity, Jaffe ensures the safety and protection of the over 420,000 residents of public housing complexes.

Jaffe feels that social events

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Yeshiva Hosts Annual Hanukkah Dinner



President Joel with honorary degree and presidential medallion recipients

By Esther Flaschner-Berko

On December 12th, Yeshiva University held its eightieth annual dinner at the Waldorf Astoria. This year, the university conferred honorary degrees on Hyman Arbesfeld, Muriel Block, Ronald Gruen, and Dinah Pinczower and presented

Dominick P. Purpura, MD, with the presidential medallion.

Over 700 guests attended the dinner and convocation, including some 40 Yeshiva students. The dinner raised over 1.6 million dollars and officially inaugurated Morry J. Weiss as the new chairman of the YU board.

Students contributed to the dinner procession, taking part in

various elements of the program. "I think it's a tremendous privilege for students to be invited to such an occasion," explained Aliza Abrams, Torah Activities Council president. "It demonstrates that the university includes student leaders in all major events." SCW senior Riva Preil introduced the dinner chair Marjorie Blenden while Hindy Poupko, SCW '05 and head of Stern's Israel Club, was featured in the Yeshiva video.

Joel conducted a menorah-lighting session, calling up 12 extraordinary guests, including graduate fellows, students and professors, to light the Hanukkah candles. These students' achievements include starting the organization ORA to free Agunot, publishing groundbreaking scientific research on heart disease and editing the

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Professor in Focus: Cohen Illuminates Her Manuscripts

By Rebecca Rosenberg

An attractive, mature woman with strawberry blond hair and striking green eyes hunches over a tattered book, holding a magnifying glass to a faded Hebrew inscription. Her eyes brighten as she turns the page of this 15th century manuscript, revealing a magnificently decorated page of text with floral images painted in luminescent gold and vivid reds, greens and blues.

This is professor Evelyn Cohen, coordinator of the art history program, who is an expert on illuminated Hebrew manuscripts - handwritten books painted with gold leaf and precious color - and spends her non-class hours conducting research and writing prolifically

on the topic. "I love this because it's very immediate - I can go to the library and have the manuscript in my hand - that's a very exciting experience," she said.

The contents of these manuscripts vary depending on the preferences of the patrons. "Some Hebrew manuscripts are liturgical books, some are Bible, some are rabbinic texts and some have a compilation of many different texts," explained Cohen.

She primarily deals with manuscripts from the Medieval to Renaissance period, such as "The Kaufmann Mishneh Torah" from 1296, written by a Jew for his brother-in-law. The scribe was identified in the colophon, an inscription at the end of the manuscript, which includes information on the copiest and

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Esther Flaschner-Berko
Editor-in-Chief

Stern's Low Self-Esteem



Rebecca Rosenberg
Editor-in-Chief

Not long ago, I (Rebecca) went to visit a friend in Crown Heights who had graduated from Stern College, and now attended graduate school. Her two roommates were Orthodox women, one was attending Queen's College and the other had graduated from NYU. We sat around a small table drinking tea and coffee and snacking on cookies when the topic of Stern came up.

One of my friend's roommates asked, "Where are you in school?" I answered, "Stern." Quickly her face grimaced, and she said almost sarcastically, "How is that working out for you?" I then proceeded to explain how wonderful and fulfilling my experience has been at SCW, citing many academic and religious opportunities I had that would not have been available at other institutions. Though, at first she appeared surprised, she grew fascinated and wanted to hear more. Thinking that I had started to persuade her of the value of YU, my friend jumped into the conversation, "I hated Stern," she said. "It was my biggest regret. I felt so unhappy and unspiritual there that I barely passed my classes."

And, not long ago, after a long night of hard Observer work, I (Esther) found myself sandwiched in the Brookdale elevator between a variety of SCW students. While talking to an Observer writer, the conversation turned to our majors. My friend recalled our last semester at SCW and noted that I had

transferred here from Columbia University. Suddenly, the other women in the elevator turned to stare. "You came here from Columbia?" one girl asked incredulously. "Why in the world would you do that?"

At this point, I usually launch into an explanation about how Columbia was great, but I wanted more advanced Judaic studies, and ended up finding tremendous opportunities at Stern College. But now it was late at night, and the elevator had opened. I turned to the student and as I walked out, over my shoulder, I simply and honestly replied, "Because I like it here."

Slandering Stern seems to have become a religious pastime for many students and Jews, some of whom know almost nothing about the institution. For those Jews who know little about Stern but choose to scoff at it, there is little we can do except show pride and dignity in the institution we've chosen to attend.

It is more relevant to address the lack of morale among students at SCW; this is a corrosive force that eats away at our community from the inside.

There are many possible reasons this is such a problem on campus. Possibly, the religious divisions, which separate many students, contribute to certain hostilities. A more right wing individual might refuse to take certain professors whom she views as too modern, while a liberal student might scorn a more conservative instructor. Jews

love to criticize and condemn one another but SCW is a unique institution that welcomes theological differences within the scope of Orthodoxy. This a place where Rabbi Saul Berman can teach freely though he is decried by some as "outside the pale of Modern Orthodoxy," and Rabbi Metzger, though an avid Lubavitcher, is adored by students of all backgrounds.

Unfortunately, many students are not willing to embrace the same tolerance toward their fellow classmates and this often results in an unfortunate fragmentation of the student population into introverted cliques. As SCW students, we should be able to achieve a cohesiveness by transcending our personal and religious differences and acknowledging a shared commitment to a Torah Umadda lifestyle. Attending SCW means the acceptance of a challenging dual curriculum.

Beyond the divisiveness, SCW's low self-esteem may simply stem from ignorance. Yeshiva consistently places in the top fifty universities in the country, and every year dozens of students turn down ivy league colleges to attend our classrooms. SCW has some of the highest rates of graduate school acceptance, particularly to the competitive fields of health sciences. Why some students view this as unsatisfactory, or even as derogatory, we simply cannot understand.

Of course, a university requires more than an appealing

ideology for success. The three most important components are the faculty, administration, and students and each must not only be strong but be perceived as strong by each other. There are too many highly respected and prolific faculty to create an exhaustive list here. Among these tenured professors are Ellen Schrecker of the history department, whose books on McCarthyism are used in universities nationwide; Carol Silver of the English department, whose academic book on fairies received rave reviews from the New York Times; and Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel of the Judaic Studies department, whose works transcend religious lines. And in what other university can students sit down with their dean to iron out scheduling difficulties or simply to talk.

Though most SCW students are particularly intelligent, we think their greatest value lies in their kindness and commitment to each other, their religion and their ideals. Last year's mission to the Hague - where over 100 Yeshiva students flew to Holland to protest the International Court of Justice's decision against Israel - is an example of YU students' unusual dedication toward Israel and their drive to actualize it.

We could go on listing for you objective reasons for why Stern doesn't deserve its reputation. But the truth is, we just like it here.

The Yeshiva University
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Artists for Starving People



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Art@letterShin.com
Send your name, photos of your work, estimated price, and media employed together with actual size.



A Message From Your Presidents



Molly Fink
SCWSC President

Hello Ladies,

This past Shabbat, parshat Vayigash, student leaders of Yeshiva University and I were honored to be at the home of President Richard Joel. Like you, as a student at Yeshiva University we are concerned with both the academic and religious aspects of Yeshiva. President Joel reenergized the

group's commitment to do their best for Yeshiva University.

The Melava Malka was, I am told by Student Council treasurer Miriam Kahn and other student leaders, "a wonderful place to meet with fellow student leaders and to discuss their views in an informal setting."

This semester has been a lot of fun and very productive. My board and I loved the constant inflow of ideas from all of you and

we are thrilled that we are able to make the programs initiated by the students happen for all of us. Keep up the good work for next semester - we are open and willing to help! If you have any questions, my email address is Nams182@aol.com.

As the semester comes to a finish, many of our seniors are graduating. From all of us at Stern College, our best wishes to each and every graduate. May

Hashem grant you hatzlachah in all your future endeavors.

I know many of you have heard about Sherene Nili's terrible accident. She wants to let everyone know that baruch Hashem she's doing well and is getting better. Have a happy and healthy 2005 and good luck studying for finals!

Molly Fink



Aliza Abrams
TAC President

for all of their hard work. I would not have been able to organize all of Chanuka by myself. Together we are an amazing team and I really can't express enough hakarat hatov to each of you.

Speaking of hakarat hatov, being thankful, I would like to address this topic. Many people have come up to me personally and have thanked me for all that TAC did over Chanuka. I want to thank those people in return. It really makes me feel special when people acknowledge all of the hard work that goes into planning activities. On the flip side sometimes people forget to show hakarat hatov. I am not saying that I need every student to come up to me and say thank you, but rather I want to share with all of you a very important lesson that I

learned through this experience, and many others involved with being TAC President.

When TAC gave out the free umbrellas at the beginning of the school year everyone was really appreciative, which was great. However since then, many people have complained about those umbrellas; they said that they were cheap, and that they have fallen apart. I will agree with you they may not have been the best quality, and I apologize for that, but in general when one gives you a present it's just not nice to complain about it, even if you hate it. I am not here to write about TAC's umbrellas and I am not here to give mussar, but I am sharing with you a lesson that I have learned, because I think it is quite important. How many

times do we walk into a building and ignore the person walking right behind us, not holding the door for them? Or how many times do we walk into a building and don't thank the person who held the door open for us? Sometimes we just don't realize what is going on around us. With the hustle and bustle of school work and running in and out of classrooms, up and down stairs, in and out of elevators, we tend to forget that there is a whole other world that doesn't revolve around us. I as a student need to remind myself of this all the time and I write to all of you as my peers, to first of all ask for forgiveness if I have ever been short with you, and second of all because recently I have had a few experiences with students

that have left me feeling disheartened. I am sure that those who I had interacted with were just as busy as I was when I was in their situation. I hope I am not giving off the impression that "I am holier than thou" and therefore giving mussar. I come to you as a student who has gained some perspective in the past couple of weeks and I appeal to you as the greater Stern community to apply the midot that have been instilled within us.

Stern is our school, our home, and our environment. We have the power to shape this environment into something great, so let's use our talents together and be the very best people we can be.

Hi everyone. I hope you all enjoyed Chanuka and all of the festivities that came with it. All of the events were so well attended, it was really quite impressive. I want to take this opportunity to thank Riva Preil, Ariella Marcus-Agatstein, Chavie Schwartzbard and Jen Shulman

Sherene Nili
SSSBSC President

Hi everyone I hope all is well and you're getting ready for finals as well as selecting classes for next semester. I want to congratulate the International Business club on a really great event visiting the United Nations. There was a large turnout and we look forward to more events next semester.

Please pick up a copy of the Marketing newsletter put out by the Marketing club. It is really exciting to have a business newsletter on campus and it has a lot of interesting information in it. The Marketplace event hosted by the Entrepreneurship club this past Monday in the Levy Lobby was an indoor marketplace/flea market where students could buy, sell or trade merchandise.

There are a lot of club events coming up in the next three weeks before finals so keep reading signs. We are working with uptown to plan the annual Sy Syms dinner- if you have any suggestions or want to get involved please feel free to contact me.

A few fun things you might want to check out- the website www.buzzagent.com. If you have ever had a class with Dr. Cohn then you have already

heard about it but if not you should definitely check it out. It is a fun website where you can get involved with word of mouth advertising while getting free stuff. You fill out your information and based on that they offer you campaigns that you would be interested in; meanwhile you are accumulating points that you can redeem for really cool stuff. For more information check out the website. Another useful web-

site, especially for seniors, is www.vistaprint.com. It is a website where you can order free color business cards, and the only charge is for shipping. As always if you have any questions or suggestions please feel free to contact me Shdvni8@aol.com.

Sherene Nili

*The Observer wishes Mazel
Tou to Miriam Shapiro on her
engagement to Dani Oppenheimer
and to Aviiva Balk on her
engagement to Aryeh Needle*

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Menorah: A Sign of Solidarity

On the first night of Chanukah, Brookdale RH lit up the street-side windows in the shape of a menorah for exactly 30 minutes. Although SCW often appears very divisive and the students seem unlikely to unify into a cohesive community, this minor act of coordination implies that there is hope. Chanukah commemorates a highly intense civil war in the Jewish world (despite the tradition that it was a war between the Jews and the Greeks) and it often appears that Jews have never been able to get along. This year's Brookdale endeavor was a true publicity of a modern miracle – the ability for Jews of different persuasions and cultural backgrounds to come together and contribute to a project which, when seen as a whole picture, was truly impressive. While it is true that it was only a window display and that it only lasted for half an hour, it is a sign of potential. SCW, for all its factions, has proven through this act that maybe there is the possibility of a united campus; it is a time for miracles.

The Problem of Plagiarism

On December 15 the SCW Writing Center hosted a faculty meeting to discuss the growing issue of plagiarism on campus. While only three faculty members were able to attend the meeting, the greater travesty than this lack of an organized response to this crime was the necessity of the meeting at all. Although plagiarism is a current issue on many college campuses, due mostly to the ease with which one can plagiarize since the Internet came into existence, the issue on our campus has a distinct dual tone to it. As students of Yeshiva, SCW students must not only hold themselves to higher standards of academic integrity but are also subject to the ethical code of Judaism. In Hebrew, plagiarism and cheating are referred to as *Genaivat Da'at*, theft of knowledge, and the implication of this wording is very telling. SCW has its extra pressure because of the dual curriculum but students who consider plagiarism should remember that the choice to attend SCW involves the choice to acquire knowledge beyond that which one might require for vocational goals; the Jewish studies portion of SCW students' course loads allow students to explore topics that pertain to their future lives but not, necessarily, to their careers. In such an atmosphere, to lose sight of the value of possessing one's own knowledge, and not stealing it from others, is to lose sight of why one comes to SCW to begin with. Intellectual property is unique in the property world – what you steal you never actually own.

The Observer welcomes all submissions.

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The Observer
wishes
heartfelt
condolences
to Ed Fox
on the loss
of his father

Diamond Rings and Onlysimchas: Musings about Stern Students and Marriage

By Tova Stulman

There are several things in this world that irk me. When people barge into my room without knocking and stay there, oblivious to the paper I am about to write or the nap I am about to take – that annoys me. When people throw their garbage on the sidewalk or the train – and people wonder why New York has rats. But out of all the things that irk me, the thing that most bothers me is people who think that Stern is just a finishing school for Jewish young women, while they bide their time and wait to get married.

It's cute when my great uncle chucks me under the chin at family weddings, calls me a *kallahmaidel* (a girl of marriageable age) and winks that I'll be next. It's not cute when various friends, family members and acquaintances, upon hearing that I attend Stern College, smirk and unoriginally ask if I'm going for my M.R.S. For the select few who attend Stern and have never heard the term, that's a type of degree where you don't achieve a diploma, but something a little more pricey and a little more sparkly. While it's true that many young women become engaged and/or get married while still a Stern College undergraduate student, that does not mean that it is fair to categorize Stern as a place where we can be lax in our studies, excused from putting any effort into our classes because we have a house to help maintain and a husband to bond with.

Having such a mentality regarding Stern is both faulty and ridiculous. Consistently in the top 50 universities in America, as ranked by the prestigious U.S. News and World Report, Stern is a bastion of academia, with professors from Harvard, Columbia, and Yale. Students from Stern go on to win many esteemed scholarships and attend many important graduate schools.

However, upon reflection, I do wonder if there is any validity to the claim that marriage while still in college does derail the seriousness of one's studies. After all, most of us at YU know that it is difficult to manage a dual curriculum, extracurricular activities and finding some time for ourselves, not to mention the

jobs that any of us might have, be it work-study or otherwise. Getting married while trying to juggle all those aforementioned things, although naturally many of the extracurriculars will be disregarded, seems like a lot to balance. "I have had four students get engaged in the last two weeks," comments Professor Melissa Bloom, an English professor at Stern College, "and their joy is palpable – I'm very happy for them. However, I just want to say to them, and to students planning weddings or hoping to get engaged, is that you've only got a few short years when your central concern is your own well-being." Tamimah Wyszowski, a sophomore at Stern, says, "The



commitment of marriage requires giving one's self to another person, but I see college as an opportunity to selfishly take time to fine-tune oneself, and I personally am not ready to share myself in marriage. Not me, not now." Many other girls feel the same way. Tamimah does, such as Elissa Kempin, another sophomore at Stern. "I have the mindset that it [marriage] will happen in the right time, and I shouldn't waste my time getting frustrated," commented Kempin.

Besides for the question of balancing marital and educational responsibilities, many girls feel an added pressure because of the ubiquity of dating and shidduch talk. This is not to suggest that the numerous engagements and marriages of Stern students are resented – everyone is happy to hear of the simchas of our friends and peers. However, when the engagements and marriages are spoken about at length and displayed in the school setting, it can cause some girls to feel the pressure that is so prevalent in our society today. "The pressure is definitely there – no girl wants to be the last in her room or floor still not dating. Everyone oohs and ahhs over each newly

engaged girl's ring, Onlysimcha's page, decorated door, etc., and it's hard not to want to be in her place. And it's even harder when the girls with rings and decorated doors are even younger than you. You wouldn't call that pressure?" said one senior, wishing to remain anonymous. Stern sophomore Donna Sabag has similar sentiments. "There definitely is an unspoken pressure to date and get engaged as soon as possible," says Sabag, "that people in the 'outside' world are often incredulous about."

It is understood that this phenomenon is not a "Stern" thing; rather, it is a "Jewish community" thing. Since Stern is the university with the highest ratio of Jewish students (seeing as how *all* the students are Jewish), it is natural that we are the college with the highest tendency toward student marriages. Lilly Setton, a junior at CUNY Honors at Brooklyn College, remarks, "The only reason Stern gets that rep is because it's all Jewish girls, and in general, Jewish girls get married earlier. Lilly theorizes that "if all Americans got married as early as Jews, every university would be seen as a waste of time until you got married." Frummi Horowitz, a senior at Stern College, agrees, saying that "Stern just reflects Jewish society in general," and calls the idea of people categorizing Stern as a finishing school "ridiculous."

These sentiments do not hold true for everyone – obviously, some people mature faster than others, or one's bashert (intended) shows up earlier than one had thought. In cases like these, marriage may very well be the right step for them at such an early stage in life. Yet Stern students caught up in the excitement and romance of finding a husband while still in college, getting to show your online wedding pictures in the computer lab, and meeting your intended in the Brookdale lounge, should realize that that does not have to be the path for everyone. Enjoy this time in school, and don't be so intent on finding "the one" while you're still a student. If, while you are a student, he DOES find you, then that's amazing, wonderful, and great – but don't let finding a husband be the be all end all of your collegiate existence.

The Observer wishes a speedy
recovery to Sherene Nili

A Problem at SCW: Talking in Class

By Esther Genuth

"Quiet please, I can't hear myself think!" Contrary to what you might have thought, this was not stated by a frustrated girl trying desperately to study in a noisy dorm room but rather was said by a professor requesting silence to begin class. How it is possible for college students to deny respect to a professor calling for quiet is beyond me, yet it happens. Requests from professors, such as "Ladies, please" or "I will wait" should embarrass students and should not need to be heard in a college institution. This situation of consistent talking and conversation is one that I have found to permeate classrooms, and is therefore worthy of address.

It is important to note that this behavior is by no means characteristic of every class and many students would not consider this a problem at all. However, given that over half of my classes feature disruptive talking I have decided to address the situation as a serious issue.

At a recent *shiur* (lecture) at SCW, a *rav* entered a room full of students, most of whom were in the midst of conversation. Normal procedure would call for the students to immediately stop conversation and direct full attention and respect to the lecturer. In this case though the loud chatter did not stop, and to gain silence the *rav* was forced to raise his voice and loudly emphasize the first words of his *shiur*. At that moment I was per-

sonally ashamed and embarrassed of my fellow students. How is it possible for a person who is coming to hear words of Torah to defy a basic level of respect?

It is difficult to sit in class for many hours and occasional questions for the girl one seat over can be hard to control. I myself, and most probably every other student, have whispered quick remarks and asked a friend what page the professor is reading from. Whether this type of behavior is acceptable can be debated, but endless and consistent talking in the classroom is not acceptable and must be stopped. This should be a goal and the first step taken towards a more respectful environment.

Technology such as the internet and cell phones has brought us within closer reach to friends and acquaintances miles away. We expertly email overseas friends and immediately return missed phone calls. Ironically though, it seems that we sometimes lack the same respect and devoted attention to those standing right before us, particularly to professors.

As representatives of Torah we have a responsibility not to solely further our own personal growth but also to serve as role models for high moral standards and beliefs. If we cannot practice fundamental human courtesy to others, what will we pass on to the next generation? I urge the students of SCW to consider classroom demeanor and work to transform any existing disruptive atmosphere into one of respect and consideration for others.

Yeshiva Lens



Rafi Klein and I both thought of the idea for the menorah during Gemara *shiur* when we were contemplating what would be the "ultimate Kiyum Hamitzvah" when it came time for Chanukah. Last year we built a cement menorah that had astounded our yeshiva. This year we decided to take a different approach. Our first idea was a menorah composed of static electricity, but we couldn't really get that to work so we came up with one that had a pump with a lever to propel the oil. That one started leaking so we gave that up too. Then, we built a menorah, which lit using a set of fuses. Once we realized it resembled a war zone, we abandoned that idea. Next, we tried a burning bush menorah, but that burned down. Finally, on a *shiur* Shabbaton we saw our Rebbe from Israel, Rav Chaim Soloveitchik, otherwise known as "The Tropicana Rebbe." His love for Tropicana was so great that it became contagious. In the beginning of the year, I drank a carton a day until my caf card ran low and I had to stop. All the cartons that I had collected for those three months really paid off as we decided to build a menorah in tribute to our Rebbe. -Joseph Goldglantz

POINT-COUNTERPOINT

By Shoshana Fruchter and Esther Genuth

Should Women Be Synagogue Presidents?

The recent feminist movement has taken Orthodox Judaism by storm, challenging communities to take a stand and reconcile traditional religious standards with today's modern world. Some initiatives are gradually accepted and put into practice, while others are deemed too progressive and inappropriate for the Orthodox community. The issue of women serving their communities in public positions, such as becoming synagogue presidents, is a subject that falls into the latter grouping, having not been accepted by mainstream Orthodoxy.

The Rambam in his *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilchot Melachim* 1:5 states, "We may not appoint a woman as monarch as it says '[you shall surely appoint] over you a king,' not a queen. Similarly, to any public appointment in Israel, we may only elect a man." It seems the Rambam would agree with the Young Israel movement's decision to disallow women from serving as presidents of their synagogues. Though the Rambam's point is not found in Talmudic sources and not brought down by most scholars, it is still a prevailing, albeit not *halachic*, position in Orthodox circles.

"It's more appropriate for the president of a shul to be a male because they deal so closely with the rabbi," remarked Sofya Botvinnikova, an upper classman at SCW. A female president might lead to some awkward situations and may not—because of purely logistical reasons—be able to fulfill the role as well as a male.

Most importantly, the traditional roles of men and women in our society should not be abandoned. "The typical role that the president plays before and after services, may not be religiously appropriate for women," commented Rachele Scholar, SCW sophomore. Rachele continued to point out that the president's duty is not limited to financial matters, but also includes "serving as the public face, representing the religious community." Males have always filled this type of public leadership, while females have always taken a more private role. This distinction developed naturally from the traditional division of household labor. "Men, in the traditional home, don't have as much of a responsibility in the house with children—most of that is on the mother—so they have that much more time to devote to the community," noted Botvinnikova.

Working so closely with men, holding such public offices and appearing before the entire congregation are not generally considered befitting a modest Jewish woman. "It's not *tznius*," protested one student, who, true to her claim, denied permission to have her name go to the press.

The synagogue, as the religious center of the community, depends heavily on tradition and that dependence should not be shaken.

Welcome to the 21st century. Today, women serve as high ranking executives and leaders of community organizations. Women manage businesses and enter into fields that were previously designated for men. Yet today, the majority of Orthodox synagogues do not allow women to serve as presidents of congregations. A woman, if qualified, could become the president of the United States but cannot serve as president of a Young Israel synagogue.

The administrative and financial responsibilities involved in this appointment would appeal to women who are skilled at such duties and wish to use them to benefit their community. Women who have the talents and skills necessary for the role should, if considered the best choice, be able to assume the position. Instead, women usually head *chesed* committees and events, yet there are many who could be best utilized as the president of a synagogue.

Although according to many people, *halachic* authorities hold that women can hold communal leadership positions, the social norm of mostly men assuming these jobs has held women back. Despite the fact that the responsibilities of a congregation president are mainly financial and political, a large percentage of Orthodox Jewish communities refuse to change their position. "I think that Young Israel is afraid of an association with feminism," stated Gitta Zivtovsky, the vice president of the Young Israel of West Hempstead. "The word has a bad connotation for many people."

If this change were implemented, it could positively effect people's perceptions of the Jewish community. Girls and young women who previously saw the synagogue as a central prayer location for men would realize that it can also be for women.

Despite Young Israel's policy of only allowing men to serve as president, there are rabbis and congregations who allow and welcome women for this position. "More women will assume *halachically* acceptable positions within the Orthodox community when their candidacy for such positions is perceived as a natural progression, absent the baggage of other agendas" wrote Rabbi Shmuel Goldin in his article "Women in Leadership Roles." Goldin's congregation, Ahavath Torah, located in Engelwood, did appoint a woman as president.

Religious opportunities available to women are greater than they have ever been before. There was a time, not too long ago, when it was socially unacceptable for women to formally learn Torah. Yet, today, women can learn at the highest level. For the benefit of the community, we must sometimes look beyond social norms if it can result in growth, especially in Torah. Times and circumstances change and, within *halachic* bounds, women should be given these opportunities as integral members of the greater Jewish community.

We must not be afraid of progress, but rather take steps to advance it. One way of doing that could be to make leadership roles available to women. If ever, now is the time.



Students learn in SCW Beit Midrash

Torah U' Madda Corner: Biology – More Than Fascination

By Chani Ozarowski

Biology may be the academic subject most easily and most often seen as compatible with a life geared toward *avodat Hashem* (serving G-d). Perhaps one of the most well-known Jewish philosophers acknowledging this is the Rambam. He asserts that just looking at the beautiful creatures and entities in G-d's world can quickly inspire one to praise Him and to develop a love and strong connection with Him. In fact, it is not uncommon for those who believe in an All-Powerful G-d to study biology and reflect these very feelings. The plant and animal worlds are full of fascinating interactions, and the human body takes care of itself in a way that is arguably a clear revelation of G-d's incredible handiwork. Let us give but one small, albeit complex, example.

An animal cell is a tiny unit that is the building block for, among other things, human beings. Though it is small in size, it runs based on an orderly set of rules and is thus often compared to a factory which produces and distributes goods. For instance, the manufacture of protein inside the cell begins in the most central warehouse section of the cell, the nucleolus, which is part of the nucleus. There, the raw material, in the form of a ribosome, is synthesized. Once that is done, the ribosomes have two options: They can either exit the entire nucleus to be free-floating in the cell's cytoplasm, or they can proceed to one of the many membranes in the cytoplasm, the network of endoplasmic reticulum. When you think about it, this might be compared to the way raw material in a factory can either remain in its original state for usage in that state or be further processed to become something else.

Following the path of the ribosomes being processed, they now can attach to the endoplasmic reticulum to be synthesized into actual proteins. Here, the end product begins to take shape. During this step, there is a 'storage room' area in the endoplasmic reticulum called the cisternae, where the product waits until it is ready for the next step of production. The next step refines and perfects. This is done in the next assembly line station by the golgi apparatus. The membrane-bound proteins travel from the endoplasmic reticulum to the golgi where they enter, are modified and then packaged for their final stage. Finally, once neatly packaged as a vesicle, the protein can leave the cell and be distributed by the body's delivery service to whatever part of the body needs its services.

What is amazing in this whole process is that the assembly basically works on its own, with each part knowing its own function, and which station to go to next. The assembly recognizes the other workers in the cell's factory so it knows how to effectively interact with the other parts. In creating life, Hashem developed a whole ordered system to run our bodies involuntarily so that we could go about our business without worrying. How amazing is our Creator Whose creations are so precise and complex! With observations such as these, a biology student can easily find religious meaning and godliness.

Though most who try and find the godliness in biology probably go through thought processes such as the one described above, there is even another Torah level of looking at biology. Rav Bachya Ibn Pakuda describes in his work, "Chovot Halevavot" that there are seven areas in the world where wisdom can be found. While a number of these relate to science, the second is most striking in the context of our discussion. He writes that wisdom is to be found inside the human being, who is "a tiny world, which contains in it a completion of the orders of the world and its beauty and its nourishment and its wholeness."

In saying this, Rav Bachya seems to be describing our very factory example. Learning biology as a microcosm-like model of society is not merely a cute way to help us remember the information, but it somehow reveals deep wisdom that G-d planted in this world. In fact, we can see here that biology is not just a vehicle to get us to say "G-d is cool" and "His creations are awesome," but it actually contains specific lessons of wisdom from which we can learn. Just to start our imaginations going, perhaps we can learn from the cell the importance of organization and working together as a team. We can learn that just as each organelle has its special personalized talents to contribute to the overall functioning of the cell and the body, so does each human being. We too must use those abilities properly for the betterment of our families, communities and the greater society.

Between the Rambam and Rav Bachya, it is obvious that there are levels to gain from our science classes that we may never have considered before. So next time you are sitting in lab and are lost in the intricacies of the cell, remember that what you are looking at just may reflect deep pieces of wisdom specially planted there by Hashem for you to learn.

A Bigger Beit Midrash, Please?

By Deborah Anstandig

If you walk into the Stern beit midrash, a place of torah study, at 3:30 p.m. during the school week, the room will be packed. Full of students of the Graduate Program for Advanced Talmud Studies, the tables are filled to capacity. Add the Stern students, who make their way into the beit midrash for a quiet place to daven mincha, and the place becomes overcrowded.

Rabbi Moshe Kahn, whose office is located across from the Beit Midrash, also recognizes the need to expand. But he is happy to see that students come to daven mincha in the beit midrash. "Before, they were davening in the stairwells," he commented. "But wouldn't it be nice for Stern to also have a separate space dedicated as a *makom tefillah*, a set place for prayer? A shul would also be a wonderful addition."

The fact is everyone acknowledges that the beit midrash of Stern College for Women needs expansion. Located on the sixth floor of the 245 building, the room is roughly the size of two classrooms and holds 12 tables which seat 48

people in all. For a student population of nearly 1000, students, teachers and administrators recognize that the size of the beit midrash is a problem.

Some students have suggested using the Koch Auditorium as an alternative location, but the space is currently unavailable due to the large biology and chemistry lectures using the space. When asked if there is a solution to this problem, Dean Karen Bacon remarked, "It's on the agenda." There are plans to modify the entrance of the 245 building, rearrange the administrative offices and also seek out a solution for the beit midrash program.

It is unclear, though, how soon these plans will be enacted. When approached, Dr. Hillel Davis, director of university life, expressed that expansion is not in the short-term plan but is certainly a good idea in the long run.

SCW junior Ariel Belson enjoys the experience of the beit midrash. She loves studying among the *talmidot chachamot* (learned female students) of the graduate program who spend their entire day studying in the Beit Midrash. "I am inspired by their learning, and my learning is enhanced as a result," Belson

said.

Nechama Price, supervisor of the beit midrash, agrees that this environment is valuable. She likes the intimacy of a smaller room, and recognizes that while there are hours of the day that the room is overcrowded, there are other times, most often during the lunch hour, when there are only a handful of students.

Belson feels that perhaps the sixth floor location should be changed. If the beit midrash were moved to a more central and visible location, perhaps people who wouldn't necessarily seek out the beit midrash would come in and "crack open a sefer."

Talia Frolich, a student in the graduate program, noted that she would love to make the beit midrash feel more authentic. The graduate program students would like to have a formal *makom* (place) and more room so that other Stern students can come in, learn and feel the buzz of the beit midrash experience.

The power of beit midrash learning is full of energy that is difficult to duplicate in another setting. Let SCW students demand that our beit midrash be a reflection of this ultimate experience.

M I D T O W N M A D N E S S

How many times have we ignored the high school students who sell candy to raise money for their sports team? I was on the subway and as a boy walked by to sell candy bars, everyone's eyes turned away from him. Never make eye contact, right? Well, one man did buy a bag of M & M's, but soon after the boy gave up. However, after the boy left the car, the man asked me and all the travelers around us, "Anyone want a bag of M&M's, I don't really like them."
-Talya Barth

Walk through Midtown and you won't find too many children or families strolling together. People walk to the office, from the office and to the train, usually

alone. Yet on Thanksgiving, families and friends slowed the pace of New York for one day. How incredible to cheer as a giant Sponge Bob balloon passed us by. To laugh and joke with a grandfather from Michigan, and to welcome a group of teenage girls from Georgia – and at the same time not to be trampled by the fast-paced traffic of the sidewalks.
-Esther Genuth

A few weeks ago I was riding the Q train on my way home from school as usual, and I was standing next to a woman who was sitting with a needle in hand, holding a beautiful scene of Jerusalem with someone's name on the bottom, presumably a present-to-be

for someone's Bar Mitzvah. I commented to my friend, "Wow, that's going to take her a really long time to make because it's so detailed and beautiful." After totally forgetting this incident, I was on the same Q line a few weeks later and happened to be standing in front of the same woman, sitting and working on her needlepoint. Except this time, I saw she had practically completed the whole picture. It was an inspiring coincidence.
-Sipporah Natani

To share your "only in New York" stories with Midtown Madness send them to sfruchtr@yahoo.com

Professor and Student Present Physics Research

By Ilana Pister

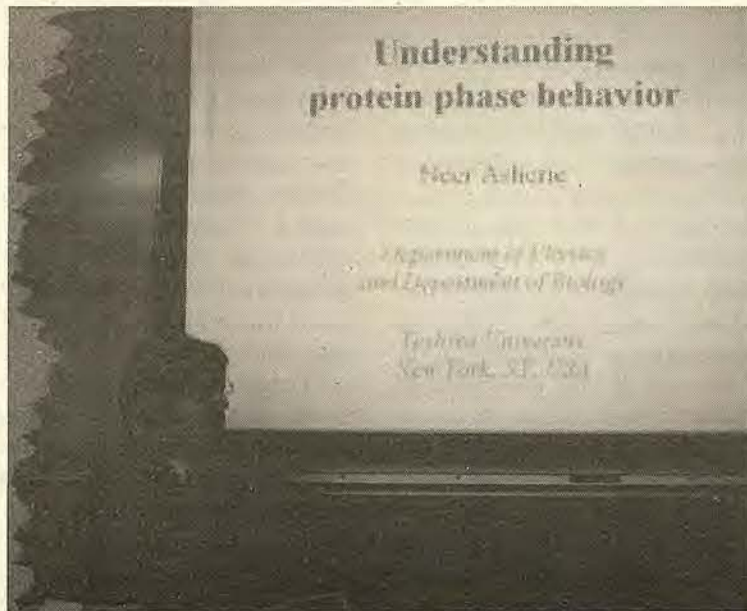
On November 23, the Biology, Chemistry and Physics clubs hosted a lecture by Dr. Neer Asherie. Asherie is a physics professor at Yeshiva College and is currently involved in biophysical research.

In his lecture entitled "Understanding Protein Phase Behavior," Asherie described the way in which proteins interact with each other and how this interaction influences their phase behavior. Generally matter will change state from solid to liquid to gas, or vice versa, with the increase or decrease of heat. Asherie's research focuses on mutations within proteins that alter this transition. The proteins that he is studying are gamma crystallins, a family of proteins from the mammalian lens. These proteins should be in a liquid phase in the lens of an eye, at a normal body temperature. However, "because of the mutation that has occurred," explained Asherie, "they crystallize." He further explained that the mutation acts on the proteins in the same manner as a decrease in temperature. These mutations often lead to various diseases and disorders. Asherie stated that "the crystallization causes the cloudy appearance of cataracts on the lens."

When the temperature is decreased the proteins move

closer together. However, because of the large size of the proteins, the distance between proteins is relatively small compared to the size of each protein. This would cause the interaction between proteins to appear more like the solid phase than the liquid phase. Asherie demonstrated this concept with two paper plates. "When the plates are far away from each other," he described, "they feel no attraction to the other plate and are considered to be in the gas phase." When the plates begin to come closer, they will only feel an attraction when there is a very small distance between them relative to the size of each protein. At this point they are in such close contact that they are considered to be in the solid phase. The final element of Asherie's presentation involved him handing out 3D glasses and showing the audience a simulated aggregation and separation of these proteins.

Following Asherie's lecture, SCW student Louissette Soussan presented her summer research. Soussan is currently a sophomore at Stern and worked with Dr. Anatoly Frenkel, a Stern physics faculty member, during the spring and summer of 2004. Soussan, along with three other Stern students, utilized the Stern chemistry laboratories to synthesize gold nanoparticles. They then spent time at SUNY Stony Brook and the National



Yeshiva's Neer Asherie explains his research

Synchrotron Light Source (NSLS) at Brookhaven National Laboratory in Long Island.

The group used two different synthesis methods, varying certain parameters, in order to produce different sizes of gold nanoparticles. These nanoparticles can be used in many applications such as catalysis, medicines, electronics, textiles and alternative energy (solar, hydrogen fuel). At Stony Brook they examined their synthesized particles using a Transmission Electron Microscope (TEM) and analyzed the results. According to Soussan, "we found that one of the synthesis techniques produced much larger particles than the other [synthesis technique]."

They then traveled to Brookhaven to analyze the parti-

cles further using Extended X-ray Absorption Fine Structure (EXAFS). Soussan explained that this procedure, "analyzed the particles by measuring the absorption of electrons when an electron beam is passed through the sample." The results were consistent with the TEM results obtained that one synthesis technique made smaller particles than the other. They also found that by varying certain parameters they were able to control the size of the particles within each synthesis method.

This research, along with other faculty-student research "teams," is made possible by the Yeshiva University Office of Academic Affairs Summer Internship.

Hereditary Breast Cancer: Do You Know Your Options?

By Jessica Feig

On Wednesday December 8, the SCW biology club sponsored a panel discussion on breast cancer awareness. Although this devastating disease is a public health issue all women face, it is of utmost concern to Jews, especially those of Ashkenazi descent. Ashkenazim have a high incidence of mutant alleles, namely BRCA1 and BRCA2 that are markers for the disease. While it is estimated that one in eight-hundred individuals in the general population is affected, one in forty Ashkenazi individuals have one of these recurring mutations.

This amplified incidence can be explained by the "founder effect." The genetic theory is based on the notion that a small group of people in an ethnic group can randomly develop a mutation. When the population's numbers are drastically reduced, as unfortunately has occurred in Jewish history, the presence of the mutation becomes magnified when the surviving population lives and grows. Scientists hypothesize that Jews developed the BRCA

mutations hundreds of years ago, and during the Middle Ages Jews were persecuted and reduced to mere thousands. Since then, the Jewish population has mostly risen, and the original mutation has therefore become far more frequent. Almost all of Ashkenazim originated from Eastern European ancestors, who then immigrated to places all over the world, including North America.

One must understand that today's women have many options. They are difficult and perhaps even devastating choices, but they may prove to be lifesaving decisions. Anyone with a family history of breast cancer should opt for genetic testing. Remember to check your family lineage from both your mother and father's side since BRCA1 and BRCA2 are inheritable from both parents. Chemopreventative medications, such as tamoxifen, do exist but

there is really no panacea to cure cancer. While these medications might lower the risk for breast cancer, the possibility of other serious diseases increases. Many

doctors therefore suggest more effective but extreme alternatives such as prophylactic bilateral mastectomy (removal of the breasts) and/or oophorectomy (surgical removal of the ovaries). Unfortunately, due to society's view of body image, the number of women who undergo these prophylactic surgeries is lower in the U.S. than in

other countries.

Jessica Israel MD, Chief of Palliative Care at Monmouth Medical Center, presented a patient's perspective. Having had genetic testing, she found out that, in fact, she is a BRCA2 carrier. However, this was of no surprise to her since both her mother and aunt died of breast cancer at an early age. Her husband, Dr. Jeffrey Weisburg

(Doris Kukin Chair for Molecular Biology at Stern College) and her two beautiful boys were her motivation to have the prophylactic surgery. Breast cancer is a thought that can be crippling, and it was only after the surgery that Israel went to bed with absolutely no worries. She said that genetic testing is a positive thing because one can also find out good news of relatives who do not carry the breast cancer gene. She provided one real-life example - her sister.

The other panelists included Ken Offit MD (Chief of Clinical Genetics at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center), Rabbi Richard Weiss MD (Adjunct Professor of Biology at Stern College for Women), and Rochelle Ausubel PhD (Clinical Psychologist, YU Department of Student Affairs). Although the topic presented was very complex, the speakers made this valuable information very clear and concise for the audience. The audience, which consisted mainly of Stern students, left the lecture with crucial knowledge that will affect them and their loved ones for the rest of their lives.

FEIG'S FAST FACTS: What's Tryptophan Doing In My Turkey?

By Jessica Feig

Now that Thanksgiving has passed, have you ever wondered why everyone is lethargic after that infamous dinner? Some of you might think that it's just a ploy to get out of helping with the dishes, and the feeling is "all in our heads." However, there's an explanation that is quite interesting.

Many people have considered turkey as the culprit since it contains L-tryptophan, an essential amino acid with a documented sleep inducing effect. Since the body can't manufacture it, tryptophan must be ingested from food sources.

After eating foods that contain L-tryptophan, this amino acid travels in the blood from the digestive system and later, enters the brain. To simplify its pathway, the L-tryptophan helps the body produce the B-vitamin, niacin. Niacin aids in the body's production of serotonin, a chemical neurotransmitter that acts as a calming agent and sleep inducer.

Researchers, however, have discovered that the L-tryptophan in turkey won't trigger the body to produce more serotonin because tryptophan works best on an empty stomach. There are other reasons that contribute to that drowsy feeling which I like to call "Post-Thanksgiving Syndrome."

In addition to turkey, tryptophan and other amino acids are found in various protein-rich foods, such as chicken and cheese. Although tryptophan is found in dietary proteins, its level increases after eating a carbohydrate-rich meal. Mashed potatoes, yams, stuffing, and pie are all high in carbohydrates. Carbohydrates stimulate the pancreas to secrete insulin, and when this occurs, some amino acids that compete with tryptophan leave the bloodstream and enter muscle cells. This results in an increase in the relative concentration of tryptophan in the bloodstream. Subsequently, serotonin is synthesized and drowsiness occurs.

A hearty Thanksgiving dinner is also high in fats. Since fats take longer to digest, one feels less energetic due to blood flow being directed to the stomach to assist in digestion. If alcoholic beverages are served with the meal, lethargy can increase since alcohol is a central nervous system depressant.

So don't blame the turkey for feeling tired on Thanksgiving!

From Portugal to New York: Jews in the Netherlands

By Orlee Levin

The room was filled beyond capacity; even the movable walls were open to create more room for seats in the YU museum on Tuesday night December 7. The crowd was gathered to hear a lecture entitled "1654: A Pivotal Year in Jewish History" presented by Dr. Wim Klooster, an assistant professor of history at Clark University. The program was sponsored by the American Sephardi Federation in conjunction with the Sephardi House.

In the 1490s Jews began to settle in Portuguese colonies to escape the expulsion in Portugal. The expulsion sought out groups and families, and was especially rigorous in investigating families of newly converted Christians. As a result, the Jews fled as clans. The Netherlands became one of the most popular places for Jews to escape to, since at that time

there was no decree of Jewish expulsion in place at its borders.

Klooster explained however, that contrary to what many assume, it was not easy to be a Jew in the Netherlands at first. "Initially the Jews in Amsterdam were not allowed to build a synagogue," he clarified. "With the emergence of Calvinism in the 1560s the Dutch became more tolerant."

Klooster stated that "the law on the books was that the Jews were only allowed to observe their faith in private. In practice the Jews built synagogues, cemeteries and schools." He continued, "Jews had a special exemption from the militia as long as they provided a substitute, and Jews did not have to take the traditional oath in court or appear in court on Saturday."

Religious freedom was new to the Jews who were accustomed to constant persecution. "Jews began to view the

Netherlands as a new Jerusalem and viewed the move from the Iberian Peninsula to the Netherlands as the Exodus," Klooster explained. "The news about a place with such a vast amount of religious freedom spread all across the world; a Jew in a Mexican jail told his cell mate about this."

Though, surprisingly, when the Jews came to Amsterdam they did not always reveal themselves as practicing Jews and often neglected their observance. "Jewish communal leaders dedicated their time to re-educating the Jews about their religion," said Klooster. He remarked that Jews were just happy to be free of religious persecution and did not want to be forced to practice Judaism.

Though the Jews had just narrowly escaped their deaths in their mother countries, they maintained a connection to the countries from which they fled.

They would travel to their homelands to conduct trade thereby developing the Netherlands' economy and becoming a strong contributing factor to the Dutch golden age. The Jews soon began to specialize in trade with the Portuguese kingdom because they had family contacts in Portugal and its colonies. Spices from India and sugar from Brazil are examples of the value commodities the Jews traded.

Around the same time that the Jews were arriving in the Netherlands, Jews were also arriving in Brazil. As the Dutch gained more land in Brazil, the Jews further migrated there, becoming sugar farmers, slave owners and money lenders. Additionally, many Jews who came to Brazil had been in jail in either Spain or Portugal.

In 1654 the Portuguese gained sovereignty over Brazil causing majority of the Jewish community to flee, with many

arriving in the present-day United States. "Only two dozen people came not planning on staying for an extended period of time," commented Klooster. "Yet the arrival of Jews in New Amsterdam in 1654 marked a milestone in the immigration of Jews to America." Other Jews fled to England, which had been closed to them since 1290, but with the hard work of Rabbi Menashe ben Israel, its doors were reopened. Others returned to the Netherlands.

The year 1654 was a milestone in Jewish history. The initial immigration of a mere two dozen Jews to New Amsterdam spurred Jewish immigration to North America. Savannah was known as the Jerusalem of the south, where Jews were plantation and slave owners.

Today, 350 years after the initial arrival of Jews to the American shores, over 5 million Jews live in the U.S.

Grade Inflation: Does SCW Have a Problem?

By Malca Bendel

It has happened to all of us. The "B+" that we got on our last paper caused tears to form in our eyes. In each one of our classes there is always someone who fights for every fraction of a point, for every assignment no matter how insignificant. But since when is a "B+" a bad grade? Since grade inflation came along and skewed what grades we perceive to be acceptable.

Dr. Carol Silver, an English professor at Stern, asserts that grade inflation is not only a problem here at Stern College, but it is a "national problem." According to the Office of Institutional Research, the percentage of university undergraduate courses in which half or more students receive a grade of A or A- has climbed from 43.6 percent in the spring of 1994 to 64.0 percent in spring 2003. Why should this be so? Is it because students are getting smarter? Silver suggests that since the number of students continuing on to graduate school is increasing, more additional pressure is put on the students to obtain better grades than ever before. Graduate schools have demanding admissions standards, and acceptance into the schools depends mostly on grades earned as undergraduates.

SCW speech professor Penninah Schram, who is notoriously sparing with high letter grades, feels that teachers will often inflate a student's grade because of a feeling of compassion, and not because that stu-

dent is deserving of a higher grade. She declares that teachers will "dilute their own standards" to please a hard-working student, when really all that teacher is doing is "deceiving the student as to what their work really deserves." The consequences can be brutal.

The inflation gives students unreasonable expectations in the future as to what their work is actually worth. It is possible that a student who received "A's" for her entire high school career, suddenly gets her wakeup call when she arrives at college, where inflated grades are less abundant. It can mislead students as to the accurate quality of their performance (and short-changes truly outstanding students). It is a form of academic dishonesty. According to Schram, an "A" on an assignment indicates superior performance. Not everyone can be "superior."

Even so, it doesn't seem fair that students coming from certain colleges, which have a tendency to inflate their grades more than others, will have an advantage when it comes to getting admitted into graduate schools. Maybe a "B+" from Stern College would translate into an "A" at another university. For this reason, Silver believes, graduate schools are starting to place more emphasis on standardized tests, recommendation letters and interviews than on calculated grade point averages. Graduate schools recognize that there is a problem, and they are beginning to take action against it. Schram acknowledges the flaws in the grading system. "Grading is not a

just system," she declares. It is a harsh reality.

One would expect that students would be in favor of grade inflation, as it is working toward their benefit; however, most students have mixed feelings toward grade inflation. "Grades should be an accurate reflection of how much material the student understands and how much effort they put into the class and studying," says SCW junior Shifra Cooper, a Bible major with a biology minor. "If a student does put in the effort and does study to the best of her ability but due to other uncontrollable circumstances does not do well on the test, then the teacher can manipulate the grades if they feel it is necessary. This can be done through extra papers, participation or whatever the teacher decides is appropriate." For students who need high grades to get accepted to graduate school, Cooper says, "they should have been more prepared for the tests. They have to realize that if they are able to talk their way to better grades in college, they will not be able to in graduate school and when they do get there, they will not be able to excel."

SCW senior Orli Zaret, a biology major with a psychology minor, strongly opposes grade inflation. "Grade inflation is dishonest," she says. "If a student does not work hard in a class than she will not excel and by having her grades inflated it does not help her improve her knowledge of the information. Furthermore, it degrades the university and makes it look like a school for people interested in

achieving easy "A's." If, however, a bad grade was a fluke and the student has a good record in the class, then that grade should be overlooked." SCW senior Diana Benmergui, a biology and sociology major, contends, "Grades are highly inflated leaving almost no challenge in some classes."

SCW has taken steps to try to counter the rampant grade inflation that takes place. The professors of the English department, for instance, meet to discuss grading standards. Even though a subject like English is typically regarded as one that is highly subjective when it comes to grading, it is objective to some extent. English papers can be judged according to a general recognition of excellence. Stern College also has an Academic Standards Committee that can be appealed to by a student who feels the grade that she has received is unfair.

Even with these systems in place, grade inflation continues to be a problem at Stern College, and across the United States. While most of us seem to be enjoying the benefits of grade inflation at present, we must seriously consider the consequences that this phenomenon might have on. Employers and graduate school admissions' officers are liable to deflate grades from places like Stern, which should cause concern among students. We should wonder if our grades are being deflated too much or if taking classes with deflationary professors, such as Schram, will cause our grades to be doubly deflated.

The
Observer
Wishes
The Entire
Student
Body Good
Luck on
Their
Finals

UNIVERSITY BRIEFS

President Joel Visits Central

On December 8th, President Joel visited and addressed the students of the Samuel H. Wang Yeshiva University High School for Girls.

"Your first entry into Yeshiva University is through the YU High School," said Joel to the students at the early morning assembly. "I want to do everything to make it the best possible experience for you."

Joel spoke to the students about the concept of renewal, and its relation to the celebration of Chanukah. He explained how the Greeks hoped to destroy the spirituality of the Jewish nation, and understood that if the Jews did not embrace the concept of renewal, and the importance of moving from dark to light, the Greeks would emerge victorious over us. Joel also explained that as Jews we must embrace life through our Torah values, and should be *mikadesh* (make holy) our actions.

"We do not believe in assimilation," said Joel. "We, *am yisroel*, are players in the world. Our mission as Jews is to look at the world through the lens of Torah and harness it for the good of mankind."

Rabbis Lamm and Brander and YU Alumni attend White House Hanukkah Celebration

On December 10th a delegation of distinguished rabbis were invited to the White House to celebrate the lighting of the White House Hanukkah candles by President George Bush. The group included Chancellor Norman Lamm and YU's Dean of the Center for the Jewish Future, Rabbi Kenneth Brander.

President Bush thanked Rabbi Brander for bringing a beautiful menorah to the White House from the Boca Raton Synagogue. The President noted, "Every generation since Judah Maccabee has looked on these candles and recalled the sacrifices that are made for freedom. And in every generation, these lights have warmed the hearts of those not yet free."

President Bush also thanked "the gentlemen from Kol Zimra, who will help us say the blessings over the candles and bless all of us with their music."

The "gentlemen from Kol Zimra" are an extraordinary group of singers, one of whom is Max Frenkel, who grew up in Belarus, went to YUSSR camp and enrolled in YU, graduating from Sy Syms School of Business in 2002. The other members of the Kol Zimra group are YU alumni as well.

A Balancing Act: College and a Career

By Adinah Borg

College students who work part-time while attending classes have a precarious balancing act, and SCW students who work in addition to their double course load have an even more complicated task. Most students work out of necessity whether it's a secretarial job in the work-study program, a sought after internship to spruce up a resume or volunteering to fulfill an inner need. However, for many SCW students these are not merely extracurricular jobs; they are very much a part of their overall undergraduate education.

What began as a summer internship for Lauren Ratzker, a junior, is now a part-time job in business development. Her position involves contacting potential renters of billboards and persuading them to sign on. Ratzker gets paid on commission and does most of her work over the phone, though she does have occasional meetings around the city.

As for her schoolwork, Ratzker says she rarely has conflicts and that her clients don't even realize she is a full-time student. She sees her job as synthesizing with her schoolwork. "Sometimes I'll be in a class and learn something that I had figured out already," she says. "Other times I'll be at work and I'll be able to employ what I already learned in class."

Ratzker attributes her modest success in developing business relationships to her professional demeanor. "I believe the key to being a student working in the business world is respecting the people you work with but also demanding respect and professionalism in return," she explains. Ratzker dresses the part as well, in what she describes as "business casual," or what some SCW students would refer to as everyday attire. But she does sometime run back to her dorm before a meeting to change into heels.

SCW junior Elana Goldmintz works as an NCSY advisor for monthly shabatonim, a YU tour guide for prospective students, a Teach for Israel rep-

resentative, an intern at NYU's child study center to enrich her major in psychology and as an occasional tutor and substitute in Hebrew school. She says that each of her extracurricular posts fulfills a different need in her life. However, Goldmintz says she manages to deal with the mayhem precisely because each of the positions contributes a great deal to her life. "Opportunities presented themselves, and I took advantage of the situation," she remarks. "But at the same time, everything is part of my education at Stern. I always make time for extra things to do, and in Stern especially, one has a chance to make your time meaningful."

President of the SCW JP Dunner Political Science Society, Beth Katz, says she pursued work as a freshman to keep herself busy. Katz is also chairman of the canvassing committee in charge of student elections, editor of a social science journal, WYUR radio show host, secretary in an eye doctor's office and a full-time student. Katz admits that she is unique in that she can juggle such a heavy load, but she asserts that no matter what college she would have attended, she would still be as "freakishly busy." "I couldn't see myself in another college, where it's not expected that you would have time for other things," Katz explained. "In Stern they expect you to have time for other things, and there are so many different ways for a student to get involved."

Katz's job in the eye doctor's office helped her realize a new frontier she wanted to pursue: optometry. "Before I started working there I never thought I would enjoy it," she admits. "I'm going to be in Stern for a fifth year to fulfill my requirements for optometry school."

Naomi Kapp, associate director of placement and career services, said that often internships and jobs clarify career goals and aspirations to the undecided undergraduate, thereby playing a crucial role in the undergraduate experience, as it did in Katz's case. The overall atmosphere in Stern can put a lot of pressure on the student to choose a career and pursue it, supplanting the

all-American college image of fraternity, parties and ivory tower academics, for an atmosphere that Ratzker calls "academics to get you to the next point."

Talya Berger, a recent transfer student from Queens College, explains that the atmosphere at SCW has been a positive force in her overall development, though she does profess a passion for knowledge for the sake of knowledge. "I love the whole sociology, anthropology comparative religion thing but I don't think it would prepare me for my life," explains Berger. "I would rather be more realistic and experience things as they are."

Berger interns at Bellevue hospital in the rape advocacy program with hopes to help further a career in psychology and is an assistant youth director in a synagogue over the weekends.

Kapp appreciates the efforts of students who balance challenging part-time jobs while focusing on their academics, but would like to see more students take such initiative. "We'd like to see students even more motivated, especially in their junior year, as they look ahead toward career goals," she said. She believes that a student's freshman year isn't too early to begin discussing career goals, citing her experiences with too many panic-stricken seniors who are just beginning to explore their options.

There is a danger of wasting these fundamental years of study by spending it concerned only with career goals Kapp concedes, but she believes there is a danger as well in only concentrating on academics. "While a student's main focus in college is clearly their academics, education does not occur in a vacuum," she states. She suggests that students make the most of their education and enhance their academic experience with a job. This won't inhibit a student's studies but, according to Kapp, will "create freedom for the student, so she can stop worrying and start broadening her education, preparing her for when she graduates."

Chanukah Concert Draws Big Names

By Esther Genuth

Celebrating the joy of Chanukah with the company of friends and popular Jewish music was easy to do if you were at the YU Chanukah Concert on December 9. The undergraduate student councils of Yeshiva University presented the annual J&R Music and Computer World Chanukah Concert for YU students and the greater Jewish community. The concert featured the performances of

many Jewish musicians and was held at Lamport Auditorium, Zysman Hall on the Wilf campus.

The concert, produced by YC alum Yummy Schacter, featured star performances by Shlomo Simcha, Sully Williger, Yacov Young, and Dovid Gabay. Surprise guest stars included Noah Solomon and C. Lanzbom of Soul Farm, and Yaakov Shwekey. Despite the concert's title of "An Evening with Abie Rotenberg," Abie Rotenberg, who reportedly was not feeling

well, did not show. YU Battle of the Bands III's winner Omek Hadavar opened the event.

"We were just having fun," stated YC student Ari Yablok, keyboard player for Omek Hadavar. "We were doing what we do best."

All music was accompanied by the Neginah Orchestra, featuring Yaron Gershovsky, and was conducted by Yisroel Lamm.

The atmosphere in the auditorium was lively with audience members clapping, cheering on the performing musicians, and



C. Lanzbom and Noah Solomon perform at YU

socializing with others. Some aisles and danced in a circle even took their high spirits to the

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CONSUMER WISE

By Adinah Wieder

	WEIGHT	MEMORY & BATTERY LIFE	FEATURES	COST	OVERALL
iPod Apple	20 GB – 5.6 ounces 4.1x2.4x.57 inches 40 GB- 6.2 ounces 4.1x2.4x.69 inches	This style comes in two different choices for memory 20 GB 40 GB. 12 hour rechargeable battery	- click wheel allows one to scroll playlists easily -aluminum case resists stains and scratches. -skip protection up to 25 minutes	20 GB- \$299 40 GB- \$399. Comes with earphones, ac adapter, iPod dock, USB 2.0 cable, and FireWire cable.	It has excellent sound quality. Aesthetically, it is very sleek. It has a lot of memory, which makes it popular. However, it has fewer amenities than the Zen Micro and costs more.
iPod mini Apple	3.6 ounces 3.6x2x.5 inches	4 GB 8 hour rechargeable battery	-same as above plus: -5 different colors -games, alarm, and organizer	\$249 Comes with earphones, ac adapter, USB cable and FireWire cable.	It has much like its predecessor but falls short of its competitor. It may weigh 2 ounces less but has 4 less hours of battery power.
Rio Karma Rio	5.5 ounces 2.7x3x1.1 inches	20 GB 15 hour rechargeable battery	-mini joy stick wheel to scroll playlists -available in black and silver -can bookmark which song you listened to last	\$300 comes with carrying case, high quality ear buds, USB cable, docking station, Ethernet card, and a power adapter	The sound quality is excellent and the battery life is second to Sony. It is pricier but lacks the features that other players have.
NW-HDI Sony	3.9 ounces 2.4x3.5x.5 inches	20 GB 27-30 hour rechargeable battery	-available in silver and black	\$350 comes with ac adapter, USB cable, carrying pouch, docking station and headphones	This product does not come with a remote control. However, it does offer the most playing time, but without all the fancy features of some of the other brands and for the most money.
Zen Micro Creative	3.8 ounces 3.3x2x.7 inches	5 GB 12 hour rechargeable battery	-scroll wheel to view play lists -available in 10 colors -radio, alarm, organizer, built- in voice recorder	\$249.99 comes with earphones, neck strap, pouch, belt- clip and stand, wired remote control, USB cable, and power adapter	This product looks like the iPod, but comes in double the amount of colors. It has excellent sound quality and battery power. It comes with many amenities and the price is very attractive. This is your best bet.

ease note: Prices tend to fluctuate. At the time, the article was written the prices were as listed.



The Apple iPod



The Apple iPod mini



The Rio Karma



The Sony NW-HDI



The Creative Zen Micro

Chanukah Concert Draws Large Crowd



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throughout a majority of the concert. A multicolor neon light show complimented the various

styles of music. Throughout the evening a continuous buzz of talking was audible from the many people who gathered.

"It was interesting that the music was the intermission for talking," commented one YC student.

The Chanukah concert not only brought together top Jewish musicians, but also raised money for Israel as well. All proceeds went directly to Hatzolah Israel, a volunteer non-profit emergency medical service that assists the victims of terrorism and other medical emergencies throughout Israel. "This concert is not just for us, it is to aid our people in need," stated Dovid Wildman, co-president of the Israel Club. Additionally, five dollar raffle tickets for a free trip to Israel were sold throughout the event

to further boost monies collected for Hatzolah Israel.

The audience consisted of many SCW and YC students, as well as other university and high school students and families. "It was awesome that almost every seat was sold," commented YC student Eli Hagler, who handled the publicity for the concert.

J&R Music and Computer World certificates were raffled off to random audience members at designated intervals of the Chanukah concert. YU President Richard Joel was called onto stage as the first raffle winner and proceeded to welcome the audience. "It was fixed," jokingly stated a son of President Joel's,

who will remain anonymous.

Shwekey, the night's featured performing musician, commanded the stage with his powerful voice and animated movement. "We celebrate that we stood up for our faith," addressed Shwekey to the audience in between his singing routine. "Rachem," a popular song, was a crowd favorite. "Personally, I only came to see Shwekey," stated Dani Eckstein, a YC junior, who figured Shwekey to be the guest performer from surfacing rumors.

With great publicity and stellar performances, the Chanuka concert proved a successful crowd-pleaser.

Cohen Explores the Jews of the Past

continued from front page
the patron. But rarely is the name of the illuminator included.

Cohen is an observant Jew whose strong Judaic studies background has helped her delve deeply into the mysteries of these books. When Cohen looked at this manuscript, she noticed something strange, shown in the accompanying image. Moses stands next to a mountain containing faces of the Israelites. Scholars, who studied the manuscript before Cohen, assumed that this depiction was based on a Midrash where G-d threatens to drop a mountain on the Israelites if they don't accept the Torah. But she noticed that a hand emerges from the side of the mountain gesturing toward Moses and, when she turned the page over and held it to the light, she saw the vague outline of a halo showing through.

"I realized that what was originally there was an image of G-d handing the tablets to Moses, which is a common depiction in a Christian scene," Cohen explained. "What must have happened was that a Christian artist was engaged and told to depict Moses with the tablets of law, and he did it as it was always done in Christian art." However, portrayals of G-d are not permitted in the medieval Jewish tradition and the image was painted over. In addition, the original illuminator also portrayed Moses with horns that were later scratched out.

To confirm her theory, Cohen took a UV photograph of this image, which revealed the underlying gold leaf as a solid round form, inconsistent with the surface image (typically, gold leaf is applied for haloes). This photograph shows the presence of God's halo underneath the mountain and explains the unusual presence of the protruding hand. It is discoveries like this one that excite Cohen's curiosity and encourage her to continue her research in the field. "I like looking at things that people have looked at over and over and seeing something that hasn't been noticed before," she said.

This was not the only instance in which Cohen employed scientific methods to aid her research. For another manuscript, a 15th-century Florentine prayer book, the colophon had been scratched off and most of the characters weren't visible. Cohen networked with scientists at the Rochester Institute of Technology, and they used spe-

cial digital imagery that revealed parts of most of the characters, which were then deciphered by Cohen.

Another manuscript Cohen has worked with extensively is the "Prato Haggadah." Its illumi-

"It's the greatest extant example of an unfinished Hebrew illuminated manuscript that demonstrates the various stages of execution."

In addition to being interesting, the study of these manu-

information gleaned about Jews from studying manuscripts in an article she recently had published in the Princeton University Library Chronicle. The article discusses a manuscript, small enough to be ideal

"This is a precious object and not just a book, so it is a way of showing that he was an art connoisseur as well," she said. "An earlier ruler of Ferrara, Borso d'Este, had commissioned what is arguably the finest illuminated Bible in Renaissance Italy. Isaac's grandfather knew Borso very well. Members of the Norsa family consciously were having made for themselves luxurious manuscripts comparable to those of the rulers of Ferrara."

Interestingly, illuminated Hebrew manuscripts have a style consistent with the mainstream culture of their region of origin. "Jewish artists worked in the style of the dominant culture so manuscripts decorated in Islamic countries look Islamic, manuscripts produced in Medieval France look Gothic and manuscripts produced in 15th-century Italy are typical of the Italian Renaissance style," Cohen said. Even the Hebrew script in these manuscripts is in keeping with that of the dominant culture. Round script is characteristic of Italy, while in Germany and Northern France Ashkenazic script tends to be narrower and angled like Gothic script, according to Cohen.

Though these manuscripts are valuable in an historical context, Cohen also appreciates them on a deeper level. "To me they are living things, they're precious, they're works of art that haven't been restored - I see them the way people saw them, I get to hold them in my hand the way people did," she said. "I get to see the texts they chose. So these aren't just works of art that they have owned but parts of their lives."

Cohen received a Ph.D. from Columbia University's department of art history. She has received numerous fellowships and awards for her work on illuminated

Hebrew manuscripts as well as for other areas of study. Currently, she is working on four articles for academic publication. In addition, Cohen is scheduled to present several papers in the U.S., Italy and Israel, some of which will focus on manuscripts made specially for women. She has made an indelible contribution to the university, having worked at SCW for 14 years. She single handedly built up the quality and variety of art history courses offered at the university and has raised substantial sums of money from outside donors to hire excellent outside scholars to lecture to the students of SCW. Cohen will not be returning to SCW next year.

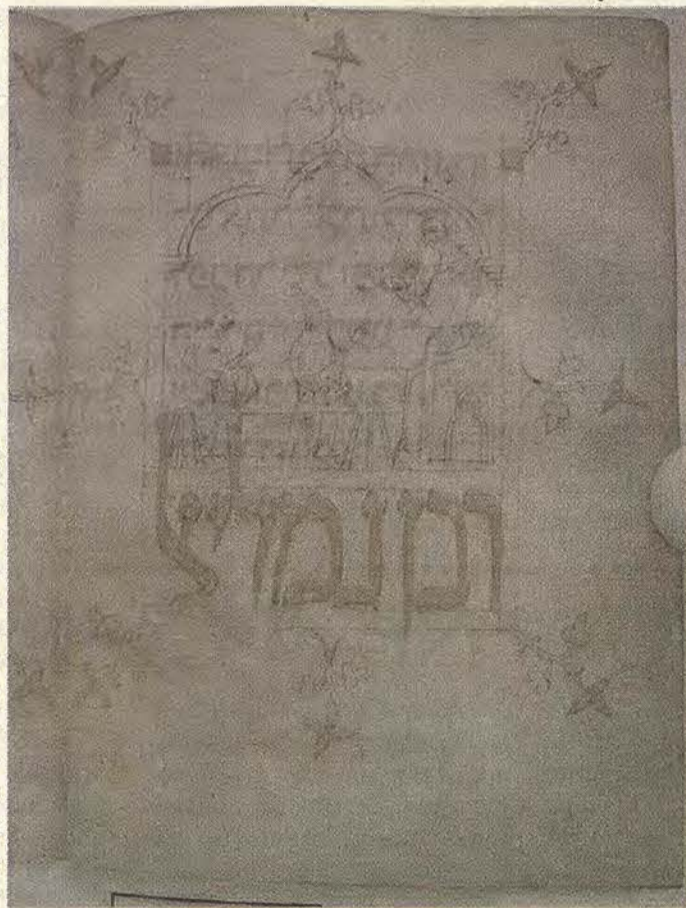


Fig. 1. Moses presenting the Tablets of the Law to the Israelites. *Kauffman Mishneh Torah*, IX, fol. 32a.



Fig. 2. Photograph taken from verso and printed in reverse showing Moses receiving the Tablets of the Law from God. *Kauffman Mishneh Torah*, IX, fol. 32a.

Clockwise from top left: *Moses and the Israelites* from the "Kauffman Mishneh Torah," U.V. image of adjacent page, unfinished manuscript prepared for application of gold leaf, finished page from the same manuscript. Last two images are courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.



nation is unfinished, offering a rare glimpse at the process involved in decorating a manuscript. Generally, the scribe copies the text onto the parchment, then, the illuminator makes preparatory drawings, applies the gold leaf and finally each pigment one by one. In the accompanying image of a page of the Haggadah, the outline of the drawing is visible and the illuminator has the Hebrew letters and the border prepared with gesso, a special plaster used for the application of gold leaf. The second image from the Haggadah contrasts this unfinished page with the highly luxuriant completed one. "This is a wonderful example of the process," said Cohen.

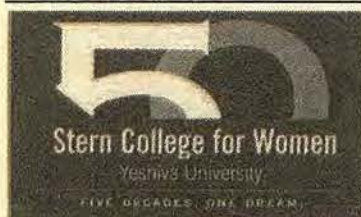
scripts can contribute to a better understanding of the Jews from this period, according to Cohen. "I'm learning enough about these manuscripts and their patrons' families that I can relate them not only iconographically and stylistically, but also in terms of who owned them and what was happening in their lives when they commissioned the work," she said. "It's a puzzle-trying to understand how these books fit into their owners' lives." Also in manuscripts that contain prayer books, the accompanying instructions reveal specific local customs, delivering a view of how families from centuries ago practiced Judaism.

Cohen shows the detailed

for travel, commissioned for a wealthy Jewish banker, Isaac Norsa. "Isaac Norsa commissioned this at a time when Jews were not allowed to travel freely," she said. "I found documentation confirming that he was granted all kinds of privileges because he was important to the Estense rulers."

These exceptions show that Norsa had a high status within the non-Jewish Ferrarese Italian community despite tensions between the church and Jews of Ferrara in this time-period.

It is also puzzling that Norsa would want such an expensive manuscript when it looks as though it had scarcely been used. Cohen explored possible reasons,



On Our Campus:

In a Bekeshe and Snoopy Tie, Twerski Visits

By Ilana Levin

In posing the classic joke "How many psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb," Dr. Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski summarized the main points of his lecture in the answer: "One, but the light bulb has to want to change." Stimulating, insightful and humorous, Tuesday night's lecturer in honor of Chanukah was arranged by Stern College's Torah Activities Council. Sponsored by the President's Circle, an estimated two hundred students attended the event. "I'm one of Rabbi Twerski's biggest fans," said Reva Preil, co-vice president of TAC who coordinated the dinner and lecture. "Everyone at the TAC meetings knew it was on my agenda for the past year and a half to have Rabbi Twerski speak. His ideas are so powerful and applicable because he speaks about things that people don't always know how to deal with."

Drawing on themes of self-esteem, self-fulfillment, spirituality and sense of purpose, Twerski wove together diverse sources ranging from the Talmud to Charles Schultz—and, of course, Chelm stories of Jewish tradition. Author of 48 books and founder and medical director of the not-for-profit Gateway Rehabilitation Center, Twerski insisted he wrote only one idea in 48 ways and would talk about it that night.

In discussing the psychological issue of low self-esteem, Twerski explained it as a tendency commonly found in gifted peo-

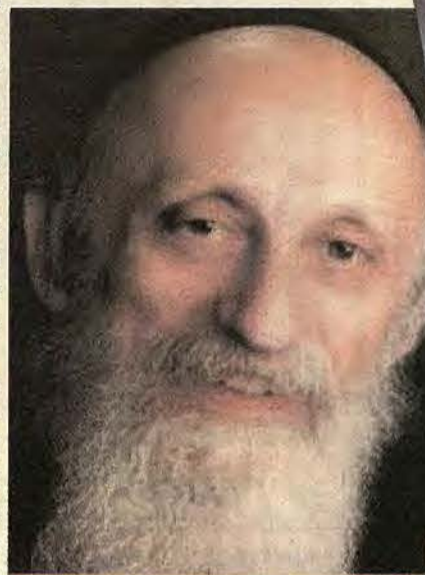
ple who, ironically, have trouble recognizing their own talents, yet it is crucial to leading a happy and productive life. At the core of self-esteem is self-knowledge, or identity. "Identity," Twerski said, "is something that we build and something that we make ourselves. It has to be our own identity, not an identity given to us by others." Eloquently revealing his own experience with low self-esteem, Twerski recounted his earlier days as a "people-pleaser" and described his identity as "whatever you wanted it to be, and to you it was whatever you wanted it to be."

The basis of a healthy self-esteem, as Twerski developed, is a sense of purpose in life. Without a goal, it is difficult to feel productive and fulfilled.

Citing science's contention that the fundamental difference between man and animal is intellect, Twerski challenged that theory by listing qualities that are found only in man: the capacity to learn from past mistakes, willful self-improvement, the ability to delay gratification and the power to make decisions in defiance of physical desires. These characteristics and others compile the human spirit and form the basis of spirituality—and transform, as Twerski allegorized, aimless goldfish in a

tank into purposeful human beings of the world.

But spirituality alone cannot create a sense of purpose, Twerski contended; belief in God is necessary to feel truly self-fulfilled. Torah values convert secular society's truisms into morality: wealth is not measured by stock portfolios but by "satisfaction with one's



Dr. Abraham Twerski; Two of his forty-eight books

lot," strength is not accumulated at the gym but by mastering desires and honor is not in titles but in how honor is accorded to others. "Purpose in life is predicated on belief that the universe has a purpose," said Twerski, "and that purpose is in looking for, but not necessarily in finding God." Man should spend his life spiritually growing in an attempt to attain the goal of reaching God, and in doing so, he will feel fulfilled.

Not everyone strikes the appropriate balance between

physical and spiritual needs, Twerski said. He related anecdotes of patients addicted to alcohol and drugs who found that they provided only momentary escapes from their unhappiness. Using the model of a doctor who prescribes nutritional supplements for a patient with an iron deficiency, the speaker suggested that a "spirituality deficiency" can be cured by Torah and mitzvot. In a proposal particularly popular with this writer, Twerski defined sleep as a mitzvah when it enables service of God.

Continuing the medical metaphor, Twerski spoke of a lobster's growth, in which the lobster continuously sheds his shell as it becomes too cramped. "Can you imagine," Twerski said, "if every time the lobster became uncomfortable he went to the doctor for a prescription for the pain?" Spiritual growth is a painful experience, he acknowledged, but it is necessary for eventual self-fulfillment.

In the question-and-answer session that followed the lecture, Twerski discussed the concept of *yetzer harah* (evil inclination) and *yetzer tov* (good inclination). He perceptively defined the concepts as "the *yetzer tov* tells you once, but the *yetzer harah* tells you

again and again." Furthering his previous contrast between secular society's morality and the Torah's morality, Twerski discussed modernity's endless desires as evidenced in the newly designed television that can be watched in the shower. Expounding on the Torah's numerous references to *yitzias Mitzrayim* (the leaving of Egypt), he describes Pesach as an Independence Day in which we were freed both physically, from being slaves, and spiritually, from desires (though that TV/shower idea remains intriguing).

Crossing the traditional lines between psychiatry and religion in a unique way, the speaker used images from each theme to explain the other. Representative of this confluence of disciplines were Twerski's equal emphasis on Sigmund Freud and the Chofetz Chaim, and his dress—a bekeshie complemented by a Snoopy tie. "That he quoted secular sources," said SCW sophomore Judy Gorelick-Friedman, "made it easier for me to relate to him and feel like he was speaking to me."

"We received such positive reinforcement, such appreciation of the time and effort that went into planning this, that the year-and-a-half wait was worth it," said Reva Preil.

While Twerski advocates the study of *sifrei mussar* and *chassidus* as the path to understanding the purpose of life, after listening to this lecture, reading several of Twerski's 48 books wouldn't be a bad idea either.

Movies for Credit: SCW New Courses

By Adrienne Eichen

Registration for the spring semester of 2005 is rapidly approaching and students will be pleased to learn that SCW is offering a slew of new and innovative courses for the upcoming term. Additions are being made in nearly every department including art, biology, chemistry, English, Hebrew, history, Judaic Studies, political science, psychology, Russian, and sociology. Two unique courses are SOCI 1934, given by Dr. Eric Goldman, which will combine a study of film and history to examine the social context of the American Jew, and CHEM 1010, given by Dr. Lea Blau, which is the first chemistry class designed for a single semester to ever be offered at SCW.

Goldman's course, entitled "Sociology of Mass Media," will focus on the sociological aspects

of the modern history of American Jews and their portrayal in film. "The thrust of the course," he explained, "is to use cinema as text for understanding the American Jewish experience over the last century." The course will encompass two elements; a focus on history and a focus on film analysis. "Hopefully, students will pick up skills in 'reading' movies and gain a better understanding of how the situation of Jews has evolved since movies began," Goldman said. "It will also be an opportunity to study some of the best American films made (mostly by Jews) about Jews."

Requirements for the class include intensive study about the films and the history of the times. "Students will be expected to read articles about the films and reference the changing sociological nature of the time during which the film was made as well as the period

depicted," he explained. "They will also be expected to study the history of American Jews during the 20th century." The films Goldman expects to show over the course of the semester include "The Jazz Singer" (1927, 1980), "Gentleman's Agreement" (1947), "The Young Lions" (1958), "Avalon" (1990), and "School Ties" (1992).

Blau's chemistry course is unusual because although chemistry classes have always been available for students to take for only one semester, SCW has never offered a chemistry course specifically intended to be a single-semester class. "The course is very different from any chemistry courses taught at present," Blau explained. "It is specifically designed to include sufficient background information for being able to discuss some of the important scientific/technological issues of today." The class, entitled "Essentials of

Chemistry," consists of lecture and laboratory sessions and does not require any other pre- or co-requisites. "Despite the fact that some students enrolled in the course may have been exposed to chemistry, the understanding of chemical concepts will not be taken for granted," clarified Blau.

Blau's course description explains, "In this course for non-science majors, chemical principles, technological advances and societal issues will be discussed."

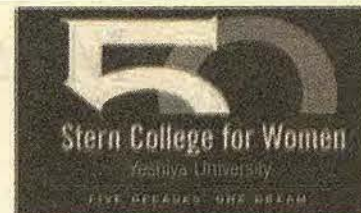
In addition, much of the class will be aimed toward students' individual development and progress throughout the course. In an outline of her course goals, Blau explained that "by utilizing effective and meaningful teaching methods," she hopes to "demonstrate to the students that learning and fun are not mutually exclusive... allow the students to construct their own knowledge... [and] develop the students' interest in furthering

their scientific proficiency."

Dean Ethel Orlian of SCW is extremely impressed with the new classes. "It's nice to see a variety of new courses offered in so many departments," she said. "It is a reflection of our faculty's versatility and their responsiveness to students' interests."

SCW faculty is also excited to offer students broader opportunities and experiences. "I am hopeful that the course will provide a new way in which students can enjoy the cinema as an art form and medium for expression," Goldman said. Blau is similarly confident that her course will efficiently teach important skills to students. "Chemistry, despite its complexity and abstract nature, may be taught to audiences of different ages and diverse backgrounds, provided that the right approach is used," she said. "This is the objective of the 'Essentials of Chemistry' course."

SCW Happenings



Chanukah on 34th Street

By Chaya Sara Soloveichik

As I chatted with a passerby on 34th street, a girl inside the Brookdale lobby knocked on the window and waved hello. "She's probably telling you not to talk to me," the passerby commented wryly.

Students certainly did glance at me curiously. And no wonder – there I stood outside Brookdale on the first night of Chanukah in the drizzling rain, attempting valiantly to write legible notes as I conversed with strangers about the meaning of the holiday.

Jen, a fourth grade teacher from Maine visiting Manhattan for the first time, stopped to admire the many lit menorahs in Brookdale lobby. "I research Chanukah the best I can and teach my students about it," she commented, "but this is what the kids need to see."

David Dolny, a member of the 1970 graduating class of Yeshiva University High School, was glad when I engaged him in conversation. "It's really an amazing Kiddush Hashem," he remarked, "In this way, people in the neighborhood walking by and riding the buses can see it also."

With a coworker as an alumna, passerby Brian Camp was already familiar with SCW. "She remembers it fondly," he said. "I'm so glad that the windows were left open, so that others can



Clockwise from top left: Brookdale Hall (BRH) lit as a Menorah; the lounge in BRH on Chanukah; students light Chanukah candles; Menorah glowing on the first night of Chanukah

see what the girls do here. It's a beautiful display."

That night, singing resonated from the Brookdale lobby and from 34th street as well. When questioned about their knowledge of Chanukah, Belalcazar

began to sing, "Oh Hanukah, oh Hanukah, we light the menorah," and Brian Camp quietly sang, "Dreidel, dreidel, dreidel, I made you out of clay."

Passersby also had unique historical versions of the significance of this Jewish holiday.

Presumably, Jews annually commemorate the miracle of Chanukah, which transpired years ago and relates to Moses, at least according to Adriana Belalcazar.

Chanukah is a busy time at SCW, and this first night of

Chanukah only led to more exciting events. Activities to enhance the celebration included free donuts, a performance by the recognized Jewish Mentalist Marc Salem, a Chanukah concert with music by the Neginah Orchestra, Omek Hadavar, Yaakov Shwekey and others, a lecture by Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twersky, and the annual Chanukah Chagiga featuring Neshama Carlbach and her band.

TAC President Aliza Abrams, together with her board, organized many of the Chanukah preparations, under the guidance of Deans Zeldia Braun and Beth Hait. "I want people to have the most memorable Chanukah ever," said Abrams. "I know what it is to be away from home for holidays, so I want people to feel happy and at home here in Stern."

Chanukah at SCW and at Brookdale specifically, has certainly been memorable. Where else is lighting candles a science? Many students have testified that placing candles in the refrigerator provides them with a longer life span. Where else is there such art? The stiff foil covering a great expanse of the Brookdale lounge lends an intriguing aura to the lighting ceremony. And where else can one converse with a stranger on 34th street about whether miracles really exist?

Marc Stern Joins the Political Science Department

By Nehama Cohen

For the upcoming spring 2005 semester, Professor Marc Stern will be joining the political science department on the Beren Campus and teaching "Constitutional Law," a course that he has previously taught at SCW.

Born in Brooklyn and raised in the Bronx, Stern attended Yeshiva College and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Jewish History. He then decided to pursue a career in law and graduated Columbia Law School in 1976. Stern began working at the American Jewish Congress in October of 1997 and has been working there ever since.

"Most of my earlier work was involved in Constitutional

Law," said Stern. "I handled cases that dealt with First Amendment Law such as Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Religion and Separation of Church and State." In more recent years, Stern has worked on cases that deal mostly with international law and Israel's right to defend itself.

When he last taught at SCW, Stern gave a course titled "Law and Civil Liberties." The course being offered next semester will primarily focus on constitutional law, the divisions of power and the framework of government. "I think that it is important to address these topics because we are now seeing a

renewal of issues in separation of powers," explained Stern.

In addition to studying legal briefs from relevant cases, Stern also plans to integrate a moot court component into the course. This element would consist of students presenting argu-

"I think that it is important to address these topics because we are now seeing a renewal of issues in separation of powers"

ments on a chosen topic or case in front of the class. "The idea behind the moot court is that this will help students strengthen their public speaking and argumentative skills," said Stern.

"The department of political science endeavors to provide a full range of curricular offerings

to match what students would find at other small liberal arts colleges," commented Professor Joseph Luders, of the political science department. "A course on American constitutional law is essential to any undergraduate political science curriculum,

especially for students that are pre-law."

Elisheva Krausz, a junior and a political science minor,

believes that this course is especially beneficial and important for pre-law students. "This course will give students who are interested in law a solid background in constitutional law, a vital component in any American law school," explained Krausz. "I hope that the students

at SCW will take advantage of this unique opportunity."

Stern tries to focus his course in a way that is relevant to the times. "One of the things I try to do is to teach the course so that it allows the students to be knowledgeable about current events and be informed citizens," he said. "I also believe that this course will allow students who are planning to pursue a career in law to be introduced to the methodology of law, the general terms and concepts that are used in law before entering law school."

This additional course in the political science department is sure to generate interest among the students at SCW, especially those who plan to make political science a part of their future careers.

Museum of Modern Art Reopens To Tremendous Acclaim

By Reena Mittelman and Adinah Wieder

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in midtown Manhattan reopened to the public November 20, following two years of extensive renovations. The new museum, designed by Japanese architect Yoshio Taniguchi, features nearly twice the capacity of the former facility, with 630,000 square feet of new and redesigned space, a lobby connecting 53rd and 54th Streets, an atrium towering 110 feet above street level, and innovative glass curtain walls that provide views of the sculpture garden and the museum's midtown surroundings.

One of the main reasons for the renovations was a lack of space to house the museum's rapidly growing art collection. Throughout the years, MoMA's initial collection of eight prints and one drawing has grown to include more than 135,000 paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, photographs, architectural models and drawings, and design objects, and approximately 19,000 films and four million film stills. By creating greater and more varied spaces, the MoMA can display more artwork, including large-scale contemporary work.

Visitor

response to the renovations has been tremendously positive. "There is no comparison between the old structure and the new," stated one man. "It is like moving from a three-bedroom apartment into a nine-bedroom house." Crowd turnout alone is an effective indicator of the museum's success. "Every day, more people are coming," said Jean Borgella, a security guard at the museum.

New visitors cannot help but be awed by MoMA's innovative and modern design. Taniguchi's new design utilizes natural light and building materials such as glass, granite and aluminum to create an elegant environment and enhance the visitor's experience. "It's a gorgeous building," remarked Meg Koschik, a first-time visitor to the museum. Koschik was especially impressed by "all the glass and the staircases that let you look down [from the balconies] and see the exhibits." Christen Marquez, another visitor, admired several miniature models of the museum's new design, and expressed similar excitement. "I thought before [that] it

was a nice building," Marquez remarked, "but [now] it's a really nice space."

The defining feature of the renovated museum is the central atrium, which is surrounded by galleries overlooking the building's exterior. While visitors previously followed a linear sequence through the museum,

from some of the older pieces.

Prior to construction, Monet's "Water Lilies" hung on a wall that overlooked the museum garden. This intensified the soothing effect produced by the piece. Now, after the construction, it sits directly behind the Barnett Newman. The staff member further noted that it is criti-

around a vertical rise, and a monumental staircase connecting the fourth and fifth floors was added at the midpoint of the gallery to provide the visitor with the kind of varied, flexible movement not found in the original design. The top floor features expansive, skylit galleries for temporary exhibitions.

tures, the MoMA project focused on the expansion and renovation of an existing series of buildings. In doing so, Taniguchi sought to "transform MoMA into a bold new museum while maintaining its historical, cultural and social context." One of the highlights of the third floor at MoMA is the exhibit displaying all of Taniguchi's works. A model of each museum is displayed along with an architectural sketch and photographs of the museum. Alongside the photographs there is a short piece describing the layout and ideas behind the creation of the structure. Each of the museums carries its own personal style, yet they are all unique. Taniguchi favors modern materials such as concrete, glass and steel. However, he meshes them with older techniques, such as filtered light and

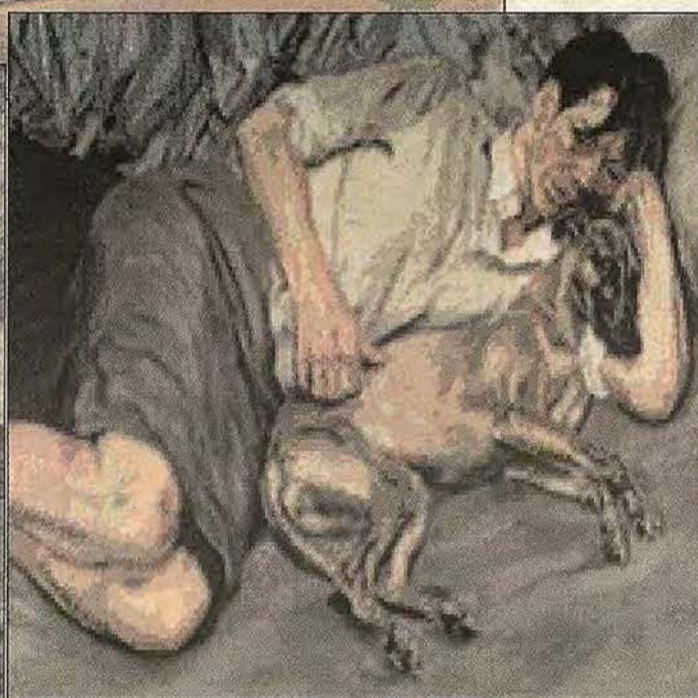
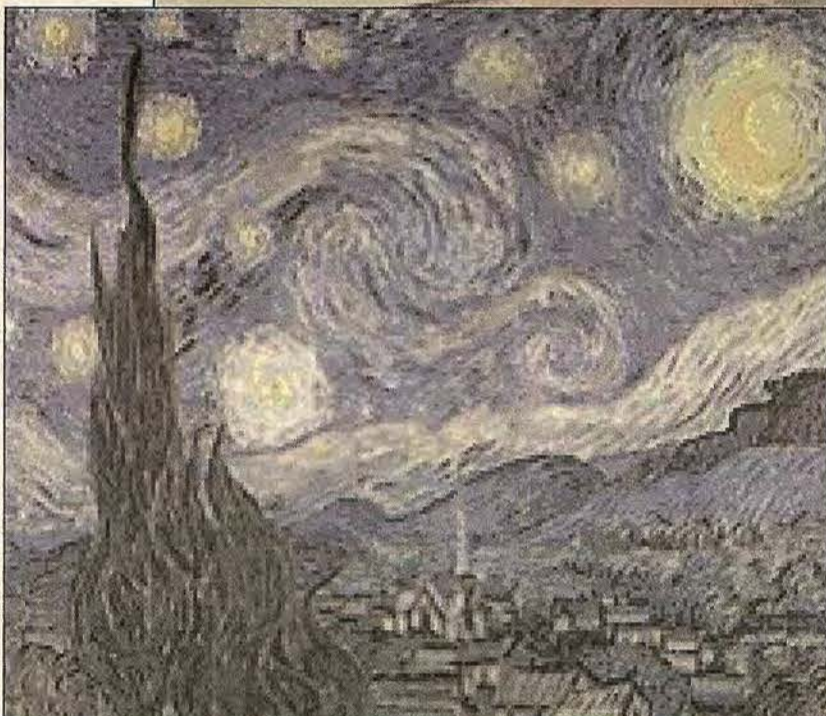
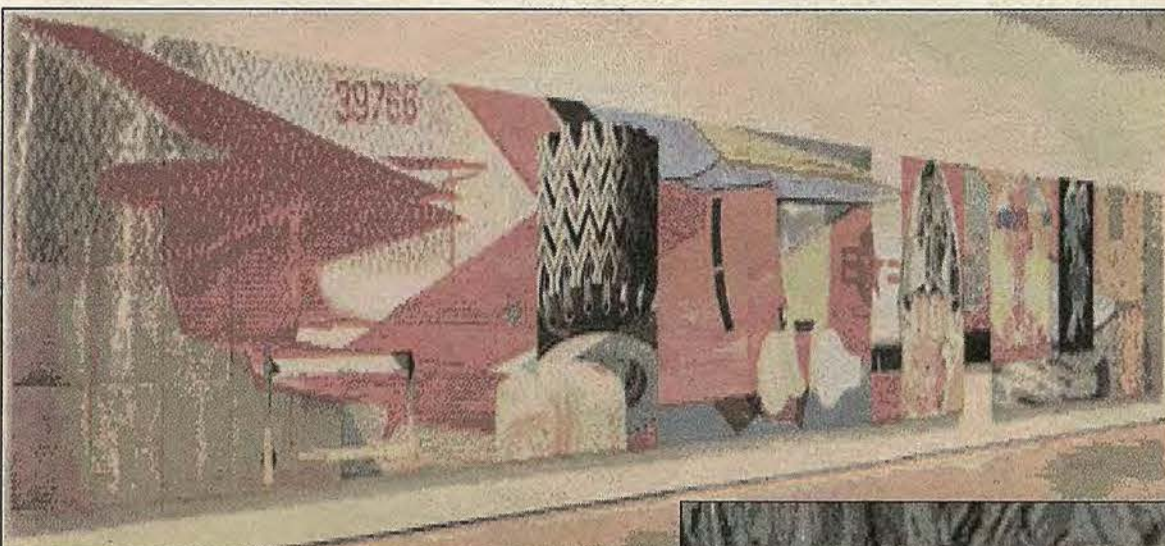
a symmetry. Some of his favorite materials include aluminum and granite. His structures all include precise geometric configurations that induce spacious appearances.

The museum contains over 150,000 objects from many different genres. The areas include architecture and design, drawings, film and media, painting and sculpture, photography and prints and

illustrated books. The Museum is home to masterpieces belonging to Vincent van Gogh, Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock and Andy Warhol.

The firm of Kohn Pederson Fox acted as executive architect on the project and directed the restoration of the original building. To finance the renovations and expansions, the Museum's Board of Trustees is leading the largest capital campaign in MoMA's history, with a goal of \$858 million. To date, over \$700 million has been raised.

Museum admission, which includes Museum galleries and film programs, is \$12 for students (full-time with current ID), \$20 for Adults and \$16 for Seniors (65 and over with ID). Members and children (16 and under accompanied by an adult) are free. Admission is free for all visitors during Target Free Friday Nights, Friday evenings, 4:00-8:00 p.m. To schedule a group visit, call (212) 708-9685. Regular exhibition tickets may be purchased online at www.moma.org.



Clockwise from top: James Rosenquist's *F-111*, Lucian Freud's *Double Portrait* and Van Gogh's *Starry Night*.

they now have greater freedom of movement, as the new building allows for frequent views between galleries and out to the newly enlarged sculpture garden and the city outside.

However, it is important to look beyond the beauty of the structure and see what the structure accomplishes in regards to the artwork that it houses. A staff member at the museum described her awe at how the towering galleries seemed to make many of the pieces look even more beautiful than before, at least the modern and more contemporary pieces. On the second floor in the center of a huge gallery stands the Barnett Newman. The Barnett Newman looks like a square shaped hourglass. There it stands, so regal as if the gallery belongs to it alone. This exhibit is quite spectacular.

However, while visiting the Barnett Newman one might neglect to catch a glimpse of Monet's "Water Lilies." Upon mention of the lack of attention to the "Water Lilies," a staff member commented that the new construction might slightly detract

cal to keep in mind that the museum is one of modern art and that the construction was created to emphasize the newer art. The ability to augment the beauty of the artwork by creating the perfect structure to house the piece is a talent that has earned Taniguchi world fame.

Signs throughout the museum emphasize that the new design "restores contemporary art to the most central and public area of the Museum." The new six-story David and Peggy Rockefeller Gallery Building houses the main collections and temporary exhibition galleries. Two new galleries are devoted to contemporary art and new media. Spacious galleries for contemporary art are located on the second floor, with more intimately scaled galleries for the collection on the levels above. The second floor galleries, with their digital capabilities and massive dimensions, accommodate the scale and diverse mediums of post-1970s work, and are intended to "flow" from the atrium. On the third, fourth and fifth floors, departmental galleries cluster

Taniguchi has also relocated the original 53rd Street entry and extended it to 54th Street, thus creating a passageway that allows the non-Museum-going public to pass freely through the Museum. On fifty-third street, Taniguchi preserved the original façade of the 1939 building and those of subsequent expansions by Phillip Johnson (East Wing-1968) and Cesar Pelli (Museum Tower-1984), while adding his own extension and entry to the west of Pelli's Tower. To the north on 54th Street, two buildings of equal height frame the sculpture garden. In the outdoor sculpture garden, Taniguchi preserved Philip Johnson's original 1953 design, which includes modern sculpture, seasonal plantings and reflecting pools. He re-established the garden's southern terrace to create an outdoor patio for The Modern, the Museum's new fine-dining restaurant.

MoMA is Taniguchi's first museum to be constructed outside of Japan. Whereas his previous projects involved the construction of entirely new struc-

Shul-Hopping With Shifra

Kehila Kedosha Janina: Dedicated to Traditional Greek Jewry

By Shifra Bronstein

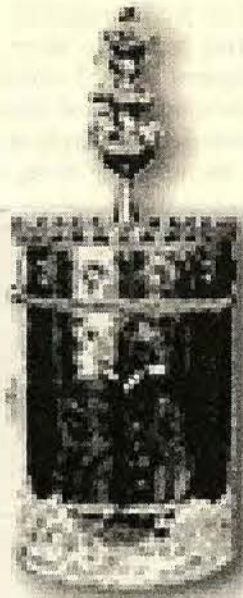
When the typical American Jew stops to contemplate the Holocaust, his most common thoughts generally circulate around the destruction of European and Russian Jewry. However, there is a segment of Jews who are commonly forgotten — the Jews of Greece. Through the efforts of Kehila Kedosha Janina (KKJ) and their museum, American and worldwide Jewry are being made aware of the fact that the Holocaust also affected the community of Greek Jews. Much of the synagogue's efforts revolve around preserving the memory of those lost during the Holocaust, as well as also preserving the unique ways and customs of Greek Jews.

Preserving the distinct traditions of the Greek Jews has not been an easy feat, but the KKJ is up to the task. The synagogue's building, still located in its original area in the Lower East Side which is now known as Chinatown, is a historical landmark unto itself. The original Ramoniote immigrants from Janina, Greece, built the synagogue in 1927. Every aspect of the building, from its stained-glass

windows to its benches, is the product of the Ramoniote Jews. Recently, it became necessary to renovate the building, but the KKJ allocated additional time and money to restore, rather than replace any imperfect parts. The effort was put forth to retain the creations of the Ramoniote Jews.

But who were these obscure Ramoniote Jews? Their historical nature is as unparalleled as the ten lost tribes. Immediately after the Romans conquered Jerusalem 2000 years ago, a ship containing Jews to be sold into slavery was bound for Rome and forced to veer off course to avoid a raging storm. Instead of reaching Rome, the ship arrived in Greece. Over the next 2000 years, this Jewish population evolved into a unique Jewish culture of its own. However, if one does not want to travel to Greece to acquire a taste of this fascinating culture, then one can visit the KKJ, the only synagogue in the western hemisphere to reflect the Greek-Jewish culture.

Another place to learn about the Greek-Jewish culture is to visit the shul's museum. The synagogue museum hosts a fascinating array of artifacts including costumes from Janina, the Ramoniote capitol of Greece, as



Torah from Greece, Courtesy of Kehila Kedosha Janina

well as the largest collection of hand-painted birth certificates, called Alephs. The museum also contains a literary center, art gallery and the one and only memorial to Greek Jewish Holocaust victims.

The Holocaust victims of Greece were honored this past April in a new exhibit produced by the museum. The exhibit commemorates the sixty-year anniversary of those victims who either survived Nazi deportation or were deported to their deaths.

Parts of the exhibit include a history, photographs and accompanying artwork by Holocaust victims. Another part of the exhibit introduces the new book "Yannina — Journey to the Past," by Eftihia Nachmias Nachman. The book discusses different aspects of everyday living among Greek Jews before the Holocaust, such as their dialect, customs and holidays.

The sisterhood of Kehila Kedosha Janina, established in 1932, is also a major factor in preserving traditional Greek Jewry. They preserve the outgoing and caring nature of this extraordinary people. Though small in number, the sisterhood has been able to successfully accomplish a great deal. For instance, in 1991, Albanian Jews, (originally from Ioannina, Greece), were given the rare opportunity to immigrate to the US. The sisterhood was able to secure safe passage for 37 Albanian Jews by organizing donations, fundraising and appealing to other outside sources. Today, this group of Jews, whose members have increased due to marriage and childbirth, is flourishing in Brooklyn. The sisterhood has also been involved with Gift of Life, an organization which

allows children from abroad to come to America for urgent heart surgery. Additionally, they acquired an ambulance for Israelis through American Magen Dovid Adom of Israel.

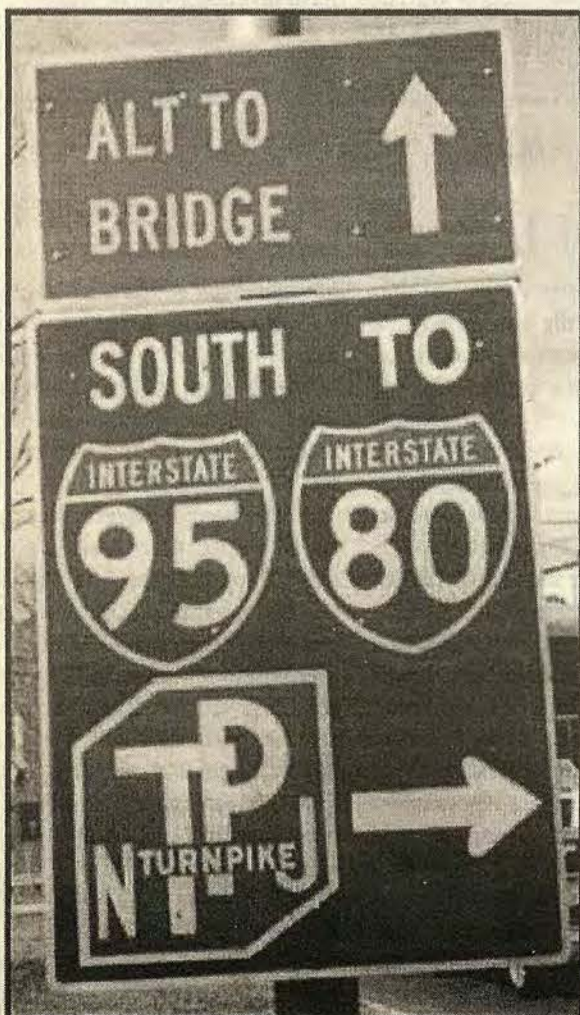
The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry (AFGJ), an organization that represents Greek Jewry in the Diaspora, is also a large factor in helping the shul to preserve traditional Greek Jewry. Together, the KKJ and the AFGJ have hosted a number of Greek representatives in the US and established a travel center to Greece. The travel center, stationed in the shul, works to send trips of Jews back to Greece to help support the current Greek-Jewish community. This past October, 150 Yanniotte Jews of Greece were able to celebrate the holiday of Sukkot, a feat which could not have been accomplished without the group's presence.

This remarkable shul has worked, and continues to work tirelessly to protect and encourage the existence of traditional Greek Jewry. If you wish to learn more about the KKJ, log onto kkj.org for additional information. The shul/museum is located at 280 Broome St. in the Lower East Side.

YU and Stern relocating to Teaneck.

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10% off with valid college ID.*



Kashrut supervision: R.C.B.C.



George Washington Bridge to Route 4 West. Take Queen Anne Road exit and follow the signs toward Bergenfield. Make 1st left after the 2nd traffic light. Lazy Bean Cafe is on left. 1404R Queen Anne Road. 201-837-BEAN. Convenient bus service available from P.A. and GWB bus stations. *Thursday from 7pm to 11pm only.

The Future of YCDS Looks Great, Until Then, Stay Home

By Dodi-Lee Hecht

YCDS has quite a reputation to contend with. First of all, Dr. Beukas is legendary on both campuses and, whether you've heard the good legend or the bad, no one can deny his devotion to the YC theatre and its boys. Any given semester, one walks into a YCDS production and knows that, at the very least, the YC actors and techies involved in that production are going to be giving the best performances Beukas could squeeze out of them. Last year the result was two excellent productions. Unfortunately, so far this year we are not so lucky.

This semester's production, "Boiler Room," had its high points but overall it was choppy and ineffective. Still, it is important to note that the blame does not totally lie with the cast and crew; "Boiler Room" was written for the screen not the stage. And it shows. While a film can actually thrive on fast-paced jumps from one scene to the next, a play cannot survive such rapid, real-time action. The many blackouts, alone, emphasized the impossibility of such short scenes succeeding on stage.

Furthermore, the abrupt scene changes were accentuated by very little substantial dialogue. While it is true that the soliloquy is an essential tool in a playwright's repertoire, a play cannot sustain itself if its characters converse with the audience 95 percent of the time and only with each other the remaining five. Especially, as was very much the case in "Boiler Room," when the speech is really meant to be part of a conversation with the latter, but metamorphoses into a proclamation at the former. Even when it really appeared as if two or three characters might actual-

ly have something to say to each other, the scene often revealed itself to be nothing more than a cleverly disguised collection of consecutive speeches.

Ironically enough, perhaps the best dialogue of the evening took place in a handful of scenes which featured one of the actors, David Mikofsky, standing off-stage. In these scenes, Mikofsky played an increasingly agitated investor, Harry Reynard. In contrast to the apparent theme of the play: no communication between characters at any cost — the entire role consisted of telephone calls between Reynard and the main character, Seth Davis, played by Joshua Russak. Despite Mikofsky's absence from the stage proper, his capacity to encapsulate the intensity of this minor role provided a wonderful respite from the monotonous blackouts and flashes of weak attempts at dialogue. Despite the fact that Russak and Mikofsky did not actually face each other during the entire play, Mikofsky managed to convey from a corner, that he was more a part of the play than many other actors who were shown to converse with Russak through a much greater number of scenes.

Still, some of the soliloquies were useful and well done. Russak in his delivery of the nar-

ration of the play provided the only true moments when plot development meshed with character development and the audience was actually made to care about the unfolding of the story.

Reynard, were never allowed to be present emotionally as much as Russak's Davis. It is unclear whether this was due to acting abilities or script limitations. This performance marks the

debut of Russak on the YCDS stage and it would appear that, as he develops as an actor under the watchful eye of Beukas, we can expect even better performances in future semesters.

In with the new implies out with the old. One final performance worth mentioning would be Josh Yehaskel's rendition of Greg Weinstein. This is the last role Yehaskel will perform for YCDS and he has ensured that he leaves the stage with a good final memory. As Weinstein, Yehaskel is the requisite competitive co-worker whose composite role as Russak's supervisor, his ethnic compatriot and his competition demands that

Yehaskel move quickly between many varied moods, in relation to

Russak. Although there are very few true moments of dialogue between Russak and Yehaskel, Yehaskel actually is the most successful at making his speeches appear to be directed at Russak and not the audience. His quick shifts from joviality to anger succeed in controlling the audience's perceptions of who he is addressing. While he may not

be the best actor in the production, he is the best re-actor, a skill that, had it been in the possession of the entire cast, would have made the play as a whole more enjoyable.

This brings us to the most important question: what went right with this play? The answer is to be found in the second part of YCDS' reputation. Alongside Beukas and his legend, YCDS is actually known to contain talent. While it is true that, for every spectacular actor, there are at least half a dozen students who are as incompetent on stage as, one would imagine, they are eager, YCDS always manages to find those potential stars. And lose them. Such is the way of college theatre — while Beukas remains a steadfast part of YCDS, his troupe gains and loses faces as quickly as it takes to acquire a college degree at Yeshiva. (Which, granted, can range from two years to six years — the point is it is finite).

This year, once again, YCDS has undergone such a change. Of the six actors to win awards for their performances in YCDS productions last year, exactly zero of them were on stage this semester. YCDS had to restock and it had to restock quickly. So, it re-examined its veterans, bumped up its sophomores and, in a bold and confidently YCDS-worthy move, cast a newcomer as the lead. During moments of transition, the final product is bound to suffer but, Yehaskel and other veterans remind us that the eventual result is usually worth it. The best response to YCDS is to put our faith in Beukas and wait for his polished stars to shine. If Mikofsky and Russak are the future then it is quite certain the glow will be more than worth the wait. Still, in the meantime, we have no choice but to wait.



Book Review:

Nancy Morgenstern, A Legacy of Life



Nancy Morgenstern, obit

By Tali Berger

September Eleventh. When spoken, these two words will quell conversation and will often generate several moments of somber reflection. All Americans, particularly New Yorkers, have

vidid memories of that day. The statistics are chilling and overwhelming: almost 3,000 people were killed. It is difficult to comprehend such a vast number, and one can only really understand it by imagining 3,000 individuals, each with his or her own life, family and dream. Each had a name, and each had a legacy. Nancy Morgenstern was one of these 3,000.

"Nancy Morgenstern: Testimonies to a Life of Joy, Faith, and Passion" tells her story. Close friends, family and co-workers who wanted to express their feelings of loss through personal anecdotes and experiences with Nancy wrote correspondences to Nancy's parents, Hanie and Suri Morgenstern, relatives of Rabbi Metzger. This book is a compilation of the letters and e-mails

that the Morgensterns received. As a memorial to Nancy and her life, this tribute shows us, on a personal level, the type of person that Nancy was.

The letters highlight the extraordinary traits that Nancy possessed without making her into a saintly, unattainable figure. The letters run the gamut of Nancy's life and the diversity of their authors demonstrates the variety of people touched by her. From her coworkers, who describe Nancy's approach to her work, to her friends and acquaintances, who stress her commitment to Orthodox Judaism and her zest for life, Nancy's character is conveyed in both the depth and breadth of her varied experiences.

Interspersed with the correspondence are pages of quotes — a single quote per page — that are

particularly expressive of her character. While some of these quotes are intensely emotional and sad, others convey the joy and passion with which Nancy lived. In this way, even if one does not read every letter completely, a picture of this remarkable woman is formed.

There is a section of photographs which catalogues Nancy's life, from the time that she was a child to her final bike tour. In the photos, one can see the happy-go-lucky, motivated, loving woman that the correspondence describes. These snapshots make her more real and concrete, and emphasize that Nancy was a person with a full life, not a statistic. While they serve as an inspiration and an illustration of her humanity, they also serve as a bitter reminder of her passing.

At the end of the book there

are messages written to Nancy's parents by a series of well-known rabbis. They are a source of inspiration, and thus, instead of the reader closing the book feeling depressed and sad, one is left with a message of hope.

This book is a useful message to all those who read it — to appreciate and strive in Judaism and faith, but never to use it as an excuse for underachieving or not following our dreams. Bits and pieces of the book can be read and savored — which I would advise, because reading large amounts at a time can be quite heart-rending — and can serve as an inspiration to achieve even greater heights in all areas of life. This is Nancy's legacy: Never settle, treat everyone with equal respect and honesty, live each day to its fullest and, as the army ad states, "Be all that you can be."

UP AND COMING IN THE BIG APPLE

Seaman Schepps: A Century of New York Jewelry Design 1904 - 2004

American Craft Museum
September 9 through January 2
40 West 53rd Street
Website: www.americancraftmuseum.org

Blue

Museum of American Folk Art
August 20 through January 23
45 West 53rd Street
Website: www.folkartmuseum.org

Kandinsky Gallery: An Inaugural Selection

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
1071 Fifth Avenue
Website: www.guggenheim.org

New York City Ballet: The Nutcracker

Lincoln Center
December through January 2
70 Lincoln Center Plaza
Website: www.nycballet.com

Big Apple Circus: Picturesque

Damrosch Park
October 21 through January 9
62nd Street and Amsterdam Avenue
www.bigapplecircus.org

Dancing About Architecture: Gwen Stefani

By Esther Lam

CD: Love. Angel. Music. Baby. (Interscope/Universal)
Artist: Gwen Stefani
Released: November 23, 2004
Notable Tracks: "What You Waiting For?," "Bubble Pop Electric," "Long Way To Go"



Beneath No Doubt's infamous alternative ska-punk style lies a pop sound that has increased its call for attention with each of the band's album releases. Throughout their career No Doubt mastered eclectic nuances of a Californian ska revival that includes the use of reggae and personal love ballads. But their pop tendencies culminated in 2001's *Rock Steady*, a record that integrated No Doubt's signature sound with synthesized dance grooves. Lead singer Gwen Stefani's voice itself, with its subtle processed appeal, and over-exaggerated intonations can be referred to as a source of pop.

It is no surprise that Stefani would take on a pop project of epic proportions. Her first solo album, titled "Love. Angel. Music. Baby.," is so popperific it should come with a warning label that reads, "contains extreme pop." The album is a dense concentration of tracks that are the pinnacle of the contemporary style. Synthesized club beats coupled with today's ever-fashionable rap ditties classify this album as Stefani's experimentation with a retro sound.

The solo album is one effort among a slew of Stefani's independent endeavors: her fashion line, entitled LAMB (the acronym of the album title), as well as an upcoming role in Martin Scorsese's "The Aviator". But the funky singer is not completely alone as "Love. Angel. Music. Baby." features numerous well known collaborators. Outkast's Andre3000 is responsible for the two standout tracks, "Bubble Pop Electric" and "Long Way To Go". For the second time in their musical careers (originally on the hit, "Let Me Blow Ya Mind"), Eve joins her in the "Fiddler On the Roof" rendition "Rich Girl". No Doubt bassist and ex-boyfriend

Tony Kanal produces two tracks on the album and former Janet Jackson producers help out on one.

Do not expect to hear the Stefani you are familiar with. Even the pop associations of No Doubt's music do not amount to her performance on this album. With "Love. Angel. Music. Baby." Stefani illustrates her ability to extend her creative talents into areas she has never been before. The album displays that Stefani is not merely meddling in new styles, rather it depicts her full immersion into aspects of club, pop and rap.

Despite Stefani's venture into this new world, the songs remain irritating and simplistic. The first single, "What You Waiting For?" is an annoyingly catchy dance tune that tells of Stefani's uncertainties about her solo career. "Naturally I'm worried if I do it alone," she sings, expressing her potential growth through the experience of breaking free of her No Doubt family. This is followed by the high-pitched self-revelation, "You've got your million dollar contract! And they're all waiting for your hot track!" The singer, realizing that she is "still a hot female," embraces her independence. These silly rhymes against an incessantly thumping dance beat either make you appreciate Stefani's sense of humor when it comes to this record or, in my case, question the album's entire creative integrity.

This lyrical disappointment mixed with aggravating pop melodies applies to many of the other tracks as well. "Serious," "Bubble Pop Electric," "Danger Zone," and "Luxurious" are among them. In "Luxurious" (which samples the popular rap

tune, "Big Poppa" by the late Notorious B.I.G.) we are told of Stefani and her beau's uphill battle to success. Stefani toasts their accomplishments by describing all the dough they are rolling in saying, "This kinda life is getting expensive, we know how to live baby." "Cha-ching, cha-ching...we're loaded and we're not gonna blow it," she proclaims. The song's cheesy French introduction doesn't help either, making this and the other tracks sound tacky and utterly shallow.

The most impressive song on the album is "Long Way To Go," one of two collaborations with Andre3000, which tells of society's discomfort with interracial couples. Besides its innovative appeal, the song is full of poetic lyrics and powerful excerpts from speeches by Martin Luther King Jr. "When snow hits the asphalt, cold looks and bad talk come," Stefani and Andre3000 declare in unison. The song is reminiscent of a funkier version of Janet Jackson's "Rhythm Nation" with its call to mobilize and fight for a pressing cause.

"Love. Angel. Music. Baby." is more significant that it is enjoyable. The record ensures Stefani's status as a pop diva, as if we ever doubted her in the first place. More than a stand-out funky lead singer, Stefani shows that she is capable of entering into a plethora of styles and creative outlets. Her wacky fashion sense is much like her music in that its unpredictable outrageousness demonstrates her artistic mind but does not guarantee likeability.

My response to the album was a mixture of extreme aggravation and, at times, an uncontrollable urge to dance. I fought this inclination as best I could but was unable to defeat its power. "Love. Angel. Music. Baby." is sure to provide the newly solo Stefani with successful overplayed radio hits, but upon hearing the headache-inducing music I will adamantly switch the station. Even if it means dancing my way to the stereo.

MOVIE CLASSICS (PRE-1970S) EVERYONE SHOULD SEE

Gone with the Wind	The Wizard of Oz	To Catch a Thief	Fiddler on the Roof
Casablanca	Bringing up Baby	Singing in the Rain	Laura
The Sound of Music	The Philadelphia Story	The Thin Man Series	Rebecca
My Fair Lady	Breakfast at Tiffany's	Some Like it Hot	North by Northwest
Mary Poppins	A Street Car Named Desire	The King and I	The African Queen

SSSB Takes Tour of United Nations

By Lauren Goldglantz

The United Nations has been the site of some of the most significant events in recent history, from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the unprecedented Millennium Summit that brought together about 150 heads of state and government. The International Business Club at SSSB had their first event this year at the historic U.N. Headquarters, located in Midtown Manhattan.

Many people do not realize that when you pass through the gates of the U.N., you enter international territory. The 18-acre site extends from 42nd Street to 48th Street, and then from First Avenue to the East River. This land belongs to all countries that have joined the organization. The U.N. has its own fire force and security. They issue their own postage stamps and conduct business in their six official languages, which are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

On December 12, 2004, the International Business Club brought 45 students from Sy Syms, YC and SCW to this historical site. They were only a small fraction of nearly a million visitors from all over the world who come through the gates each year. The tours are conducted in over 20 different languages with male and female guides from approximately thirty countries.

"The United Nations is truly a place where people of different nationalities, religions and ages come together under one roof," one of the tour guides stated. There are currently 191 member states, and 4,500 staff members from nearly 200 countries who work at the U.N. Headquarters.

The students who attended this tour were first given a brief overview of the organization and its structure. The main part of the tour consisted of a visit to

the chambers of the Security Council, the Trusteeship Council and the Economic and Social Council, which are located in the Conference Building. On some days, visitors are allowed to briefly observe a meeting in session.

The students who attended learned the various functions, composition and current actions undertaken by each council, as well as the activities of the U.N. system. They also saw many exhibits on such topics as peacekeeping operations, decolonization and disarmament. An extravagant art collection, presented by member states, is also part of the visit, consisting of tapestries, mosaics, murals and sculptures.

The final stop on the tour route was the General Assembly Hall, the largest and most well-known room. The U.N. bookshop and gift shop have wide variety of unique books and antiques from most of the 191 nations.

This tour lasted about 45 minutes, followed by dinner sponsored by Sy Syms, YC and SCW at the Levy Lobby in 215 Lexington. Student feedback was positive and many students will be more eager to participate in future events sponsored by the International Business Club of SSSB. This club was founded a few months ago, and while it currently exists at the Beren Campus, they are progressively working on creating one on the Wilf Campus as well. Next semester, the club plans to have an international food night, where they will serve cuisines from 10 different countries around the world. They want to introduce students to a more diverse palette as well as acquaint them with other cultures. They encourage fresh ideas, and if anyone is interested in joining the club, or wants to help, e-mail them at internationalabusclub@yahoo.com.

Morry J. Weiss Officially Inaugurated as Chairman of the YU Board at Hanukkah Dinner



Yeshiva students and faculty light Hanukkah Menorah

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publication that memorializes Israeli victims of terror, Kol HaNeshama.

"I felt honored and privileged to be part of the YU dinner," remarked Poupko. "As a student leader it was inspiring to see firsthand all the accomplishments YU has made so far, and it was very encouraging to see the amount of people who are committed supporters of Yeshiva University, in support of the YU mission."

Inaugurated only last year, the presidential medallion is an honor accorded to educators of Yeshiva University who have served the institution with tremendous dedication. Last year, SCW's Dean Karen Bacon received the award, and Albert Einstein College of Medicine Dean Dominick Purpura was this year's honoree.

Purpura, the longest serving dean of any medical school in the country, has led AECOM over the last twenty years. A renowned neuroscientist, Purpura has authored over 200 publications and brought Einstein to the frontiers of modern medicine. He graduated Harvard Medical School and served as dean of Stanford

Medical School before assuming the leadership of AECOM.

In his address, Purpura spoke of the need to further research in genetic therapies and advance humanity. He recalled Einstein's idealistic beginnings as a medical school to "breach the barriers of bias," and an energetic source of creativity. In a charming moment, Purpura quoted the Jewish Talmudic proverb, that it is not a man's obligation to finish the work, but neither is he free to abstain from it. Purpura's years of service to medical development attest to his dedication to Yeshiva and its mission.

The four recipients of honorary degrees included philanthropists and Yeshiva activists. As a board member of YU's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) for the past 20 years, Rabbi Hyman Arbesfeld helped make the seminary the vibrant center of Torah scholarship and rabbinic training that it is today. Rabbi Arbesfeld graduated from Yeshiva University High School for Boys in 1949, earned a BA degree from Yeshiva College in 1953, and was ordained by RIETS in 1956.

Muriel Block, owner of Gray Block Realty, is a member of both the board of directors of the

National Women's Division of Albert Einstein College of Medicine and the Executive Board of its New York chapter. Ms. Block's gift of real estate to Einstein, valued at more than \$21 million and the second largest in Einstein's history, is being used to expand research and education facilities through the current construction of The Harold and Muriel Block Research Pavilion.

Ronald Gruen, one of the Dallas community's most prominent Jewish leaders, continues to have a tremendous impact on various projects. Mr. Gruen and his wife, Ethel, are YU Benefactors and partners in a distance learning program aimed at expanding and enhancing learning among Jewish students nationwide.

Dinah Pinczower has been dedicated to furthering the work of Yeshiva University Women's Organization (YUWO) for more than two decades. Through her inspiring leadership and tireless devotion, YUWO has raised millions of dollars for scholarships, academic facilities, stipends for needy students, and other important projects.

A Musician from Gush Katif

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Defense Forces and is now guarding the small settlement Neguot near Hebron. Last year, terrorists infiltrated Neguot and killed a father and his daughter in their home. Ronen received special permission to interrupt his army services and come to do concerts in the United States and Canada. His return to Israel is also his return to his military uniform.

A self-described "simple soldier," Ronen has been living in Gush Katif since the age of six. He was born in Beer Sheva, and

explains that his parents moved to the Gush in 1977 not for ideological reasons, but because they liked the area. His father became an agriculturalist and his mother, born in Hungary after WWII, became the government officer responsible for preschools in the area. Soon after, Ronen's grandparents, Holocaust survivors who had lived through Auschwitz and Russian labor camps, also relocated to Gush Katif. They settled in Israel and helped establish Moshav Ganei Tal. Now, Ronen lives in Kfar Darom with

his wife and children; his brother, an army officer with three children, and his grandparents, all live in Neve Dekalim.

For someone so rooted in the land of Gush Katif, Ronen is in a unique position to comment on its importance. "I think Gush Katif is part of Israel, it's simply ours, part of our land," he explained.

I asked the musician what he thought about the future, with the recent news coming from Israel about disengagement and the future of Ronen's community unclear. "I don't think

[disengagement] will happen," he said quietly. "I don't think about the situation, what I'll do if they take me out of my home. But we do things to prevent it from happening- protests and trying to convince people. But no, I don't ever think of the possibility that it will happen...All the Gush residents, we've sacrificed too many for this place."

Ronen's son was injured by a falling mortar when he was only three years old. Ronen's brother was injured in the army, his cousin was also hurt, and his sister-in-law's sister killed by a

terrorist attack.

Someone who has seen all this, a talented musician, came to America to perform rock music. And when I asked him what struck him most about the United States, he paused a moment, and in a voice full of naiveté, exclaimed, "Everything is big here- the size of things here is astonishing." That's Israel's simple soldier.

¹ Interview was conducted in Hebrew and quotes were translated by the author.

SCW and Cardozo Host Academic Conference

By Adrienne Eichen

For the past year and a half, SCW Professor of Jewish History and Rebecca Ivry Department of Jewish Studies Chair, Dr. Ephraim Kanarfogel, planned an international academic conference to celebrate the enormous influences of Rashi and Maimonides. From November 21 to the 23, SCW was host to the product of Kanarfogel's preparations: a conference entitled "Between Rashi and Maimonides: Themes in Medieval Jewish Law, Thought, and Culture." The conference was set to coincide with the 800th year anniversary in 2004 of Maimonides's death and the 900th year anniversary in 2005 of Rashi's death.

The forum was co-sponsored by The Leonard and Diener Institute of Jewish Law at Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law of Yeshiva University and The Rebecca Ivry Department of Jewish Studies at Stern College for Women of Yeshiva University. Cardozo Director of Communications and Public Affairs, Susan Davis, was excited to participate in the lecture series. "It's an event we were very happy to be involved in," she said. "We are eager to have programs that go across university lines, where we participate with other schools, so this was great."

"Dean Bacon had asked me two years ago to suggest an academic event that the Jewish Studies department could undertake in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of our college," Kanarfogel recalled. He decided to host the convention and set out to find appropriate scholars. Knowing that he wanted to eventually publish the lectures as a volume, Kanarfogel said he "picked people who were not only outstanding speakers but great publishers as well."

The series was split into five sessions, consisting of three lectures each. The first session, Methodologies of Legal Interpretation, included "The Problem of Identity in Rashi,

Rambam, and the Tosafists," given by Professor J. David Bleich of Cardozo; "The Unique Place of Penitents in Medieval Jewish Legal Thought," given by Professor Nahum Rakover of the Jewish Legal Heritage Society in Jerusalem; and "Between Ashkenaz and Sefarad: Tosafist Teachings in the Talmudic Commentaries of R. Yom Tov b. Abraham Ishvili," given by Kanarfogel.

The second session, Mysticism and Exegesis, included "The Changing Image of Maimonides in the School of Nahmanides," given by Professor Moshe Idel of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; "Nahmanides on the Dynamics of Biblical Dialogue in the Book of Genesis," given by Professor Michelle Levine of SCW; and "The Canonization of Rashi's Torah Commentary and its Late Medieval Detractors."

The third session, Comparative Perspectives, included "The Weight of Midrash on Rashi and Rambam," given by Professor Alfred Ivry of New York University; "Rashi and Maimonides on Christianity," given by Professor Daniel Lasker of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev; and "Philosophical and Psychological Approaches to the Book of Job: Rashi vs. Maimonides," given by Professor Mordechai Cohen of SCW.

The fourth session, Dimensions of Maimonidean Thought, included "The Ravings of Amulet Writers: Maimonides vs. Ashkenazic Scholars on Incantations," given by Professor Aviezer Ravitzky of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; "The Philosophical Influences on Sefer Ahavah," given by Professor Menachem Kellner of Haifa University; and "Maimonides and Secrets: The Opening Chapters of the Second Part of the Guide," given by Professor Dov Schwartz of Bar Ilan University.

The fifth session, Multidisciplinary Approaches, included "The First Crusade Narrative of R. Eliezer bar Nathan," given by Professor

Robert Chazan of New York University; "Peshat and Halakhah in Radak's Exegesis," given by Professor Naomi Grunhaus of SCW; and "Rashi, Rambam and the Constructivist Theory," given by Professor Scott Goldberg and Professor Moshe Sokolow of Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration.

The event kicked off with a dinner, where SCW's Dean Karen Bacon and Kanarfogel addressed the speakers, who hailed from New York, Canada and Israel. Visiting lecturers were put up at the local Bedford Hotel on 40th Street, between Lexington and Park Avenue.

Kanarfogel "was very pleased" with the result of his efforts. "It worked out beautifully," he said. "The facilities worked out, Cardozo was very cooperative... and we had a very nice audience of students and outside people." Most importantly, he stressed, "What was said was very interesting. The students and faculty got to hear wonderful lectures... and the speakers learned what we [at SCW] are about; they were very impressed." Professor Menahem Kellner of Haifa University relayed his impressions of the conference to Dean Bacon. "It was wonderfully planned and executed, with a happy mix of lively presentations and time for schmoozing," he said. "I have been to a large number of Rambam conferences this year, on three continents, and this one surely stands out as among the very best."

Kanarfogel highlighted the importance of SCW hosting such an event. "It is a great thing not only for SCW, but for the entire University." In regard to upcoming events, Kanarfogel has already commenced talks with colleagues from leading universities. "It was a great first event," Kanarfogel said, placing conspicuous emphasis on the word 'first'. Surely this is only the beginning of a new academic forum for SCW.

Extended Singlehood - A Jewish Crisis?

By Jessica Feig

On Sunday December 5, 2004, at the Geraldine Schottenstein Cultural Center, "Challenges and Opportunities: Orthodox Families Confronting A Changing World," sponsored by Dr. Marcia Robbins-Wilf, marked the last of Stern College's jubilee events to celebrate Stern's 50th anniversary. The lecture was delivered by Dr. Sylvia Barack Fishman SCW '64, professor of Contemporary Jewish Life and Near Eastern and Judaic Studies at Brandeis University, as well as co-director of Hadassah International Research Institute on Jewish Women. Her goal that evening was to sensitize the small, yet attentive audience to critical issues confronting our communities.

One concern of hers is the "extended singlehood" crisis (otherwise known as "delayed marriage") which is increasingly becoming a problem. Throughout the years, women have become more ambitious and have therefore chosen to delay marriage or delay having children. She provided some statistics to strengthen her argument. More than a third of today's women from ages 25 to 34 aren't married. This lies in sharp contrast to 40 years ago, when half of the women were married by age 22 and three-quarters of the women had a mate by the age of 35. While non-Jewish women, after attaining their bachelor's degree, have two to three children, Jewish women with bachelor's degrees report the desire to have two to four children, but statistics prove that they aren't having those children. Obviously, there is a distinct gap between expected and actual family size. All of these statistics are related to the phenomenon of delayed marriage and non-marriage. However, delayed marriage leads to infertility issues, and she told women to be aware

of "the biological repercussions of their personal choices."

Fishman pointed out some potential causes of this tragic problem. She said that "singles these days look at each other with an accountant's eye." Every year our list for what makes the "perfect match" gets longer and more detailed. This undermines the joy and spontaneity of "finding each other."

As the evening progressed, Fishman touched upon other challenges that Jews encounter, such as intermarriage, substance abuse and agunah and divorce issues. Intermarriage, Fishman says, is a result of the acceptance of the Jewish culture into the American way of life. Even Jewish phrases, such as mazal tov and meshugenah, seem to have become part of the American lexicon. In addition, didactic TV programs aimed at children teach that interfaith households are superior since they encourage empathy toward both parents' religions. One solution is that parents should practice their religion in the home to have an impact on their children. They should also make sure that their children are in the right circle of friends. In fact, rates of intermarriage are related to population densities.

Her final words of advice that evening were to "face all challenges in love and strength and not in fear. We can't compass our children, but we can definitely provide them with a compass to guide their lives."

Women's role in marriage has changed throughout the years. In the past, men supported the family while women raised the children. Today, it is not unusual to find "dual career" households. As a result, since both parents support the family financially, they also share the responsibility of raising their children. Therefore, women can have it all. The choice is theirs to make.

City Officials Mingle at Le Bistro

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like this one help foster mutual respect and appreciation. "Some students here are never exposed to the police department and see us coming to the University in a friendly relationship," said Jaffe. "It can only benefit them. We're not their adversaries but their friends. I hope this continues for many more years."

During the holiday party, Rosengarten raffled off tickets for Morris Katz paintings as Katz stood in the background wearing a beret and paint speckled overalls in front of a paint

brush and easel. Later, Rosengarten showed YU's newest promotional video, which debuted at the Hanukkah Dinner.

"I was most inspired by Mr. Rosengarten's statements and the video," said Supreme Court Justice of Brooklyn Bruce Balter. "They emphasized how [they] try to instill in Yeshiva University graduates in all the schools a commitment to community and public service."

In addition, Balter believes these kinds of events are important because they enable

officers and city officials to interact with the Jewish community in a positive way. "Unfortunately, in life there are many innate misconceptions, innate prejudices by lack of contact with representatives of the Jewish community," said Balter. "Young men and women of Yeshiva University who are so active in community affairs, whether it be social work or medicine, help to build new bridges of understanding and cooperation as representatives of the Jewish community."

Rosengarten empha-

sized that the YU community is part of the larger metropolitan community and should treat its neighbors as friends. "From a practical point of view there are people here who have helped us in many ways and will continue to do so, and it is very important to us that they feel at home on our campus and are cognizant of what we do here," remarked Rosengarten. "This is all connected to President Joel's leadership because when he speaks about community, our community includes these civil servants."

The party is hosted

annually by Yeshiva, the only university in New York that reaches out to the NYPD in such a manner, according to guests. "Every year [the brunch] it continues to reinforce the relationship between Yeshiva and city government, and the most important part of that is the NYPD," explained retired chief John Scanlon, former chief of Patrol Services Bureau of the NYPD and director of New York Homeland Security. "This is very positive and necessary."

Yeshiva Implements Significant Faculty Adjustments and Raises

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nance is part of a larger university effort to improve the reputation and status of Yeshiva. In addition to this year's higher than usual four percent faculty raise, the Board of Trustees, at the suggestion of YU President Richard Joel, authorized significant salary adjustments for senior faculty, which took effect October 1st for YC, SCW and SSSB. "We lagged behind on a professional level and lagged behind in comparison with other universities," said Joel. "This was an important show of investment on the part of our trustees and I was happy to be part of it."

On the Beren Campus, Dean Karen Bacon, Dean Norman Adler and Dr. Charles Snow recommended specific faculty for raises and adjustments to Lowengrub who then presented them to Joel for final approval. "There was a special effort to enhance salaries of senior faculty," explained Bacon, "particularly those who've been with the University for many years and have been exceptionally successful both in the classroom and in their research and service to the University." The process is standard each year; faculty submit a report describing their activity in teaching, research and service to the university, and Bacon makes her recommendation based on this and information she's informally collected in conversation.

Many senior faculty members have noticed a greater attentiveness to faculty concerns and welcome this new approach. "There most certainly has been a change in attitude and concern," said senior faculty member Rabbi Pesach Oratz, but still he added, "The disparity of salary between

City University and Yeshiva is glaring."

A clear indication of the progress Yeshiva has made in interacting more positively with its faculty is the attitude of the newer junior faculty. "The administration has been very supportive and encouraging of my efforts to write and publish and I have felt inspired by their support," said Dr. Jay Ladin, a professor of the English department hired in 2003. "I have felt more productive here than at any other time." Ladin has taught in different capacities at universities around the country.

The salaries of senior faculty have been a contentious issue for the University over the last 25 years, while junior faculty are more appropriately paid because they were hired at a time when the University was not struggling financially. Furthermore, there is an acknowledgement that pay comparable to similar liberal arts colleges is necessary to recruit quality instructors. The administration has taken these steps partly to improve morale. "This was done out of a recognition that we needed to do better for our faculty," stated Lowengrub. "We want to move this University forward in making it an excellent place, attractive to people knowing that faculty who are here for a while will be rewarded commensurate with their efforts."

Statistics from the Chronicle of Higher Education illustrate the discrepancy of salaries between Yeshiva and other small liberal arts colleges. In 2002 to 2003 the average salary of a full-time professor at Swarthmore, Amherst and Vassar ranged from \$102,000 to \$108,000, while at Yeshiva's undergraduate schools

(combining SCW, YC and SSSB) the average was approximately \$82,000. It is important to note that this average includes the more recently hired full-time faculty who are more generously paid than senior faculty. The cost of tuition at Yeshiva is also similar to these liberal arts universities; however, their students don't take an average of six courses a semester, raising the number of faculty members who must be hired per student at Yeshiva. Yeshiva's location in Manhattan makes the cost of living much greater. At Barnard, where tuition was higher, the average full-time professor was paid approximately \$110,000 for these same years.

In addition, at Yeshiva there is a discrepancy in course load; senior faculty teach four courses while junior faculty teach three, the standard at competitive colleges. "I had to reduce the workload for junior faculty in order to bring in the best junior faculty I could," said Lowengrub. "We wouldn't be competitive, we wouldn't have some of the people here that you already know are extraordinarily good. So now we're working on what we can do for senior faculty, but we also have fiscal responsibilities, and I have to match the two things."

Yeshiva faculty have struggled with YU over monetary issues for many years. In the 70s and 80s there were periods when faculty salaries were frozen - meaning standard annual raises to account for the increased cost of living were not applied - because the University was financially troubled. When Norman Lamm assumed the presidency in the mid-70s, Yeshiva was so engrossed in debt that he almost signed bankrupt-

cy papers. Once the situation improved, he promised the faculty that he would increase salaries dramatically to catch up to the salary level at comparable universities, but this did not happen. The conflict peaked again in '95 when the University professed an inability to pay for faculty raises though it had just built a nearly one billion dollar endowment.

"The difficulty was President Lamm came in at a troubling time for the university," said a faculty member who has asked to remain anonymous. "He is credited with saving YU from bankruptcy, and his administration had to turn it around using limited resources. He just couldn't get out of that mindset."

Despite the low pay, many faculty chose to remain at Yeshiva. "Many stayed out of a deep commitment to the mission of the University and its students and were willing to sacrifice their own material wellbeing in order to be part of that mission," said Rabbi Saul Berman who has taught at SCW since '71. "Others stayed because at critical points they were not able to get jobs elsewhere."

Yeshiva's dealings with faculty may have influenced its nationwide reputation. Many universities across America, who had never heard of Yeshiva University, learned of its existence from the landmark 1980 Supreme Court decision National Labor Relations Board versus Yeshiva in which the litigants clashed over the faculty's right to unionize. The Supreme Court ruled that full-time faculty of a private university, because they are involved in hiring and firing decisions, are considered management, and therefore, are

not allowed to unionize. This decision impacted the policies of many private American universities, earning YU a reputation for reversing the progression of faculty rights.

Yeshiva's connection to this Supreme Court decision might have influenced YU's U.S. News and World Report ranking. Peer assessment accounts for 25 percent of each university's ranking determined by sending questionnaires to presidents and provosts of other U.S. universities. In the 2004 U.S. News and World Report ranking, YU placed 18 in the country in terms of supporting faculty research, which accounted for 20 percent of the score, however, placed only 105 in the country in the category of peer assessment.

Bacon acknowledged the discrepancy between the ranking's categories of peer assessment and faculty resources. The administration is trying to close this gap, according to Bacon. "When we have important events we send invitations to other presidents and provosts," Bacon said. "Though we know many won't come, we want them to know about us to raise our profile."

In addition, the University is considering composing a YU report about important YU events and contributions to particular academic fields to distribute among other U.S. universities. "We want to raise our profile in the eyes of our peer institutions who rank us," said Bacon.

Despite the strained past, Yeshiva is taking strides to improve the status of the University. "Joel is accelerating the pace of reaching the faculty standard that this university is seeking," said Bacon.

Lady Macs Take It to the Court

By Sari Nussbaum

We've all heard the famous "There is no I in TEAM" quote, and various other motivational clichés. But this year, there is something about The Lady Macs that has turned this seemingly corny notion into a reality. As a player, there is no greater feeling than winning a basketball game through a true team effort. I believe it was Stephen Covey who once said, "Strength lies in differences, not in similarities." Essentially, this notion encapsulates our team. Each and every individual player brings a different facet to the game, and together, we stand united as a team. In fact, this sense of unity extends off the court as well. I have never seen such a myriad of personalities mesh together so effectively. As a result, our season has been infused with this special team spirit.

Our season began just over a month ago, when we traveled to Boston for the Kim Krawiec Memorial Tournament. The tournament was held over the

weekend, and our first game was on a Saturday night, against Emerson College. The tension was palpable and the pressure was definitely on The Lady Macs. Emerson was a very tough team and even though we battled fervently, we lost the game by a substantial margin. Although this loss was tough to swallow, we bounced back the next day in our game against Wheelock College. With a true team effort, The Lady Macs overpowered Wheelock, 63 to 48, and consequently secured third place in the tournament.

Traveling to Boston for the weekend wasn't just about playing basketball; it was a true bonding experience for our team. We thought spending eight hours on the bus together was enough, but then we had to spend the entire weekend in the same hotel! Fortunately, we survived, and so did hotel management.

We also had the chance to meet people in the Brookline community over Shabbat. In fact, many of the people who hosted us for Shabbat meals came to our games to support us, and we cer-

tainly won their hearts over. You see, there are many things you will see at a Lady Mac's basketball game that you would not see at any ordinary basketball game. First and foremost, you will see girls playing in skirts... now that's not exactly your average basketball attire! Not only will you see skirts, you will see a number of players in protective gear, specifically kneepads. In fact, sometimes I wonder whether our power forward, Rivke Pianko, is suiting up to play football or basketball.

You have to realize that basketball is a rough sport, even though it is theoretically a non-contact sport. As a matter of fact, one of our rookie players, Shira Biber, leads the team in a newly created statistic for the team, namely number of falls per game. Biber, a fierce competitor, is definitely on the floor more than any other player on the team.

Notwithstanding all this, it's not just about what you see at a Lady Mac's game that makes us such great entertainment, there are also the extraordinary sounds. In any given game, you'll

definitely hear one of the Almo twins calling "FLEXXX!" (a set play), or the shout of "BOX OUT!" in an Australian accent from somewhere down the court. You'll most probably also hear the loud stamping of our coach's heels in dire frustration. And above all, you will always hear the bench screaming "DEFENSE!" in true team spirit.

Following our awesome trip to Boston, this past month has been jam-packed with a number of extremely tough games for the Lady Macs. In fact, one week we played four games over five days. This included our game against Baruch College in Manhattan. Baruch is a very fast, tough, athletic team who persistently pressured us the entire game. Unfortunately, we were unable to consistently break this defense and we lost.

While this was a disappointment, our focus turned to the Medgar Evers Tournament that we were competing in that weekend in Brooklyn. That Saturday night, we played The College of New Rochelle, and won by 30 points. We then had the

Championship game the next day against Medgar Evers. In a very close and exciting game, The Lady Macs fought till the very end, but we went down by five points. With this result, we attained second place in the tournament overall - still a mighty effort.

Despite this tough loss, the team bounced back again a few days later with a strong win against SUNY Maritime in the Bronx. Showcasing superb teamwork yet again, The Lady Macs looked strong and confident, and defeated Maritime by 24 points.

So, as you can see, it has been a tremendously busy month for The Lady Macs. Despite our record, which currently stands at 4 to 4, we can still hold our heads high and be proud of the way we play. Regardless of whether we win or not, we play as a true team, and most importantly, we have great fun together. Everyone contributes their share and no individual stands out. As a player, it is truly a privilege to be a part of this team, both on and off the court.

Meet the Fencing Team

By Judy Alkoby

Many of us Stern students feel proud that our school has a fencing team, yet most of us don't even know what the team or sport is all about. Most of our knowledge of fencing comes from over dramatized films, such as "The Mask of Zorro," and doesn't extend further. Well, meet SCW's fencing team. This year's team is instructed by Coach Judy Cummins, who also teaches Elementary Fencing as a gym course. Coach Cummins has been involved with fencing for over 10 years, and feels deeply connected to the sport. "I want [the team] to have fun and understand what the sport is about," said Coach Cummins. "Competing is so important in our lives. I don't care if we win or lose."

Our team has 13 members, and is part of the Eastern Collegiate Women Fencing Conference (ECWFC). Other schools in this conference include Hunter, CUNY, Steven Institute of Technology, and Drew College. All of these schools have fencing members at college level and don't recruit high school competitors. The fencing team also plays other schools outside of the conference, such as Army, Haverford, and Johns Hopkins. The fencing bouts (matches) are held off campus, since the SCW gym can't

accommodate the regulation size of the strip on which the fencers compete. (The strip is meant to be 14 meters in length, and 1.5 meters in width.)

Despite the fact that the members of our fencing team only have the chance to practice

year. "We're still beating them, even though our girls don't start until junior year. In a way, we're doing better," remarked Coach Cummins.

At every team event, there are three starters and one alternate in each of the three different

shorter). The victories of the bouts are added up to determine the winning team.

Our team practiced their lunges and positions for the tournament in December. This holiday invitational tournament was sponsored by the National

past, Stern students have brought home awards, such as Esther Zitter who won the NIWFA Outstanding Scholar Athlete Award.

Other tournaments include a competition at Hunter College on December 14th. There will also be an overnight competition held later on this year in Philadelphia. All students and friends can attend every competition, and are strongly urged to show their support. "Many of the other schools have a lot of people coming with them, since they usually also have a men's fencing team," explained Coach Cummins. "It's just me and the girls over a large spread out area, so we really need the support." You're guaranteed to have an enjoyable time watching this rich, timeless sport. Come cheer on our team, and see what fencing is really about.

Fencing Team

Charlotte Phillips (Captain)

Malka Lipshitz (Assistant Captain)

Leora Ross (Manager)

Lauren Goldglantz (Sabre Captain)

Navah Rosensweig (Epee Captain)

Frida Fridman (Foil Captain)

Deanna Frazin

Rochellie Schelsinger

Dahlia Eisenberg

Stephanie Shneebalg

Rivka Hedaya

Gitty Mandel

Sara Weissman



SCW students in fencing practice

twice a week, as opposed to other schools who practice 4-5 times a week, the team is up to the challenge. In addition, since many Stern students spend freshman year abroad, most of the students who participate in the fencing team join as juniors. This can be seen as a disadvantage, since other competing schools train their fencers from freshman

weapons. Every member of the team specializes in her specific weapon, which is either the epee, foil, or sabre weapon. Each competitor will fence the other teams' competitors with the same weapon. There is a total of nine bouts per weapon, and 27 bouts total. Each bout is worth five points, and has a three minute limit (but is usually

Intercollegiate Womens Fencing Association (NIWFA). It was held on December 5th, at Farleigh Dickinson University in Teaneck, NJ. However, this was not a team event, but an individual event. Each competitor fenced against other competitors in her specialized weapon for championship awards. In the

Alumnus in Focus:

Sharon Volk, First Physical Education Major in Stern

By Melodie Balarsky

Parents and educators always caution young people "if you don't take hold of the opportunities set before you then they will slip right through your fingers." Sharon Volk, SCW graduate of 1979, the first physical education shaped major in Stern is a shining example of what it means to take advantage of the opportunities set before you.

Volk grew up interested in sports as both a player and a spectator. After spending a year learning in Machon Gold, a seminary in Israel, she decided to continue her Torah study in a formal setting, graduating from Stern with a Judaic Studies Certificate in addition to her bachelor's degree in physical education.

After arriving on campus Volk soon got involved in the SCW tennis and basketball teams, refusing to allow her passion for sports to remain stagnant. "I remember that there were times that you had to go through so many channels to get one thing accomplished or to get

to the right person," explains Volk. "We had to do our own fundraising for uniforms for the teams. That was a little annoying. I think the administration considered it more a club than a team."

Volk soon decided that she wanted to pursue a career in physical education and sat down with professor Arthur Tauber, then the physical education department chair. He helped her design a shape major in physical education, which included taking courses off campus at Queens College to supplement her on campus credits at SCW. Volk relates "all my off-campus credits came through without a problem."

One of the ways in which the profession of physical educators has evolved over the years is the variety of fields one can work in, states Volk. "You could be a certified personal trainer, an aerobic instructor and a yoga specialist," says Volk. "People are serious about staying in shape and there are many new venues to accomplish that. Hip hop and jazz are given as exercise classes."

Volk currently is a physical education instructor in a Jewish day school, which has grades nursery through sixth. For each age group, Volk has specific goals in mind for what she wants them to be able to accomplish by the end of the course in relation to their ages. "With the younger children I do interpretive games, cooperatives games, games that involve coordination, even supervised free play time with the school equipment and body awareness games and skills," says Volk. "With the older children we do different units of sports over a four to six week period where they learn skills and strategies." Volk explains that her job is like any other teaching position. "If you work in the public schools you are assigned to a school and you know basically what the hours are and the pay scale increases as you spend more years in the system," explains Volk. "It was my choice to teach in a Jewish day school and be on the same schedule as my children."

Volk also likes her job because it allows her to spend more time at home with her hus-

band and children. "You have to make choices in your life," says Volk. "Sometimes a job is more lucrative but it is far away and it is long hours. This job is 25 minutes from my house and I get to be with Jewish kids and be on the Jewish calendar schedule."

One of the most rewarding aspects of her job is similar to that of any teacher, watching a child achieve a skill that you have been rehearsing with him or her over an extended period of time, reflects Volk. "They become comfortable in their skill level and feel they can play the game as good as anyone," says Volk. "Occasionally, I have a child that will be trying to hit the baseball I will give them more than the regular amount of strikes because I really want them to get it. We aren't winning any tournaments we want kids to feel good about themselves and to learn."

Volk emphasizes in her classes the importance of working together and not competing with each other. She finds it extremely challenging when there are certain children in the class with a very competitive

nature, which results in a lack of respect for their classmates.

As a parent of a current SCW student, Volk has the opportunity to see first hand changes that the University has undergone over the past twenty years. Volk says that one of the greatest strides that SCW has made is a change in attitude toward sports. "They are treated much more seriously now than they were twenty years prior," says Volk. The sports' teams are competitive."

Some things have not changed though. "I just took out the yearbook," says Volk. "Dr. Carol Silver from the English department and Penina Schram, professor of speech, are both still there." In addition, she adds. "Dean Bacon is a fabulous role model for the students at Stern, I have a lot of respect for her." Another aspect of the SCW experience that has not changed in the past twenty years is where the Volk women dorm, "Ironically, my daughter and I both had dorm rooms on the same floor."

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F A S H I O N

Fashion Design Majors at Stern?

By Sara Levit and Shoshana J

What do Donna Karan, Diane Von Furstenberg and Stella McCartney all have in common? All are well-known fashion designers, and all happen to be Jewish women. These women have certainly succeeded in establishing themselves in the demanding and competitive field of fashion, making definite strides since a time when a Jewish woman's place in the garment industry meant minimum wages and sweat shop conditions. With a long, revolutionary history of its own, Stern College for Women appropriately shares a place within the field of fashion design, and for those who are considering entering the field, Stern College may be just what you're looking for.

Inside the sleek Sy Syms building, home to Stern's art department, art students train in various disciplines such as painting, drawing, design and art history, as well as several exciting art electives such as "Creativity and Innovation," a course where students learn to think more creatively by broadening their knowledge of the avant-garde. Second year art majors can benefit from the many classes that F.I.T. offers through their joint program with Stern. Fashion design majors in particular, take a series of apparel and fashion courses. "I've taken fashion and design class for a semester where I learned the basics of drawing fashion figures, simple garments and how to render them," says senior Bayla Rabin, a fashion design major at Stern. "There's perceptions of creativity, a lab to the fashion course which helps you think of creative ways to design and gives you the inspiration to create a design, and there's also design room techniques which is a basic sewing class."

The joint program at F.I.T. is a way for students to be exposed to a broad range of fashion classes, and learn at one of the top fashion schools in the country without ever having to submit sketches to be accepted. Unfortunately, students have encountered serious issues with F.I.T., generating many complaints. "I haven't yet started at F.I.T.," says sophomore Ruthie Lapin, "but I know that students have been frustrated by the paper-work department. Students tend to get cut out of classes or dropped because

tuition hasn't been paid by Stern. We also have to be on top of the offices. It isn't fair that we should have to take care of everything."

Besides tuition payments, being a part of the joint program can be an educational struggle as students must cope with juggling their liberal arts work with the fine arts work given by Stern and F.I.T. Although to some, art may seem to be a free-floating major, those studying it maintain that its intensity constantly keeps them on their toes. "Every semester I've taken two art classes," says Lapin. "People don't realize how much time and difficulty goes into it. My art classes are harder than any of the other classes I'm taking. You're learning to look at the world in a new way."

With its intensive art education and joint program option, Stern may be the answer to fashion lovers who wish to remain in a Jewish environment. "There's a very solid art education at Stern," says Professor Gardner, the head of the art department. "The amount of art you focus on here won't be as great but the quality is just as good." While most students will agree on the quality, the quantity element has proven to be a source of frustration to some. "I think the art department is great," says one fashion design major, "but I didn't realize that you were only allowed fourteen credits at F.I.T. which isn't that much; it's only about six classes. I feel that I need more classes and skills before I go out into the world."

However, there have been instances where the skills learned at Stern College have been enough. After having interned at various design houses, students have been offered positions right out of college. "One student," says Professor Gardner, "went directly from Stern to designing the catalogs for Victoria's Secret." Stern has also developed relationships with various design houses, such as Eli Tahari, D.K.N.Y and Kenneth Cole. Many students

plan to take advantage of the opportunities that SCW has to offer. "I feel secure that when I need an internship, Stern will provide me with one," notes Lapin. "I've heard that if you create contacts and internships in college, further education isn't necessary, but if I can get a full-time job and go to an art school like Parsons, that'd be great. Art is a continual learning process for me."

Another exciting development within the fashion department at Stern is the annual fashion show which takes place in the spring at the Schottenstein Cultural Center. "We're hoping to work with designer Terry John, who has a daughter at the school," explained Jamie Gluckstadt, a senior and management major at Sy Syms, who is directing the show. "Or possibly Eli Tahari, who was featured at last year's show, might be featured again." Contributing designers must have a full clothing-line, the featured clothing will adhere to the guidelines of modesty and the audience will consist solely of females.

Furthermore, any students who want to be involved in the technicalities of the runway such as lighting, music or modeling can contact Jamie Gluckstadt for further information. Jewelry design majors may sell their jewelry afterward as well. According to Gluckstadt, the show is hoping to get coverage from Women's Wear Daily, the fashion industry's premiere trade magazine, who covered last year's event. Certain companies that attend Terry John's shows may be covering the show as well. "It's going to be awesome!" says Bayla Rabin, who is directing the show alongside Gluckstadt. "It'll present the spring line and give the Stern girls the experience of a fashion show."

Because of the provocative nature of the fashion industry, Jewish women may face some difficulties finding their place within the fashion world. "Fashion shows are on Saturday," says Professor Gardner, "and you



Bayla Rabin; Fashion Art & Design Course at FIT



Bayla Rabin; Fashion Art & Design Course at FIT



Bayla Rabin; Fashion Art & Design Course at FIT

Splurge vs. Steal



Cole Haan \$250



Aldo Luggage Purse \$29.99



Luella-Gisele Tote \$895



Rampage Strappy Tote \$38



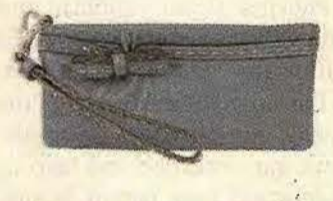
Marc Jacobs Stella Tote \$975



Target Mossimo Tote \$24.99



Burberry Wristlet Clutch \$450



Forever 21 Pretty Bow Wristlet \$10.80

have to work a show Friday night." Observant women may be more challenged to use their talent and creativity in a new way, according to Gardner. "Of course modesty is the key element and that might be disturbing to some students. There, however, have been some very successful observant design houses." Jodi Weisleder, for example, creator of Jodi International Ltd., a woman's apparel company, caters to the religious crowd with modest hemlines, longer sleeves and does not mix linen and wool. With her own label, Jodi has become a staple in various Jewish communities such as Long Island, Toronto and Brooklyn. "I'm trying to deliver exactly what they need," stated Weisleder in the spring 2003 issue of the Jewish Women's Magazine. "So many religious women are fashionable. So many of these women want what they see on the runways, but they can't afford it, or there are too many strapless, sleeveless items. I think: what

can they wear? How can I make my customers look fashionable?" Some of the students at Stern share Weisleder's convictions and intend to face the modesty issue head on. "I would like to make tzniut [modest] clothing with a twist," says Rabin, who hopes to create clothing catered toward a Jewish crowd, "with more of a modern look." "I want to create individual and personal clothes," says Lapin, who hopes to come out with a mainstream line which just happens to fit a modest profile. "Everyone is different, and I hope my clothes will allow a woman's personality to shine through. This can create an incentive for secular people to dress modestly, while allowing modest dressers to have more fun." It has been a long time since the uprising of 20,000 in 1909 in which many Jewish women participated in the International Ladies Garment Workers Union protest here in New York, beginning a women's revolution in the fashion industry. Stern college allows that revolution to continue by providing its students with the best that the fashion industry has to offer, ensuring that its students have a place within it. With only six girls, but lots of drive and opportunity, Fashion Design at Stern may just be the little major that could.

Walid Shoebat: Myth Taught as Fact

By Rachie Jacobson

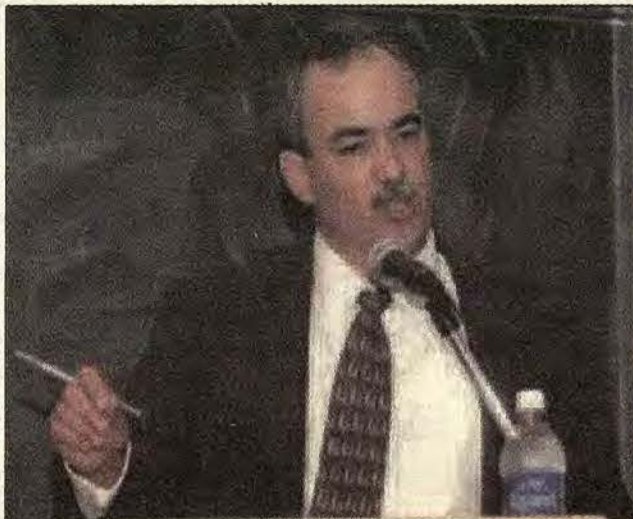
On Monday, December 6, the SCW and YC Israel Club hosted Walid Shoebat, a former PLO terrorist now turned Christian Zionist, to address Yeshiva students. In his presentation, Shoebat offered the students a first-hand account of how Palestinian children are indoctrinated with anti-Jewish sentiments and are trained to hate Jews. Raised in Beit Lechem, song lyrics such as, "We knock on the gates of heaven with the skulls of Jews," were typical and a familiar part of Shoebat's upbringing. Shoebat posited that it is unreasonable to expect one to emerge from this type of society as a peace loving Muslim.

The event, held in Weissberg Commons, drew over 300 Yeshiva University students, an unexpectedly large number. The organizers, Israel Club Presidents, Dovid Wildman and Hindy Poupko, were very pleased with the sizeable turnout. Wildman commented that, "the goal of this event was to supplement our education and help us understand how hatred permeates Palestinian society."

Shoebat explained that the realization that he had been fed lies his whole life led him to conduct a research campaign to uncover the truth about the Jewish people. Through this campaign, he discovered that unlike fundamentalist Islam, Judaism preaches peace and tolerance. Having uncovered this truth, Shoebat now shares his

knowledge with the masses, but has been excommunicated from his family and native people.

Daniel Wiesenfeld, a Yeshiva College junior, valued the personal account, because Shoebat was able to, "speak about the subject matter from a personal



Walid Shoebat

perspective - something that no Jew can do."

Shoebat also emphasized the theme of false education in his address. He clarified that at the core of Muslim indoctrination lies the consistent education of myth as fact. He explained that typical Muslim teachings include fabrications and lies, such as insistence that the Jewish temple never existed in Israel, the Arab nations were the original Canaanites, and there was never a Jewish presence in the land of Israel.

If one understands Nazi Germany then one is able to understand Fundamentalist Islamic belief, explained Shoebat. He stated that like the Nazis, fundamentalist Muslims rely on propaganda and hate campaigns to mold the public's view. He explicated that, "mediocre minds are no match for professional

propaganda."

Shoebat illustrated that "confession is the beginning of healing and there is no confession in the Middle East." He believes that the Palestinian people are not open to stopping this vicious cycle of hatred and the violence which ensues from it. However, he did assert that "the only way to fight fear is with fearlessness" and that to combat this situation Jews, and especially Jewish students, must, "become educated about the case for Israel."

The general response from the student body in attendance was very positive. Chava Turk, SCW junior, felt that "it was a very important event because it

substantiated many of our assumptions and views on the anti-Israel Palestinian education."

Despite the positive feedback, there were some who felt that Shoebat's address was unbalanced. Yael Schiller, SCW sophomore, was, "disappointed that he didn't address any anti-Israel sentiments or any of Israel's faults as well."

The students seemed engaged by Shoebat's oration and interested in the subject matter. Following the formal question and answer session, many students flocked around him to ask additional questions. Sarah Schechter, SCW sophomore, "was inspired to hear the story of someone who used their intellectual powers to break away from the brainwashing of their society and admit to historical and ideological truths."



Chanie Brandsdorfer, Chavie Schwartzbard, and Frumie Horowitz at the Israel Info Table

SCW Students Take a Stand at Union Square

By Sarah Matarrasso

Every Thursday afternoon for the past three years, three dedicated SCW students have been heading to Union Square to demonstrate against a group called Women in Black (WIB). Chavie Schwartzbard, Frumie Horowitz and Chanie Brandsdorfer have made their presence known by standing peacefully across the street while holding up signs, handing out flyers and answering questions.

According to their website, www.womeninblack.net, Women in Black is an "international peace network" that branches around the globe. The site explains, "Women in Black vigils were started in Israel in 1988 by women protesting against Israel's Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza." Many of the members here in Manhattan are Jews themselves who feel the need to make their Jewish voices heard. Dressed in black, they stand vigil every Thursday afternoon in Union Square.

In response to these silent demonstrations, David Kerner, who works for the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), decided to organize a group of volunteers and start up an "Israel Information Table." Although this program is not affiliated with the JCRC, Kerner initiated this project on his own. Because of his initiative, the Israel Information Table has been a constant presence on 14th street for almost three years now. His three dedicated SCW volunteers make it down there every week, rain or shine. They stand across the street from the Women in Black, distributing flyers which are updated on a regular basis.

According to Schwartzbard, while the flyers are meant to be attention-grabbers, they are not filled with propaganda. "I'm there because Women in Black are there, and they're the only

ones out there," Horowitz commented. "The public will get a biased view. I want to make sure that those who get information from Women in Black will also get flyers from me."

The general mission of the Israel Information Table (as seen on their website www.israelinfotable.com) is to educate the public about the "democratic underpinnings of the State of Israel, including its record on voting rights, freedom of speech and freedom of religion for its diverse population, as well as the nature of the terrorist war currently being waged against the State of Israel."

When asked to name her own personal reasons for dedicating so much time to this activity, Schwartzbard said, "I'm not there to argue with people who are virulently anti-Israel. I'm there for the people who are really interested in finding out more information or who don't know anything. I'm also there to show my support for my brothers and sisters in Israel."

The reactions elicited by the volunteers are generally positive, with many a passerby displaying interest in what they are doing. While they are generally left unscathed, there have been a number of upsetting incidents. In one situation, they were confronted by the group of WIB who shouted at them angrily. They even have a "regular" who passes by, shouting insulting remarks. Nonetheless, they do receive words of encouragement and continue to show up to represent the "other side."

The dedication displayed by this small group of students is truly remarkable. However, they are all seniors and are hoping that others will take an active interest in what they have been doing by making their presence known at Union Square. Therefore, if anyone is interested in seeing what the Israel Information Table is all about, contact the group at israelinfotable@aol.com.

Israel's Simple Soldier

By Esther Flaschner-Berko

A shy, small man with an unusually gentle voice, Ronen Tzwaig doesn't strike anyone who meets him as a hero. Quiet and unassuming, with that indisputable artistic manner, the thirty-three year old is a musician who plays the base and keyboard, while composing beautiful melodies. But Ronen also plays another tune; he is one of three family generations living in Gush Katif and a father of five who is now serving military duty in Hebron.

I met Ronen earlier this week, as he was touring the States for the first time with his rock band, Ma'arava Mikan. The band was formed four years ago,

when Ronen informally met fellow Gush Katif resident Ezra Haidu. The son of a French-Israeli professor of music, Haidu has a striking voice and demeanor to match. Haidu sang to Tzwaig's melodies and the

"All the Gush residents, we've sacrificed too many for this place."

two recruited fellow musicians and slowly released their first CD.

Ronen admits his hesitations about coming to America. "For a vacation, I wouldn't come here, since I want to stay in Israel because I love Israel," he explains, with almost a boyish indecision. "But for work, I came - and after a week, it's

enough." Tzwaig was impressed with the American Jewish community's warmth. "The Jews I met here are amazing," he remarked. "They have tremendous *hachnasat orchim* (hospitality)."

Ronen's tremendous musical talents have deep roots in his personality. He studied music at the Rimon Academy in Ramat HaSharon, and now plays, teaches and composes music. "Since I was a boy, I was attracted to music," reveals Tzwaig. "In kindergarten I told my parents I wanted to play piano...music is natural to me."

But Ronen's trip comes in the middle of his annual military service, known as *milueim*, or reserve duty. Ronen serves in the infantry unit of the Israeli

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