

THE OBSERVER

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Expanded Wireless Coverage and Sunday Caf Hours Arrive at SCW

BY ALANA RUBENSTEIN

The Student Life Committee, comprised of a diverse group of students, works in conjunction with the faculty and administration to implement changes for the betterment of students. Because of this committee, along with the Stern College for Women Student Council (SCWSC), conditions on the Beren Campus keep improving, with the intention of making SCW a full-time college that provides its students with proper services and facilities.

SCW has the reputation of being a three and a half -day-a-week school, a place where students come to learn and then leave as soon as their last classes let out on Thursday afternoon. As a result, many of the school's facilities have been open and available for a limited amount of

hours, both over the weekend and during the week. This "took away from the level of seriousness [of the university]," observed Tiferet Unterman, co-chair of the Student Life Committee.

Presently, this is all changing. "Our school is growing and becoming a seven-day-a-week school," said Deena Hassan, president of SCWSC. "It's important for students on campus to know the facilities are here for them seven days a week and not just four." To ensure such a feeling, the library, computer lab, and cafeteria hours have all recently been expanded.

In the past, the computer lab opened at 8:30 a.m., giving students with a 9 a.m. class little time to utilize the computers in the morning. If a student had to

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Midtown Eruv to Encompass Beren Campus

BY AVIVA SEGELMAN

The long awaited Midtown eruv is ready and waiting to be built, and the physical structure will go up as soon as the necessary funds are raised. This eruv is the longtime dream and recent project of Rabbi Gideon Shloush (YC '93, REITS '96), rabbi of Congregation Talmud Torah Adereth El on East 29th Street. Yeshiva University has joined with Adereth El and the entire Murray Hill and Gramercy Park community to make this vision a reality.

Having an eruv in this area is what Rabbi Shloush describes as a long time dream. For years, some Jewish members of the Midtown communities of Murray Hill and Gramercy Park had been relying on the Manhattan eruv to carry on Shabbat. This practice

was recently challenged at a meeting of Manhattan rabbis, where it was decided that the Manhattan eruv is no longer acceptable, and that it can no longer be depended on. At this time, the Upper West Side had had their eruv for many years, and the Upper East Side community coupled with them to extend that eruv across the park.

This uptown eruv does not extend past 58th or 55th street, depending on the area, which leaves out the entire Midtown community. The combination of the new Upper East Side eruv initiative, and the lack of an acceptable Manhattan eruv, gave a sense of urgency to the long existing problem. The Midtown communities, led by Congregation Talmud Torah Adereth El and Rabbi Shloush, began the push for their own

eruv.

Rabbi Shloush has worked with the Bet Din Machon L'Hora'ah of Monsey, an "extremely knowledgeable and reliable" bet din, which is also responsible for the Upper West Side eruv. The new eruv will extend from 55th Street to Houston Street, and from 6th Avenue to, but not including, the FDR Drive. At this point, the eruv is set and ready to be physically built, and is being held up only by lack of financial backing. The eruv will be funded by both YU and the local community, and according to Rabbi Shloush, YU promises to be an important partner in this project. "We are doing everything we can, and we hope to get this project off the ground as soon as possible."

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Financial Aid on the Rise in Response to Tuition Increase

BY YAFFI SPODEK

In every university, tuition is raised by a certain percentage every year, and YU is no exception to that rule. According to Robert Friedman, university director of Student Finance, this annual increase is not by a set amount; rather, it depends on market forces.

For the 2004-2005 year, the base tuition for YU was \$23,200, and including the comprehensive fee for dorming and the cafeteria, it totaled \$30,960. For the current year of 2005-2006, there was a 9.06% increase, making the base tuition \$25,600 and with the comprehensive fee, the full amount is \$33,980.

"Whatever the increase is, that money goes primarily right back into the classroom, and secondarily to student life," Friedman explained, when asked where the tuition money is spent. Friedman noted that since President Joel has taken office, his message has been that "we have to do things to enrich academics, and to increase the number of top-ranked professors."

YU has had to create a campus environment for students, replete with residence halls, cafeterias, and meeting places, and it has filled its teacher vacancies with top-notch educators. That, Friedman maintains, has been "the focus of the president" since

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Architectural Designing for New Beit Midrash Underway Formal Options Expected By Purim

BY TIFERET UNTERMAN

Over the past few months, architects have been hard at work, calculating and evaluating a respectable place which will house a new beit midrash for the Beren Campus. The beit midrash will be centrally located at 245 Lex, the main building on the Beren Campus, allowing for easy access to the student body.

While not ready to announce any final plans yet, Jeff Rosengarten, Chair of the Space Planning Committee, expects that near Purim, concrete plans will be presented. He did assert that there have been requests to build the beit midrash on the first floor. In the coming weeks, the admin-

istration will be shown plan options by the architects, while students will be asked to react and assist in designing the interior. Suggestions from students for additions to the beit midrash include a washing area near the entrance, computers with the Bar Ilan program installed, standing *shtenders*, as well as many additional *seforim*. An official student representative committee will likely be formed to fully evaluate student needs and give input for the final decisions.

Before any architectural

designs are concretized, the intentions for the exterior and for the first floor of the building must be mapped out. Programmatic decisions of the exact location for the beit midrash can then be determined. The beit midrash is going to be doubled in size and

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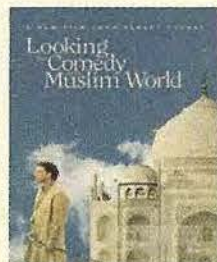


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Midtown Eruv

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The impact of the eruv on the Stern community promises to be significant. When asked about what a difference the eruv will make, Dean Efreim Nulman responded, "It's a good thing, it's a positive thing, and it will make everyone's daily life here on Shabbat better and easier." SCWSC President Deena Hassan commented, "The fact that YU is financially supporting an eruv that encompasses our campus shows that they are making Shabbat enhancement a priority." On a personal note, she added, "And it will be nice to use my Shabbat *siddur* again." For students who live in independent housing in Windsor Court and 184 Lexington, staying in their apartments for Shabbat is not an option, because keys cannot be carried throughout the building's stairwells or hallways. An eruv

would make it possible for all Stern students to stay in for Shabbatonim, without the current hassle of finding a room to stay in.

Rabbi Shloush describes this event as monumental. "We had women with young children who couldn't push their carriages to shul on Shabbat and ended up being stuck at home," he said. "Having an eruv is not only important for them, but it also means we can do things like invite a scholar-in-residence who has kids, without having to worry. From a communal perspective, this eruv is an important step." He anticipates that it will be a draw in terms of new community and synagogue members. "An eruv is a key attraction for people to want to live in a community." Adereth El now draws around 150 people each Shabbat morning, a significantly higher

number than just a few years ago, and a number that Rabbi Shloush hopes will continue to increase.

"We cater to so many different people," Rabbi Shloush explains. The daily *minyanim* are extremely well attended, mostly by businessmen who work in the area. There is a nursery school, community learning events and speakers, and a notable number and array of outreach programs, such as Beginner's Services, a Beginner's Talmud class, and a crash course in Hebrew reading. There is weekly one-on-one learning with Stern College women, which is one of the ways the local community and the Stern community come together. In the words of Rabbi Shloush, "The eruv is another wonderful way that our shul and the Stern have been able to partner together to benefit the larger Jewish community."

Student Services Extend Hours

continued from front page

finish a paper or print out an assignment, she would find herself rushing to do so. Similarly, many students felt enormous pressure to finish what they were doing by midnight when the room would close.

Now, the lab is open at 7 a.m., the same time the SCW building opens, and does not close until 1 a.m. on most weekdays. And while no official data has been collected at this time (the university can track when students log on and off the computer), "it looks like it has been used," said Tom Oleszczuk, the manager of Academic Computing at YU. "Students seem to know it has been open."

Similarly, both the reference and upstairs levels of the Heidi Steinberg Library are opening earlier. The library used to open at 9 a.m., making it difficult for students to check out and return books before class. It also prevented students from having a quiet place to study before a first period exam. Now, the library opens at 8:30 a.m. during the week.

While sufficient library hours are clearly necessary in any serious college, students have not yet been taking advantage of this adjustment. "At this point the attendance is weak," said Edith Lubetski, the head librarian at the Heidi Steinberg Library. Vivian Moskowitz, another librarian, agreed. "People don't tend to come at 8:30," she said. "[They are] not banging down the

doors." The fact that this schedule change was made only recently, as well as a lack of adequate advertising until this point, could partly account for the low attendance.

Though all the modifications add to the "qualitative growth of the university," according to Unterman, the third change has been the most publicized and best received. The Kushner Dining Hall is now open on Sunday afternoons for lunch from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. Previously, the cafeteria had only been open for dinner, discouraging many students from staying on the Beren Campus over the weekend or returning early on Sundays.

"It was a need which needed to be fulfilled for a long time," said Unterman, a fact proven by the overwhelming attendance at the inaugural lunch. "I really think it's a good thing," expressed Miriam Maruani, a freshman from Montreal. "I remember every time waiting till four and it was annoying." Hassan has also received a lot of positive feedback.

"I think the school is really trying to make things better," remarked Deborah Anstading (SCW '07). Yet, "we still have a long way to go," she added, an opinion that will not be going unnoticed.

In addition to the extension of service hours that SCW facilities now offer, Academic Computing has recently announced the expansion of wireless Internet coverage on the

Beren Campus. Now, the Hedi Steinberg Library, the Schottenstein Residence Hall (both the ground floor lounge and the 8th floor lounge), the 36th Street Residence Hall (both ground floor lounges), and the Schottenstein Cultural Center on (4th floor) provide wireless service.

The Student Life Committee is in the process of making further changes to make the SCW experience more enjoyable and accommodating. Currently on the committee's future agenda are plans to extend the Thursday night cafeteria hours from 7 to 7:30 p.m. and to improve the workout machines in the Schottenstein Residence Hall. Additionally, they would like to provide students with the means to access their individual accounts on the library's computers, as well as to require professors to post syllabi and book requirements before the semester starts so that students can get their books in a timely fashion prior to the first week of school. The committee is also discussing expanding and improving the Beren Campus's athletics facilities, but this is a more complex and long-term issue.

"When we see a need, we try to change things," said Hassan, explaining the various teams working on behalf of the student body. Therefore, "keep on complaining," she encouraged with a smile.

Beit Midrash Plans

continued from front page

occupancy capacity, SCW Dean Karen Bacon explained, so the placing of the beit midrash will depend on the amount of continuous space various floors can offer.

Currently, the main beit midrash on Beren Campus is located on the sixth floor of 245 Lex. In 1992, students expressed a need for a beit midrash, articulating a void felt by the absence of a central environment for learning and davening. A solution was reached by knocking down two classrooms on the sixth floor to create the beit midrash which is still in use today in 245 Lex. The beit midrash now holds space for 50 students, with a modest selection of *seforim* to learn from. Fourteen years later, Stern College, Sy Syms, and the Talmud Program student body are finding this outdated space lacking in its ability to sufficiently provide for the learning and davening needs of students.

While initial stages of architectural planning for the beit

midrash have begun, many other factors must be considered before the final decisions. These factors include the plans for the Heidi Steinberg Library and Kushner Dining Hall. Impractical in design, the library, split between different floors and wings of the building, creates obstacles for growth and harbors inefficiency. The Kushner dining area sorely lacks sufficient space for students. All of these major projects need to be accessed and instituted into a workable architectural framework to reach a final and appropriate building plan for the renovations which will take place.

Although the process is admittedly complicated and tedious, Rosengarten is optimistic about all the changes which will be taking place, saying "the good news is at the end of this we can end up with a building far more attractive, far more functional." The beit midrash especially will be a long-awaited for and welcome addition.

Financial Aid Increases

continued from front page

he was elected. Friedman suggested that once these teaching positions are filled, and student life is sufficiently improved, maybe there would be a smaller tuition increase, perhaps of only 6% next year.

As tuition increases, the scholarship budget does as well, and according to Friedman, "people recognize that." Scholarships are given because YU needs to be affordable, and it wants the maximum number of students to attend, especially in light of President Joel's talks of "increasing enrollment" in the coming years. YU does plan to offer more scholarships in an effort to achieve this goal. In the 2004-2005 year, there was a total of \$19 million given out in scholarship money, and in 2005-2006 that figure grew to \$23 million. In the 2004-2005 year, 1,498 students were given some kind of financial aid, and about 50 to 60 people received loans. So far, in 2005-2006, 1,525 people received financial assistance, and requests are still coming.

The overwhelming majority of scholarships are need-based, as opposed to merit-based. In 2005-2006, only 15% of the \$23 mil-

lion, totaling about \$3.5 million, was allotted for merit-based scholarships. The remaining 85%, approximately \$19.5 million, went to need-based recipients of financial aid. Most students who request financial aid receive it in some form, since "only those who really need it ask for it," explains Friedman.

According to the Student Aid Department, financial need is defined as "the difference between YU's cost of attendance, including living expenses, and the Expected Family Contribution (EFC), according to the information reported on FAFSA." All the money is given through FAFSA, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, and the amount awarded is determined by a qualification process and a specific formula, all calculated through FAFSA. Most need-based packages consist of "grants, low-interest loans, or work-study awards, and are awarded for one academic year at a time." A student can be eligible for financial aid for up to five full years.

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OPINIONS

Torah and "Wissenschaft": From the Heights to Bavaria

BY YARDANNA PLATT

Everyone remembers their first time back from Poland: it is not easy to forget a place where destruction is ubiquitous and where the reality of murder is so unbearably trenchant. Likewise, before embarking on Bridges of Understanding's trip to Germany, I was not only fearful about having to relive this experience, but was also apprehensive about visiting the place where the Holocaust was originally unleashed. In fact, it took a few weeks of telling my grandparents that I was going to western Hungary and the Czech Republic for winter break before I could come to terms with where I was going and why. I know now that I went on this trip because I had questions that demanded answers. Like many others, I wanted to understand how "refined" countries succumb to perpetrating such ruthless and irrevocable misdemeanors, and if it is truly possible to vindicate those collaborating nations for committing such ruthless and unwarranted thefts of life.

Ironically enough, if I departed for Germany with a thousand questions, it seems to me now that I have emerged from this

experience with two thousand more. Our group leader, Aliza Abrams, assured us that this was not going to be another Poland trip, and it became apparent to us that we would not be returning in the same manner: this experience was far from the emotionally draining nightmare of visiting Poland which had left me shattered and dispirited. In fact, this trip to Germany was the most thought-provoking, illuminating and inspiring trip of my life. My trip to Poland left me feeling dejected with the heavy shackles of commemoration pressing hard against me, but I returned from



Munich clock with dueling Bavarian and German knights

Germany inspired and enthused, with memories of the past thrusting me forward.

The trip to Germany was not merely a one-dimensional examination of a bleak past and its aftermath; rather it was an eye-opening three-dimensional investigation into our history, present and future. In attempting to understand the continuum between the Germany of yesterday, today and tomorrow, I saw that my questions were much more complex and multifaceted than I initially realized. It became clear that the search for truth was not readily attainable in nine days

of paying tribute to concentration camps, visiting Jewish museums, meeting with governmental officials, and seeing the different ethnic communities of Berlin. In nine days we glimpsed the courageous integrity and sincerity of a woman whose parents selflessly saved multitudes of Jewish lives, and also listened intently and approvingly to the Bavarian Ministry of Education's report on Germany's World War II-centered high school curriculums. Conversely, in the same week, we were touched by piercing Holocaust memorials, and had glared contemptuously and despairingly at a group of German teenagers whose boisterous comportment while treading through Sachsenhausen was nowhere near respectful or decent.

Interestingly enough, these frequent paradoxical experiences did not frustrate us to a disconcerting capitulation. Rather, they prompted us to ask more questions about what happened to our brethren in a place that they called home, and what can be done for the thousands of Russian Jews who still do. We found that the future of these Jews was the only issue that needed to be resolved, and that our interaction

with them was the most important connection to be fostered. I cannot say that I remember all of the structural minutiae and architectural intricacies of the Judische Museum which coalesced to symbolize the void that Germany feels because of the "disappearance" of its Jewry, but I do remember Elana Stein's *shiur* explaining German halakhic custom on a train trekking through the heart of a land where Torah has been silenced. I also certainly remember the warm appreciation of a bride and groom who were so overjoyed by our presence that they attempted in three languages to return to us some of the Torah that we gave to them, and to thank us for making their *sheva berakhot* so full and meaningful.

When it came down to it, it mattered very little to us whether our "*El Maleh Rachamim*" in Sachsenhausen was loud enough for the surrounding locals to hear; what mattered to us was both imparting our thoughts and hearing the voices of the Jewish communities that are struggling with so much strain, get so much resolve to pick up the pieces of their shattered lives that were deprived of Torah in Russia and Germany alike. The feelings of

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Letter to the Editor

Dear Editors,

Thank you for publishing Jackie Fast's article on the Halachic Organ Donor Society in a past edition of the Observer. The article was extremely informative on an issue which, sadly, many Jews are totally unaware. This ignorance is the reason that thousands in the United States and hundreds in Israel die needlessly due to the inability to obtain a needed organ to live. Many Jews, including Orthodox Jews normally well versed in practical halacha, perpetuate a knee-jerk reaction to organ donation. Without taking a moment to properly understand this potentially life-saving concern, these Jews actually dismiss the halacha entirely.

It is unanimous among the *poskim* that harvesting organs from an already dead body for *pikuach nefesh* (saving a life) is permitted. Where the rabbis differ, however, is the point a person is considered dead enough to take these organs.

As Fast explains in her article, the definition of death is a major dispute among the rabbis, this disagreement having huge ramifications on when organ transplants are permitted. Whatever stance a person chooses to follow, the Halachic Organ Donor Society offers an organ donor card that presents two options, allowing each Jew to donate according to his or her religious beliefs. We encourage the readers of the Observer to consult a competent rabbi, and obtain a donor card with the preferred option selected. Organ transplants save lives; please, choose life!

Sincerely,
Sarah Leibert, SSSB '06
&
Laya Pelzner, SCW '06

The Strangers Who Were Not So Strange

BY AYOL SAMUELS

After two flights, a five-hour van ride, and an ascent by night in the back of a pickup truck, we arrived at the village. There we were, a group of 16 Yeshiva and Stern College students atop a mountain in Honduras with some 30 pairs of eyes staring curiously at us. It was us, the rich "gringos" with the bright light exuding from our flashlight-clad foreheads, and them, the poor Hondurans, coming to greet us with their best clothes—for the men, the dirty jeans and American t-shirts. After some awkward "holas" and "mucho gustos" and a failed attempt to build a conversation off of smiles and nods, I realized just how large the division was between the two groups. Interestingly, this feeling aroused in me more a sense of pity than a

desire to help and attempt to minimize this division. After all, you pity those you cannot identify with; you help those you can understand. I neither identified with, nor understood, this culture.

With these sentiments I joined my peers for our first Honduran meal cooked by our amazing chef, Doña Erlinda. We sat in Don Mario's living room, a small space with no furniture other than the chairs we were sitting on and a few bags of rice. The only ornamentation was a colorful piece of paper on the wall with psalm 121 (*esah einai*) as well as a diploma of one of their children. Two curtains, on opposite sides of the room, led to the bedrooms, and the far side opened to the kitchen, a space with a few shelves, a brick oven, and a slit in the wall that they



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It was Controversial, and It was Courage: Remembering Betty Friedan

Back From a Village Above the Clouds

BY TIFERET UNTERMAN

"That's it?" I thought as I hung up from my phone call with the Riverside Memorial Chapel. It was that simple. I found out what day and where the funeral would be from CNN.com and then called up the chapel asking what time the funeral would be. 11 a.m., I was told. They didn't ask me who I was or if I was invited. It seemed too regular to be the funeral of a historic personality. So in the spirit of using the greater Manhattan area as a tool for our edification, two friends from Stern College and I hopped on a subway, and made our way to the Upper West Side for the funeral of Betty Friedan.

Who would attend the funeral? Who would speak? Would we really be allowed to attend? We were expecting big. We were expecting commotion and droves of people who would be eager to be part of this historic memorial. We were expecting student representation from all sorts of universities coming to pay tribute to the person who named the unnamed problem and thereby opened up the minds of the American people.

So we were not surprised to pass a row of well-stationed newscasters and photographers as we stepped into the entrance of the chapel. In truth, I thought we

would be refused entrance, or have to present ID or something. But before we could hesitate, a helpful attendant just pointed us to the elevator. "Second floor," he said.



Once upstairs, we entered the high domed chapel. It was full, but not overwhelmingly packed. There were no newscasters allowed inside, no swarms of people waiting to get in. It was actually pretty simple and private. No fanfare, no glitz, just a few flowers and a plain pine casket. After a few short minutes of seat arranging and rearranging, the ceremony began. The rabbi began by reading the sobering excerpt from Kohelet, "*la kol zman vaet*," "for every time and moment," followed by an explanation from Ben Sira on the unique and eternal aspects of dying with a *shem tov*, a good name. After these short divrei Torah, the rabbi sung a hauntingly beautiful rendition of Tehillim

23, a text appropriate for a woman who went through turbulent times with faith and courage. The speakers were then quickly listed; only their names were mentioned. The ceremony seemed almost surreal in its simple and humble proceedings. At first I thought it strange for someone who so impacted the face of America should have so modest a funeral. Amitai Etzioni, a well-known communitarian who met and befriended Friedan while he was teaching at Columbia University, explained this reality well, saying, "Betty did not have a sense of self-importance. She was dedicated to the cause, not to herself." I realized that this funeral just reflected Betty's approach to her mission in life.

Betty Friedan, born February 4, 1921, is best known for her society-shattering work, "The Feminine Mystique," published 1966, which jumpstarted the second wave of the women's rights movement. She was integral in helping to create and then became the first president of NOW, the National Organization for Women, which is today the largest feminist organization in America. As part of this organization, Friedan helped lobby Congress on issues of equal protection, equal pay, and other sig-

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BY SHOSHANA FRUCHTER

I've just returned from the most productive week I could ever have imagined.

The trip was indescribable. I can offer you the short version: it was an amazing trip on every level.

For more information you'll have to read the whole version:

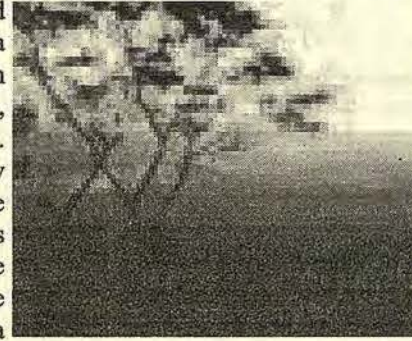
Our team, a group of about 15 YU students, spent the week helping to build a school in a tiny village in San Jeranimo, Honduras. Stationed way up high in the rural mountains of Honduras, we lived above the clouds for a week.

Rising by 6 a.m., we had ample time during the day for our projects. Upon arrival we were told that if we were interested we could also paint a world map mural for the village on the school house. We formed an art committee and got to work. Charting a map and drawing the world to scale is a lot more difficult than I'd have thought but together we created an amazing mural, complete with each country labeled—in Spanish.

The village was unreal. The

natives of Las Bendiciones ("The Blessings") displayed admirable faith and commitment to their Christianity. They live by a value system a bit different than ours which is extremely down to earth and sincere. It is a slow-paced lifestyle which allows for the development of interpersonal relationships. We played hand games with the children and discussed life with the adults.

The children were on winter break while we were there, so the women on the trip were able to stay in the original school house which was serving as the classroom



(despite its lack of chairs, tables and books; all they had was 2 pencils) for 60 students and two teachers. As we all know, running a classroom like that is practically impossible. Noticing that, the village approached PAG, Proyecto Aldea Global, a non-profit organization in Honduras which helps strengthen communities in the face of poverty, and asked for support in building another school house. (You can visit www.paghonduras.org for more information). The

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POINT-COUNTERPOINT

A Women's Megillah Reading at SCW?

BY SHOSHANA FRUCHTER AND ESTHER GENUTH

As the month of Adar approaches many preparations are performed in anticipation of the Purim holiday. *Mishloach manot* baskets are assembled, money is set aside for the poor, and children begin to deliberate over their costume choices and preferences. As the season of national pride and triumph approaches it would be interesting and appropriate to evaluate the pride and unity of the institution we attend as students within the context of *megillah* reading.

Introducing a women's *megillah* reading at SCW would do much to enhance the religious atmosphere and experience on campus. Without a *minyan* on campus and a set *shiur* time in the morning there is an inevitable lack of centralized religious activity. An SCW *megillah* reading would succeed in assembling the students of Stern College in a religious setting as well as enhancing the sense of community among students. Torah involvement in the context of the *tzibur* would create a whole new level of seriousness in our attitude

toward Purim and a much deeper connection to the holiday.

On a practical level, a women's *megillah* reading at SCW would solve a variety of inconveniences that arise. Finding men to constitute a *minyan* would be unnecessary, as would the commute of SCW students uptown to hear the *megillah*. Perhaps the many Stern College students who would normally have to travel all the way home to fulfill the *mitzvah* would opt to remain in school for Purim.

Given the countless number of capable and religious women at SCW, a *megillah* reading would provide an opportunity to display leadership qualities in the context of religious services. This could be a priceless outlet for more active female Jewish involvement in a holiday that celebrates the fortitude of Esther Hamalka, a woman whose actions and commitment to the Jewish nation helped shape the course of history.

Another group of people, this time of women, *laining* from the *megillah* is not necessary at SCW. True, it may be allowed according to the letter of the law, but a separate women's reading is not in the spirit of the law. Jewish holidays in general, and Purim—a commemoration of the joint effort of our dispersed ancestors' victory over the powerful Persian empire—specifically, are kept to celebrate the unity we've championed in the past and to ensure the continuance of that unified community. Breaking away from a community, be it the YU *minyan* and *laining* available to SCW students or women's hometown shuls, reads the exact opposite message.

Besides the separatist connotation of a breakaway *megillah* reading, there is another, more contested issue at hand, namely the women's *megillah* reading. Women's over-involvement in religious activities is a sticky subject. The Jewish women's role in contemporary society is widely debated. For hundreds of years women participated in *megillah* reading via listening to men read it, they did not create their own readings; why should we start now?

Any argument of convenience is not

very strong: tens of readings are available in the city, a bunch of them conveniently located right near TAC's Purim *chagigah* in Belfer Hall, and there is always a small group of YC students who are kind enough to come downtown to *lain* for the women who stay in Stern for Purim.

At the core of this issue is the marginalizing effect that a women's *megillah* reading will have on those who participate, an effect which extends to the entire SCW community. *Mitzvot* that women can just as easily fulfill by participating in the general (co-ed) community do not warrant their deliberate separation from the crowd, an action which screams of a feminist character. The formation of such a group flaunts the defensive "women can do it, too" attitude which is not consistent with Jewish values, since we believe that men and women have different roles in society, and need not assume each others' just because they can.

Breaking away from the *tzibur*, abandoning tradition, and aligning oneself with a controversial political stance are aspects of a women's *megillah* reading at Stern which led one woman who dorms on the second floor of Brookdale Hall to say, "It just doesn't feel right."

The Power is in Your Hands

BY LAYA PELZNER

How many of us would recognize our congressional representatives if we saw them walking down the street? I would assume that many of us know the names of our congressmen and senators. We may even know their stances on some of their major policies. Yet, I am convinced that if 90% of us were sitting next to them, we would not realize who they are.

Why is that? If we view ourselves as educated individuals, what prevents us from being more aware of those people who, at least in an ideal world, represent our interests when it comes to passing legislation?

One answer to these questions lies in the fact that most people do not believe that we can connect to people in positions of power. Anyone who has tried to set up an appointment to meet with a politician, or anyone else with a position of power, can attest that it is not an easy task. Even after spending a considerable amount of time contacting their offices, people have to settle with a brief meeting with one of their aides. This can be disappointing and can concretize the notion that people in power do not have time for the "average man."

Until recently, I may have sided with the view that, while our actions can initiate change, the actual politicians and government officials are beyond our reach. But

that changed when I helped register Congressman Anthony Weiner, Congresswoman Nita Lowy, Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations Dan Gillerman, and other such dignitaries at the America Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) Annual Northeast Regional Dinner.

True, I did not have the opportunity to get involved in lengthy discussions with them. Nonetheless, this was a paradigm shift which taught me a lesson in initiating change, in both the political and the general arenas.

Yeshiva University offers students interested in politics and lobbying several ways to become active. Congressman Weiner spoke at this year's Political Science Shabbaton, and the Yeshiva University Public Action Committee (YUPAC), YU Israel Club and the Joseph Dunner Political Science Society are organizing a lobbying mission to Washington D.C. Utilizing opportunities such as these is the first step people interested in social change can take to meet politicians and optimize success in instigating change.

Ethics of the Fathers teaches, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And when I am for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?" This dictum is a model for our behavior. We have a moral obligation to stand up for issues we care deeply about.

Yeshiva University provides students with a unique atmosphere to get involved in exciting social action initiatives. Take the organization Not Now Not Ever. YU students mobilized thousands of people and received major media coverage by creating a rally against the genocide in Darfur. Some people may have been skeptical about the large scale of the event and the high caliber of the attendees, but when people feel empowered, they have the potential to accomplish the unimaginable.

Getting involved with organizations such as Not Now Not Ever and AIPAC provide students with a sense of purpose. They also enable students to interact with a large network of students from other universities to promote the causes we care about.

The AIPAC Northeast Regional Dinner had student volunteers from schools such as Columbia, Barnard and Rutgers. College students generally focus their efforts on their own campuses, and this is a completely rational tendency. YU students, like students at other schools, focus most of their energies on building our own sense of community.

Yet sometimes it is appropriate for us to step outside of the wall of our immediate community and work with others to combine our skills and best utilize our abilities. While we can turn to other colleges to learn from their modes of instigating social change, we can also supply other students

and professionals with our unique perspective.

As an Orthodox institution, we believe that we should act as a light unto the other nations. Yet before we can do this we must be a light unto ourselves and our fellow Jews. In many contexts, Orthodox Jews stand out. If we have the confidence to take advantage of our surroundings and get involved with issues of social change, we can have a tremendous effect on the Jewish community and the world at large.

We are all aware of the ripple effect. One action can produce countless outcomes. Whether a night of volunteering at an AIPAC dinner opens up the door to have a discussion with elected officials, or a conversation with a friend at another school results in creating a venue for contacting members of Congress, we should not underestimate our potential.

The United States Army boasts the slogan "We Want You." It is no coincidence that one of the most powerful armies in the world uses a slogan emphasizing the power of an individual. Every person has the ability to win battles. For most of us, those battles will not occur on a battlefield. They will occur when we each pursue the causes we feel personal connections towards and take the necessary strides to take action.

Building Houses with Bnei Akiva

BY ARIELLA NADLER

Hailing from Canada, I never imagined that I would ever end up spending a week of my life in Eastman, a small town in southern Georgia, with a mere population of 5,393 people. Nevertheless, that's where I found myself this past winter break, building houses with 19 of the most energetic, entertaining and fun-loving people that I have ever met. I was on a Habitat for Humanity mission, organized through Bnei Akiva by Aaron Steinberg and Sammi Varnai, both students at YU.

The adventure began on the first *motzei* Shabbat of vacation. We all piled into two big vans, ready to spend the next 15.5 hours with people that we barely knew. Those 15 hours turned into 24, but by the end of the day we had all made new friends and were really excited to get to work. Upon arrival, we met Dean Smith, the person in charge of Habitat for Humanity in Eastman. He told us the plan for the week ahead and got us pumped up and ready to go. We got to work early the next morning and were assigned to an assortment of jobs. These included building a storage shed, cleaning out a warehouse, and removing lots of dead trees, roots and stumps from empty lots so that new houses could be built on them. The work was intense, but it was a lot of fun. We worked hard throughout the week, but we still managed to go bowling; visit Walmart every few hours; befriend Tooby the dog; tour Macon, Georgia; take a 25-cent trolley; meet lots of people named Donald (well fine, only two...maybe 3?); enjoy many delicious "family" meals; have a rocking bonfire; eat lots of snack packs; take over 900 pictures and 45

videos; and, of course, laugh...a lot!

Along with having all this fun, I gained many important lessons on the trip, specifically from the people who worked for Habitat for Humanity. They were prime examples of those who give their lives towards helping others. Their job is to organize and build houses for those who cannot afford proper living quarters. They work each day to give families dignity and a greater sense of normalcy in their lives. In addition, the people we met taught me the importance of having a little patience. Although they were profes-



sional builders, and most of us were novices, they took the time to teach us how to use power tools, hammer in a nail, and use a drill. Instead of taking over and finishing the job at a much faster pace, they gave us the opportunity to learn and acquire a new skill. We did, showing how much can be accomplished with a little patience.

They also taught me the importance of open-mindedness. Before our group of 20 Jewish students arrived in Eastman, the people we worked with knew very little about Judaism and had most likely never met a Jew before. From the start, Dean told us that he knew nothing about our religion, but was ready to soak it up like a sponge. He was always excited to

learn a new aspect about Judaism, or a new Hebrew word, and gladly made accommodations according to our specific needs, such as giving us the day off on Friday so that we could travel to Atlanta for Shabbat.

My experience in Eastman was a lot of fun and taught me many important life lessons, but what truly made the trip unforgettable were the incredible people that comprised my group. Not only were they were the funniest bunch around (at any given moment I could be sure to find at least one person doing something totally off-the-wall and wacky), but

they were also really friendly and kind people, and it was truly enjoyable to be with them. I could not have asked for a greater group of people to spend my winter break with. I also cannot believe that I had the privilege of taking part in such a great trip. To sum it up in three words, "it was *amazing*."

Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organization whose mission is to eliminate poverty housing. Groups such as ours provide volunteer labor, and others donate money and materials, so that the houses can be sold at no profit and financed with affordable no-interest mortgages.

CORRECTIONS

In the January issue of The Observer the following misinformation was printed:

In the article entitled "Yossi Olmert Addresses YU Students on Democracy in Lebanon," the article refers to the "Mennonite" people and it should have read "Maronite."

In the article entitled "Former UN Ambassador Richard Holbrooke Presents 'New Idealism,'" the article neglects to note that the conference was co-sponsored by the Dr. Marcia Robbins-Wilf Scholar-in-Residence Program and the Rabbi Arthur Schneier Center for International Affairs at Yeshiva University.

A Message from the Student Life Committee:
Please make sure to separate your recycling from your garbage and place them in their appropriate bins.



HILLARY LEWIN
TAC PRESIDENT

Over winter break, I was privileged to be in Israel to participate in YU's winter mission "B'Leivav Shalem," which was coordinated through TAC, CJF, Israel Club, and YU Israel. The mission was dedicated to learning about and helping those who have experienced the disengagement. Together with about 100 students from YU, we visited the "communities" that people are living in post-disengagement and distributed money that we raised on campus. Additionally, we worked in a greenhouse for a day, listened to a panel discussion about different aspects of the disengagement and had a closing dinner with Israeli university students from diverse backgrounds to discuss Jewish identity, politics, and life. The mission was intense, awakening, and full of raw emotions.

One of the first communities we visited is called "Ir Emunah" (City of Faith). We had the opportunity to hear from a woman living there who told us about her experiences leaving her beautiful home in Gush Katif, moving to a pavilion in the middle of nowhere and attempting to build a new life with her fellow community members. After hearing her speak, I understood why the community is called "City of Faith." The people living there are resilient, unified and utterly dedicated to and optimistic about rebuilding their new community on sacred land. They have recently moved into dilapidated, second-hand caravans with no running water since they were unable to stay in tents due to the rainy winter season.

The members of the community were able to assemble a two-story make-shift school in a period of three weeks. Luckily, the residents of Ir Emunah have been able to maintain a sense of continuity for their children of their lives in Gush Katif by employing the same school teachers and keeping the children in the same classes. The woman who spoke to us tried to provide some comic relief by telling a story about how she wakes up in the middle of the night to other children crying for their parents to take them to the bathroom. When the parents don't wake up, she will call out to her friends to wake up and take their child to the bathroom, which is about a five-minute walk from the caravan site. She was laughing while relaying her anecdote, but I wasn't sure how to react.

Another community we visited was made up of tents on the side of a highway. One of the residents there took us on a "tour" of the tents where we saw a kindergarten class during nap time. Politics aside, the juxtaposition of four-year-olds napping in a tent next to a highway of bustling traffic and honking trucks was appalling. A 65-year-old woman who has been living in the Jerusalem Gold Hotel expressed frustration that she has not been able to sit down to a quiet home-cooked dinner with her husband in five months because the only semblance of a kitchen she has is a hotel mini-fridge which can hold at most a few bottles of soda and some fruit. I left the community tour feeling physically ill and emotionally distressed.

The second day of the mission was dedicated to hands-on volunteer work in a greenhouse. We helped a woman reassemble her greenhouse that she moved from Gush Katif to Ashkelon by planting, weeding, and performing other manual tasks. It felt good to contribute by repairing some of the damages that were done to this greenhouse; however, I still felt uneasy.

That evening, we had a closing dinner which was called "Panim El Panim" (Face to Face). We were privileged to be addressed by President Joel while dining with Jewish Israeli univer-

sity students from diverse cultural backgrounds and religious affiliations. Throughout dinner, we had a program that was designed to provoke thoughtful discussions about Jewish identity and Israeli politics. We introduced ourselves around the table with our names, and identified our greatest heroes. We then were asked to define our Jewish identity through questions such as: "What type of Jew are you: universal, American-Jew, Jewish-American, Israeli-Jew or Jewish-Israeli?" We were also shown a short video clip of an advertisement with the colors of the Israeli flag and two separate triangles. This image stirred passionate conversation about the current "state" of Israel. The questions that challenged our Jewish identity helped to break down the barriers between us, so that we could communicate with and try to understand one another with open hearts and open minds.

President Joel mentioned in his speech that the very act of *dattim* (religious Jews) and *chilonim* (secular Jews) from America, South Africa, Israel and Ethiopia sitting down to dinner "Panim El Panim," to discuss our places within the vast spectrum of Jewry and to express our political opinions to achieve a greater understanding and respect for one another is precisely the remedy of our current struggle as a people. While I was in Israel, the separation of the triangles on Israeli flag was so tangible to me. I realized that the only way those triangles are going to come together again is not by picking weeds in a greenhouse, but by taking the time to communicate with and to attempt to understand one another, regardless of our differences. Although it is not easy to put this idea into practice, and not all problems can be solved over dinner, I believe this initiative is imperative if we want to keep the rest of our flag.



SHARON SHMUEL
RECORDING SECRETARY OF
SCWSC

The *gemara* in Sanhedrin 23a brings to light a dispute between R' Meir and the Sages. In a Jewish civil court there are three judges. R' Meir says that the prosecutor and defendant of a case each pick one judge and then come together to agree on a third. The Sages disagree, saying that the parties do not have a say in who the third judge will be; rather, the two judges that were chosen decide who the third will be.

There is another *gemara* in Brachot 7a, in which we witness a conversation between God and Moshe. Moshe has three requests from God. The main focus of the *gemara* is on the third request: Moshe asks God to show him His ways. According to R' Yochanon, Moshe was granted this wish; R' Meir held the contrary opinion.

What does it mean that Moshe asked God to show him His ways? The *gemara* explains this to mean that Moshe was bothered by why good things happen to bad people, and bad things happen to good people. This is the central line of the *gemara* that brings forth the problem. There is a theory that humans have in mind, but not everything falls into the theory; there is a great deal of inconsistency. So, has this theory of good people being rewarded and bad people being punished proven to be false? Or is this theory, in fact, correct, but with a few exceptions?

Juxtaposing these two *gemaras* is essential to our entire existence.

The two *gemaras*, together, encapsulate the power in humans. How much power do people really have? What is in the hands of

the creatures of God, and what is not? In Sanhedrin, we see how much power people have. It is in the hands of mere flesh and blood to decide how the justice system should work. Within that, humans have the obligation to clarify the ranks within their race and the power each rank holds. Humans decide that bad things happen to bad people and good things happen to good people.

After seeing what people can and must do, Brachot comes in and outlines what people cannot do or understand—what is beyond them. Why do bad things happen to good people? That is not in the hands of humans. People can question and try to find answers, but the bottom line is that God controls that, and regardless of how hard people try, God's job is one task at which they will never succeed.

SCW Student Council is that entity that represents the body that decides that good things should happen to good people. While only God can decide if our ideas and creations will be carried out, we, as the women of Stern College, continue to prove that our planning and our involvement will never die down. Even if it means hours of planning for a Raise Your Voice meeting that attracted only ten people, we continue with our mission to do good to good people.

We continue to do it for the 100 girls who ate and were merry at Fiesta Night. We continue to do it for the 200 Yeshiva and Stern students who laughed so hard at Comedy Night they did not know how they could ever go back to biology. We continue to do it for the hundreds that wished they had attended the hypnotist event or the Chanukah concert.

Sometimes God will decide one way, and sometimes He will decide another, and as far as our actions are concerned, it is irrelevant what the end result is. We will continue to, borrowing from the United States Army, "be all that we can be." Whether it is insisting on additional Sunday hours at the "caf" or unexpectedly overturning the Beren campus with Survivor, it is the student body that persists, and it is the student body that perseveres.

ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT CORNER

The pulse of spring semester is beginning to beat
To avoid any of the unnecessary heat
Review the course syllabi
And plan ahead, oh! my

Keep up with weekly readings
Do schedule study meetings
And if you get stumped
Remember there are resources
To get you over the hump

Stopping by the Academic Advisement Center
Is one of the places to go
Before academic stress makes you feel too low

We will listen to your concern
And suggest a way to improve
What you learn

So do visit us soon
To keep your academic record in fine tune.

Contact Your Presidents:

Deena Hassan, SCWSC
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Fairy Tales Exposed: When an Ugly Duckling Becomes an Ugly Duck

BY TOVA STULMAN

Does anyone ever think about the story "The Ugly Duckling"? Since we're all sophisticated college students, the sort who read Camus and Kafka and are long past reading literature with more pictures than text, I doubt it very much. To refresh your memory, "The Ugly Duckling" is one of those famous children's stories in which the little baby duck blessed with rather unfortunate looks is shunned by his fellow ducklings, only finding redemption upon blossoming into a beautiful swan. I myself only recently thought about the tale because I was looking through a satiric collection of fairy tales, one of those parodying books that mocks fairy tale classics by offering alternative twists and endings. (Listen, it was buried underneath all my Camus and Kafka books, all right?) In the one that skewered the said ugly duckling, the conclusion for that sad little

duck that had suffered such torture and banishment by his family and friends was that he grew up into an ugly duck. The end.

Taken aback, I thought back to my childhood—and gasped in horror. True, it's not the sort of dramatic psychological revelation that requires hours of therapy or cathartic confessionals and support groups, but I was quite dismayed to discover, nonetheless, that one of those fairy tales, long thought to be purveyors of warm and fuzzy feelings, essentially taught children that only once the ugly duckling grew to be beautiful was he accepted by his peers and experienced love. I was thoroughly disgusted, as was my mother once I brought this to her attention. This launched a discussion, one that I now share with you; how perverse our society essentially is to teach that only with beauty comes acceptance or love. True, this message is the bread and butter of the beauty industry, and has long been rec-

ognized and criticized by feminists, but rarely does anyone think of the message as aimed towards little children. Think about it: nearly every traditional fairy tale ends the same way—happily ever after, but ONLY after making sure to mention the woman is fair and beautiful, with the man a prince of a guy, and charming to boot. And Hans Christian Andersen normally didn't pen fairy tales featuring princess and the like, but even his works, of which "The Ugly Duckling" was one, contain the same twisted message. Ducklings! Is nothing sacred? For shame, Andersen, for shame.

So what are we to read to our impressionable youngsters? Those brothers Grimm have an interesting collection of atypical stories, but they tend to veer into the realm of the macabre (so the princesses are there, but their heads are cut off at alarming rates). Not a misguided message about the high placement of value

on beauty, but probably not something most of us would advocate reading to kids. It looks like we'll just have to stick with innocuous stories about Little Red Riding Hood and her dead grandma, and the three little pigs who see two of their ranks being eaten by a wolf who also meets an untimely death, and Aesop's Fables—Aesop, thank heavens, was a man who could be trusted with not instilling imprudently themed tales about beautiful princesses helplessly waiting for their rescues from chivalrous royalty. He basically stuck to animals who displayed remarkably human traits like jealousy and selfishness.

Better yet, perhaps we should just stop reading to kids completely. Just sit them down and let them watch movies—the entertainment industry has become hip to parental urges for positive role models, and thus provides audiences with females whose eyes are finally smaller than their

waists, and skin that comes in shades other than flawless porcelain.

Alas, it might be too late for our generation to let go of the insidious message implanted within us about beauty. I personally have realized, not without alarm and consternation, that I am just a little more patient with the cuter kids at the pre-school I work in. Horrid, I know, but I take a small measure of comfort in blaming that silly Dutchman. We must be aware, for the future, that we should pick and choose the stories we read to our impressionable youth, and make sure they realize that even if that ugly duckling grew up to be ugly, in no way should the treatment he received be sanctioned or approved of. And I? I must try to be a little more tolerant when it comes to the less prepossessing children in school—after all, just like Andersen's duckling, they may grow up to be beautiful.

My Shabbat Experience on the Beren Campus

BY DEENA HASSAN

I am a senior in Stern College for Women. I spent a year and a half bouncing around Israel while attending Machon Gold for *shana alef* and Midreshet Lindenbaum for *shana bet*. Being that I attended two different seminaries, I spent my Shabbatot in Israel with a number of different people.

Making Shabbat plans was always the topic of conversation; on the way home on motzei Shabbat everyone was already calling their friends, arranging meals and housing for the "upcoming" Shabbat. Then Friday finally rolled around and you packed up your life and put it in a suitcase sometimes enough for three days (Thursday night through Sunday morning). You find some kind of public transportation and grab a Shabbat gift on the way, and 50 shekel, one bouquet of flowers, and two bags later another Shabbat had passed you by.

Upon returning to the States and starting my college career I perceived that it was the norm to continue to pack up my life and go away for Shabbat. Staying in school had been a foreign concept for the last year and a half, so why change now? It took me until the end of my first semester to realize that staying in the dorms for Shabbat was actually an option. After my first Shabbat on campus I was sold; I once again had a Friday afternoon, I no longer kept my suitcase by my bed, and I was free.

Unfortunately, I found the best kept secret about SCW Shabbatot too late for my first semester, but when I came back in the fall of 2004 I spent every Shabbat during that semester on campus, with the exception of a Shabbat kallah that I had to attend. I stayed in Brookdale Hall

every weekend. Staying in for Shabbat allowed me to create an entirely new network of friends: a group of people that I did not take any classes with or dorm in the same building as, people I would have never met if it weren't for the Shabbatot I spent in school last year. Thanks to the Shabbat Enhancement Program on the Beren campus, I was able to enjoy an array of shabbatonim sponsored by a variety of clubs as well as class boards and many seminaries.

A very special aspect of the Shabbat on campus is the fact that we are open to the male students as well. Stern provides hotel rooms for as many as 70 men, depending on the size of the shabbaton itself (some of which include as many as 300 people). Having coed shabbatonim enhance the experience tremendously and gives the Shabbat a feeling of community, complete with a *minyan* and *shuirim*.

One of the most enjoyable parts of Shabbat on campus is the dorms on Friday night and Shabbat afternoon. Each dorm lounge is equipped with a number of games and candy boats. Sitting around the candy boats, deciding which color gummy bear is your favorite, is a perfect way to make new friends and keep the old. Just a few weeks ago my friends and I were playing Trivial Pursuit in the 36th Street front lounge. For those of you who are familiar with this lounge, we were playing this game closer to the TV, and behind us was a group of people playing Apples to Apples, and to the right of us there was another group playing Scrabble. Not only was each circle of games coed, but I personally know that there were at least three people in each group that had met right then and there. As everyone played their games you could hear laughter

and joy throughout the lobby. One thing that was unique and truly great was what happened when we got stuck on a question in Trivial Pursuit. Instead of skipping and just going to the next person, we read the question extremely loudly and asked for help from the other groups. From the time we started we were only five women who had gone to school together; by the time the game came to an end (only because it was time for *seudat shelishit*) there were four guys and eight women playing with an extremely loud peanut gallery.

Some might say, "Why stay in school? The food is horrible!" What I would say to that person is, you do not stay in school often enough to know that it is just fine. Shabbat food on a college campus will never be on par with a nice home-cooked meal, but it is not supposed to. This is college; live a little. As the semesters go by, the enhancement of each Shabbat is greater. Since the beginning of this semester one thing that has been pushed for and has happened when the number of students permits, is to have round tables in the dining room. In the past students have found that round tables have been much more conducive to more enjoyable Shabbatot. This year we have been lucky enough to enforce the usage of round tables more often and hopefully soon permanently. Unfortunately, when our Shabbat numbers are over 200 people we don't have enough space for round tables, but we make do.

New friends, a coed environment, round tables, *minyan*, *shuirim*, good food, fun games, good snacks, my own bed, and no suitcase...what more can you ask for in a Shabbat? In my opinion: nothing.

The Strangers Who Were Not So Strange

continued from page 4

called a window. Over beans, rice, tortillas, and fried plantains, we discussed our reasons for being in this village and what we hoped to accomplish.

While many people spoke about their admirable desires to help this community, to learn about social justice issues, or to demonstrate to these people that they care for them, I could not understand these feelings. My reasons for joining the trip stemmed from a hope that a trip such as this would allow me to learn things about myself and the assumptions I make in my life. I loved the fact that we were building the much-needed school for this community, but I was not deluded enough to think that this could not have been done without our presence and I did not believe that we could, or should, for that matter, make a significant difference in the lives of these villagers with whom we have so little in common.

Our conversation abated and one of the villagers announced that the leaders of the community wanted to say a few words. This village of 15 large families apparently had almost as many community leaders, each awaiting his turn to address us. With sincerity that I rarely have the pleasure to witness, one after the other thanked God for bringing us there and thanked us profusely for coming, for leaving our prosperous country and our large homes to help them in their humble village. While they don't have much, they said, they will use whatever means they possess to make us feel comfortable. Then, with absolutely no warning, one of the community heads broke out into spontaneous prayer to God, praising him for this moment. At once there was euphony of voices expressing

aloud their gratitude to God (and Jesus), each person with his own individualized prayer. Sitting there, in front of my gracious hosts, I was stunned. This was not so much because of the new form of prayer, but because of the challenge this presentation posed to my original assumptions. Maybe my peers were right after all; maybe our visit really is somehow affecting the villagers. Remaining with me still, though, was the question of "how"—how is it possible that these Hondurans, with whom we have so little in common, value our visit to such an extent?

The next morning, awaking to the sound of roosters that would not stop crowing and regretting that I didn't take the *shechita* course offered at YU, we applied our insect repellent, put on our wide-brimmed hats and work gloves, and began our day. Because we had arrived at night, it was not until the morning that we realized just how beautiful this village was, overlooking stretches of clouds, mountains, and trees. With an enormous pig to our immediate left and some roosters and ducks meandering around, we took the short walk down the dirt road (every road there is dirt), thick brush on both sides of us, to our prayer spot.

After an inspirational *davening* facing San Jeronimo and a short breakfast, we split up into two groups. One group's job was to construct the school alongside several of the Honduran villagers, some our own age. This meant digging, laying down dirt, mixing



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NEWS

YU Students Volunteer during
"Alternative Winter Break"
in Honduras

BY YAFFI SPODEK

This past winter vacation, 16 Yeshiva University (YU) students chose to spend a week volunteering in Las Bendiciones (literally, "The Blessings"), a remote village in San Jeranimo, Honduras. The Center for the Jewish Future (CJF), together with YU's Office of University Life, organized this extraordinary trip under the auspices of the American Jewish World Service (AJWS). The AJWS is an international development organization that helps thousands of people in Africa, Asia and the Americas move beyond poverty, illiteracy, disaster and war. Once in Honduras, the group worked with the Profecto Aldea Global (PAG), a local committee that AJWS partners with to help strengthen communities in the face of poverty.

Hillel Davis, vice president of University Life, was instrumental in preparing for the trip by

allotting the appropriate funds and making many of the arrangements. The group of students was accompanied by Rebecca Stone, a graduate fellow, and by Cindy Bernstein, the student organizer, both of whom played integral roles by interviewing potential volunteers, running the orientation, and being involved in much of the planning. Bernstein, having previously volunteered in Ghana with the AJWS, was responsible for initiating the trip and for its eventual inception. A *semikha* (rabbinical) student also went with the group to ensure that they had kosher food and pots and pans, as well as a *sefer Torah* and an *eiruv* on Shabbat.

Participants described Las Bendiciones, located high in the rural mountains of Honduras, as "a village above the clouds." About 15 families live there in huts and houses, and are supported by coffee farming along the mountain ridge. The host house



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Business Director Makes Her Mark
on SOY Seforim Sale

BY SARA LEFKOVITZ

Each year, the Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY) Seforim Sale attracts consumers from across the tri-state area to the YU enclave of Washington Heights. The "largest Jewish book sale in North America," as it is advertised on its website, is a wholly student-run initiative. Yet, despite being located at 185th street on the male-dominated Wilf Campus, the sale features no shortage of female employees and volunteers. The business director of the entire event, in fact, is a woman from Stern College.

Shoshana Michelson, an upper junior at the Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB), had long set her sights on the SOY Seforim Sale. An accounting major with a minor in finance, Michelson viewed the sale as a unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the world of small enterprise. After volunteering for the event last year and shadowing its previous accounting intern, she became interested in acquiring a more senior position for 2006. When the offer materialized, she immediately gave her consent.

"After dedicating much of my time to the Seforim Sale last year, I decided that I wanted to learn more about its inner workings," said Michelson. "I was

stimulated and challenged and was determined to contribute to the sale in a much more significant way. I was surprised to have been asked to be a director but I was excited to accept the responsibility."

This aforesaid responsibility encompasses a great deal of both organization and administration. Overseeing a staff of approximately 70 employees, Michelson is also involved in the basic demands of the sale, such as ordering various items, creating a comely display, and taking inventory. Maintaining accurate records of cash intake and ensuring customer satisfaction are equally important tasks accompanying the job description.

Michelson has paved new ground by assuming the role of director, a position that has been assigned to a woman only once before in the event's 30-year history. Aside from bringing the Seforim Sale to a greater level of gender parity, she has also added her own distinctly feminine touches in the process. Possessing a heightened attention to detail and sensitivity to consumer concerns, she has served as the sale's spokeswoman on the Beren Campus and has recruited fellow female students to volunteer at the sale.

"We chose Shoshana because she displayed dedication and competency by dedicating her free time and many long nights to

the Seforim Sale," articulated Yoni Goldenberg, a senior at SSSB and the presiding director of the sale, when asked to give his reasons for appointing Michelson to her current managerial position. "She was well respected by all employees and demonstrated the leadership qualities necessary for a Seforim Sale director."

When asked to reflect on her experience thus far, "As my job is not yet over, I cannot tell you everything that I have gained," Michelson answered. "What I can tell you is that [so far] I have gained a new knowledge of what it means to work in a corporation. It has brought me skills that I hope to bring with me to my future workplace." These plans currently consist of a summer internship with one of the "big four" accounting firms in Los Angeles and a potential career in either finance or accounting.

The SOY Seforim Sale will be held at Weissburg Commons on the Wilf Campus from February 9 until February 26. Books and other Judaica items such as educational software, cookbooks, and CD's are ordered from suppliers worldwide. Profits from the sale will be used to finance YU student activities and other initiatives for the larger Jewish community. For more information, please see the sale's website at soyseforim.org

Researching Radak: Bible Professor
Returns from Sabbatical

BY SHIRA SCHWARTZ

At the university's discretion, instructors are given an opportunity to take a sabbatical, a temporary hiatus from teaching that allows them to focus their efforts on research and writing. The idea behind giving a professor this time is that both the professor and the university will benefit by the professor's academic progress. Dr. Naomi Grunhaus, assistant professor of Bible at Stern College for Women (SCW), took advantage of such an opportunity this past year by engaging in intense research to make headway in her upcoming book, "Methodology and Motivation: A Functional Analysis of Radak's Approach to Rabbinic Traditions."

The book, which is essentially a revision of the dissertation Grunhaus completed under Dr. Lawrence Fishman of NYU's Hebrew and Judaic Studies Department in 2003, explores the Biblical commentary of Rabbi David Kimhi (1160-1232), a biblical commentator, and his usage of *Chazal* (the Sages). However, she was still faced with the challenge of changing her work from

something only "Radak groupies," as she described them, would read, to something that would be comprehensible to all Medieval Biblical Exegesis scholars and the general academic world at large. "I spent a lot of time saying, 'Now what is wrong with this? Would anyone reading this know what I am talking about?'" Grunhaus said. This required a lot of tedious work, while also leading her to new venues of research.

Grunhaus began her work with the question of why Radak, a classic *pashtan* (commentator), would employ *midrashic* and *aggadic* (non-factual) literature, an atypical methodology for a *pashtan*. In analyzing this question and Radak's biblical commentary, she recognized that the real question is not why Radak employs *Chazal*, but rather, who indeed is Radak? She realized this is much broader than previously thought, as his quotations of *Chazal* exceed even those used by Rabbi Shlomo Yizhaki (Rashi), an esteemed commentator famous for his usage of *midrash* and *aggadah* in biblical interpretation. Why would someone like Radak, a scholar whose

commentary is so interwoven with words of *Chazal*, one who clearly values *midrash* and *aggadah*, so blatantly contradict the very same institution to which he is loyal? In short, Radak is clearly a more complicated character than previously thought to be.

Moreover, Grunhaus discovered that Radak is tied much closer to the rabbis of Northern France than previously thought. There is a direct correlation between the rabbinic sources quoted by both Rashi, who is from that region, and Radak. Furthermore, in areas of halakha, Radak falls right in line with the approach of Rashi's grandson, Rashbam.

What is most intriguing is that the combined general approach of Radak and Rashbam in matters of Jewish law tends to be one that is open to contradicting *Chazal*. There are areas in Radak's biblical commentary where he quotes *Chazal* with the intention of disagreeing. His language in these cases is pronounced and extreme, mocking and poking fun at the Sages' interpretations. Radak is far more than the classic *pashtan* we have

all grown to love, concluded Grunhaus. Rather, he is a hybrid of different elements that serve to create a complex whole.

Grunhaus says that the sabbatical provided her with the time and freedom to think broadly about the topic, to view the whole picture and to analyze previous mistakes. With one chapter now ready to be sent to a publisher and another on the way, the time off enabled her to get a handle on how the book should be organized and what exactly needs to be done. With that now firmly established and with the first chapter as a model, the rest of her work can be accomplished alongside her teaching.

To change your perspective on the grand scale, something that is required for writing a book, you need to take a step back, Grunhaus explained, and is proud that the university understands how important this is to academia. "We are really lucky that Dean Bacon and Rabbi Dr. Kanarfogel are encouraging us to do research and publish. So I am very appreciative," Grunhaus stressed. "They are just as happy as I am to publish. They realize you need time to sit back and

reflect and turn a sort of corner in the book." The open time allowed Grunhaus to do just that. "It gave me a chance to get to a completely different level in my writing," she said.

Reflecting on her year, Grunhaus admits that while the work was long and sometimes tedious, it was very rewarding as well. "I thought I would be much further, but I know that I used every day," she said. "I didn't sleep much," she added with a chuckle. Although the time off for research was fulfilling, she looked forward to returning to work in the classroom.

As part of the university's sabbatical policy, Grunhaus is required to teach for a consecutive year following the sabbatical. She now realizes that the sabbatical is enriching and allows the professor to return and perform at an even higher level than before. It's taking a step out of the classroom to rejuvenate and to grow by learning from oneself.

Grunhaus is currently teaching three Bible courses in which her students will be able to benefit from the knowledge and fervor she has accrued over her much-appreciated sabbatical.

Winter Torah Tours Inspire Communities and Students

BY DEBORAH ANSTANDIG

Over the winter break, Yeshiva University offered a variety of different opportunities through which students could get involved in the greater Jewish community. Torah Tours, most famous for its Simchat Torah and Shavuot programs, launched a winter program, sending students to communities in Miami, Los Angeles and Charleston.

In each city, the YU students found themselves serving the local community in different capacities. In Miami, the group of seven students visited the congregants of Beth David Highland Lakes Synagogue, a mixed community of native Floridians and South Americans, where YC alumnus Moshe Rothschild serves as rabbi. Giving classes in the synagogue offered the synagogues members, who are almost entirely *baalei teshuva*, the opportunity to engage in textual learning.

"It was invigorating," remarked Ariel Schwartz (YC '07). "I've never seen such an excitement about learning Torah." The group also spent time at the Hillel Community Day School in North Miami Beach, running informal programs about the significance of making decisions.

Dinah Zaghi, a senior at SCW, learned many positive lessons from her experience in Miami. "We were able to learn to

accept others," she reflected. "Many students came from non-observant homes, but each student proved to have his or her unique way of expressing Judaism that we grew to appreciate."

On the West Coast, the group that traveled to Los Angeles spent their mornings at the Westwood Kehila Synagogue, and learned with students at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) in the afternoons. The experience enabled the YC students to meet Jewish students at another college and ultimately establish a



great respect for them.

"We met many students at UCLA, some with greater religious backgrounds than others," recalled Michael Lazner (YC '06). "What was most inspirational was that although there were people with so little knowledge, they were so enamored by Judaism. It was an inspiration to watch these people maintain such a commitment to Judaism." And while the team was only comprised of six YC students, other YU students who were vacationing in the area joined the program

at UCLA for Shabbat, adding more *ruach* to the group.

The Charleston team went down south as a part of a movement to create a traveling *kollel* in the region. After having visited the area for Simchat Torah, Noam Schneck, a YC senior, bolstered the community to raise funds so that YU students would be able to come down to the region and inspire the community more often.

"This was not a one time visit," explained Nomi Presby (SCW '06), who went on the trip. "As Yeshiva University students, we understand that we have the opportunity to relate to and interact with members of the community, and create real relationships with them. We will all be going down to Charleston throughout the semester."

Torah Tours is only one of the plethora of programs organized by the staff of the Center for the Jewish Future (CJF). "Through Torah Tours, CJF serves the greater community and inspires young scholars to take their knowledge outside the classroom," expounded Rabbi Kenneth Brander, dean of the CJF. "The program allows students to take an activist role in the community." Apparently, Rabbi Brander's message was taken to heart.

Remembrance and Beyond: The UN Marks Holocaust

BY DEBORAH ANSTANDIG

On Friday, January 27, the United Nations (UN) marked its first annual International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust. According to Ellen Fawer, a representative from Jewish Women International, on November 1, 2005, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution designating January 27, the day of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp, in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. The program, entitled "Remembrance and Beyond," filled the General Assembly of the UN building with members of the Jewish community, including Holocaust survivors, as well as a handful of high school and Stern College for Women (SCW) students.

This national day serves to commemorate the liberation of Auschwitz 61 years ago. Stressing the need for the Holocaust to remain a part of the world's consciousness, Shashi Tharoor, UN Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, introduced the program by expressing that the day must serve as a reminder to the UN that it ought to commit itself to preventing racial or religious discrimination throughout

the globe.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan addressed those gathered to commemorate the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust through a video teleconference. "There can be no reversing the unique tragedy of the Holocaust," he said. "It must be remembered with shame and horror as long as



human memory continues."

Dan Gellerman, Israel's ambassador to the UN, echoed this plea. In his remarks, he reminded the audience of just how hard the UN must work to actualize this goal. "We sound an alarm, a call to arms and a wake-up call to the world," he stated, "a world in which a member state of this organization denies the Holocaust while it prepares the next one."

The ceremony also featured a lecture, a choral performance, photographs of Holocaust victims, and poignant addresses by survivors. Michal Cohen (SCW

'07) was moved by their speeches. "I felt privileged to take part in this historic event," she said.

Although the ceremony marks an important first step for the UN and the international community, there is still a long way to go. While the event gathered many Jews, few members of the UN were actually in attendance. "The UN needs to address the root cause of anti-Semitism," said Fawer. "The majority of Muslims today still reject Israel as a Jewish state. No Arab leader has affirmed that Israel has a right to exist. 1.3 billion people do not agree that this spot on the map should be Jewish, that Israel is a homecoming enterprise. 'Zionophobia' condemns 5.5 million people to statelessness as well as to possible genocide. The impact of "speaking out" gets to the ears of children—to know that atrocities are not the norm."

It is significant that there will forever be a day to serve as a reminder that the victims of the Holocaust will not be forgotten. While the UN is busy attempting to create peaceful solutions to global conflicts, they are also pledging to use the memory of Holocaust victims to fight genocide throughout the globe.

Economics Professor Adds Another Book to the Shelf

BY ALANA RUBENSTEIN

Dr. Aaron Levine, the Samson and Halina Batensky Professor of Economics and Economics Department head at Yeshiva University (YU) since 1973, as well as a noted expert in Jewish commercial law, has written five books. His newest book, "Moral Issues of the Marketplace in Jewish Law," has recently been published by Yashar Books.

The work covers a myriad of topics relevant to the business world including personal ethics, fair competition, marketing ethics, labor relations, privacy issues, public policy and the protection of property. "[I wanted to] look into issues where it's not obvious what halakha would be," Levine explained. Therefore, he spent a lot of time extrapolating what *Chazal* (the sages) would say about modern issues. This was "at once the hardest and most enjoyable aspect of my work," he said. One such issue is the use of integrity testing and polygraph in the workplace.

There have been many books printed about Jewish business ethics in both Hebrew and English, and about business ethics in general. However, Levine says that his book is unique in that "it provides a halakhic perspective for issues that college business course text-

books address. These are the issues that people will encounter in the pluralistic world." The book was written using the case study method and integrates halakha, American law and secular business ethics.

While the book can be classified as one that deals primarily with business, making it particularly pertinent to people in such fields, Levine feels that the general Jewish population could benefit from reading his work. "All the examples I give I feel you could generalize to all the professions," he said. For instance, when discussing false good will, a topic described in the introduction of the book to be dealing with identifying the "parameters wherein the capture of goodwill is the legitimate entitlement of the person who generated it," and "the identification of the circumstances where the opportunity to capture legitimately earned goodwill must be forgone," he mainly discussed it in terms of the moral dilemmas faced by the rabbinate.

Yet he believes that people in a myriad of vocations grapple with the same sort of questions.

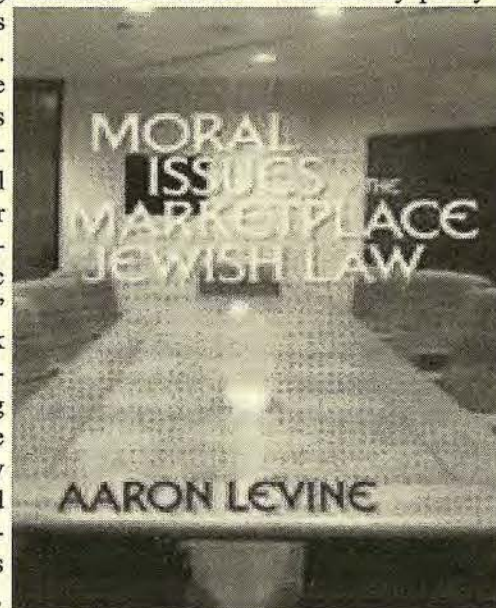
Similarly, the book deals "with many every day life things," Levine further explained. Students, homeowners and teachers can all learn a great deal from the last two chapters of the book, which discuss the bounds for guarding and defending one's property (and other) rights from being encroached upon. He writes about the liability a land owner may have if his property causes someone injury and about whether a teacher is permitted to confiscate a student's belongings.

The "focus of this work is the duties of a Jew vis a vis a fellow Jew," wrote Levine, believing that the book can be beneficial to non-Jewish readers as well. Firstly, by reading this book, "they would learn that the Torah requires us to fully respect their rights," Levine said. "Specifically in our marketplace dealing with non-Jews, *dina d'malkhuta dina* (the law of the government is the law) prevails, even when the treatment of the issue at hand in secular law contradicts the law of the Torah."

Another reason non-Jews may benefit from the book is that in his writings, "I also make the case that in the modern marketplace we should adopt a non-discriminatory policy for Jews and

non-Jews," said Levine. He explains this in detail in the book's introduction, writing that based on the halakhic principles of *eivah* (resentment) and *darkhei shalom* (ways of peace), among others, "any policy for the workforce or marketplace must be implemented on a non-discriminatory basis, treating Jews and non-Jews equally."

The book was written with the intention of being universally read. "It's really a book in economics meant to contribute to economics and law," said Levine. The book has received the praises of Dr. Dennis Carlton, a Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business and the editor of its Law and Economics Journal, as well as the recognition of many well-known rabbis.



Hebrew Coordinator Outlines Department Changes and Improvements

BY ALANA RUBENSTEIN

Zaphira Lidovsky-Cohen, the Hebrew coordinator at Stern College for Women (SCW), began working in SCW in 1984 as an adjunct. The Hebrew Department was "working, but not a smooth work," Cohen recalled. "There was total discontinuity." A lot of students were placed in tracks incorrectly and there was no real curriculum. Instead, Cohen described the classes as more "localized," something that became a problem when students changed teachers and levels at the beginning of each semester. Although all students below the intermediate 1205 level were concentrating on grammar, and the students in 1205 and above were primarily learning Hebrew literature, the teachers had a lot of leeway in the actual material taught. "A lot of students and faculty were complaining about the heterogeneity of the department," she remembers.

Changes needed to be made, and Cohen began to institute them. She earned her Master's degree in Education from Yeshiva University's Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration in 1986, and was immediately made a full-time instructor at SCW. She then went to get a Doctorate in Hebrew Literature from New York University, and was promoted to assistant professor and put on the tenure track after completing her dissertation in 1997. After attending numerous conferences and being published in both Hebrew and English, Cohen was awarded tenure in the fall of 2003 after her book, "Loosen the Fetters of thy Tongue Woman: The Poetry and Poetics of Yona Wallach," was printed.

Cohen's first move was to establish a placement test. "A lot of the students were really mis-

placed," she said, explaining that they were either placing themselves or being positioned based on their previous education. "I don't care if she went to Frisch or Flatbush. I want to know how much Hebrew she knows within the six levels [offered at Stern]." And while it is still a challenge to make sure students don't sneak into the wrong level, the placement test has clearly helped, she confirmed.

Cohen also worked to revamp the entire department's curriculum. She first had to ensure that the progression between the classes on different levels was sequential and logical. Additionally, she arranged the same syllabus for classes on the same level. Now, "every class is studying the same curriculum if it has the same number," she affirmed.

Additionally, last semester the Hebrew Department instituted a new program for beginner students. Instead of taking Hebrew language twice a week, students in level 1204 and below take Hebrew every day. "When you take an elementary class in any language," Cohen explained, "you get absolutely nowhere without practice. There is no way you can move without doing it minimally four times a week." And while she acknowledges that some of the students feel that the extra two and a half hours they spend with a teaching assistant each week is "a heavy load," Cohen is not sorry she instituted the extra classes. "Objectively, I feel as if it's a huge improvement," she said.

However, it is not only the beginner students who feel that there are too many Hebrew requirements in SCW. Many women resent having to take the language courses when there are so many other Judaic Studies classes offered. While Cohen has nothing to do with this decision,

she happens to disagree with the complaint. "I always think it's too little," she said with a smile. "A lot of students feel Judaica is separate from Hebrew and for me I think it's totally inseparable. However, I do understand that they want to take other classes."

And as long as SCW women are going to have to take Hebrew classes, Cohen promises to remain dedicated to improving the department. Firstly, she is in the process of updating the placement test to make it more useful and enjoyable. "It's doing its job, but it's flawed," she explained. Therefore, she intends to make it "quicker, more interesting and more efficient," in terms of both content and grammar.

Secondly, the department is dedicated to reducing class size, something that can only be done with an increase in faculty. "In the past two years since I have started taking care of this business we have five full-time faculty," Cohen said proudly. "It used to be only two." In addition, the department currently has three part-time instructors.

Lastly, the department has recently begun discussing adding thematic upper level Hebrew courses. While there would still be a literature requirement, students would have the opportunity to possibly take a class in education, where they could learn to read and understand primary sources in Hebrew, or perhaps even a class in Hebrew visual arts.

The option of additional Hebrew courses is still under discussion and nothing yet is finalized. However, Cohen intends to continue expanding the department to provide more advanced courses for students.

"Alternative Winter Break" in Honduras

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where the YU students were staying had no electricity, using instead candles most of the time.

The people of Las Bendiciones approached PAG for support in building a new schoolhouse, since education in their current conditions of 60 children to one classroom was practically impossible. Therefore, the YU students had two basic jobs to accomplish while they were there. One was to work alongside the members of the community to build a new school for the village. The manual labor involved waking up at six a.m. to dig, spackle, paint, mix cement, and level the ground.

The second task was to paint a mural of the map of the world with all the countries labeled in Spanish, a feat accomplished by the "art committee," which was made up of the students who were not building the schoolhouse. The rest of the time the group led games and activities for the children. Although neither group understood the other, since the Hondurans only spoke Spanish, they communicated via the "universal language" of laughter. The volunteers taught the locals some fun American games such as Simon Says, Monkey in the Middle, and Freeze Tag.

Bernstein described the time spent with the Hondurans as a "real bonding experience." For her, one of the highlights of the trip was when "some community members came out and built a bonfire, and we sang songs. They sang a song, and then we would sing a song. Even though neither side knew what the other was singing, everyone was just bonding over the moment."

Stone shared similar sentiments when reflecting on the trip. "[Everyone] bonded so much as a group, and created a new support system of friends and peers," she said. She described the experience as "life changing" because "we learned how easy it is to connect to other people regardless of religion, language, and culture, and how easy it is to adapt to poorer circumstances and communities."

Stone explained that the main goals of the trip were "to expose YU students to the developing world, and mobilize them to bring awareness and activism for

major global issues to the YU community and campus." They went "to help the people and do good. We wanted a group of Orthodox students to see what it is to be helping, and to go outside the bubble that they're in and see how people live in the rest of the world," Bernstein elaborated.

To achieve this end, the AJWS provided educational sessions for two hours every day where the group was able to talk about relevant issues such as fair trade globalization, the global debt crisis, and causes of global poverty. Also discussed were the concepts of *tikkun olam* (fixing the world) and *tzelem elokim* (being created in God's image), American values versus Honduran values, and Honduran culture and education.

All who participated deemed the trip extremely successful. "The trip definitely achieved and surpassed our goals," said Stone. "The administration is thrilled with the outcome" and "definitely wants this project to run annually."

Now that they're back, the volunteers are going to continue their mission by planning programs and follow-up projects to raise awareness about these issues on campus. For fair trade awareness, they want to bring fair trade coffee to the cafeteria and have a food services campaign. They hope to have student petitions, to raise the issue in town hall meetings, to write letters to government officials, and to distribute pamphlets at the SOY Seforim Sale.

"We have already had meetings to discuss the follow-up social justice projects they will initiate," Stone said. "The students were so blown away by everything they learned and saw, and feel so strongly about their experience. We learned how important it is to be aware of the rest of the world. As God's children, it is our responsibility to care about all of God's children around the world." The trip was a big step towards "YU's involvement within the larger Jewish community," she continued, "and for working with and helping gentile communities around the world—an important responsibility and *mitzvah* that our community can sometimes forget."

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FEATURES

Open Orthodox Semikha Program Offers Unique Learning Options

BY JACKIE FAST

Between the Commentator and OnlySimchas.com, most Stern students have probably seen the ads displaying the phrase "Who is YCT?" and in all likelihood, they have ignored them without a clue as to the meaning. Nearly every single Stern student who was questioned in the writing of this article looked as though she had no idea what language was being spoken to her when asked about Yeshivat Chovevei Torah (YCT). It's really a bit of a surprise that regarding the only other American Modern Orthodox *semikha* program outside of YU's affiliate Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS), many SCW are still completely in the dark.

YCT was founded by Rabbi Avi Weiss of Riverdale in 1999 as an "open" Orthodox yeshiva program. Although the first class had only two students, the graduating class of 2005 had 11 students, and currently the yeshiva has over 50 students enrolled. Students who study at Chovevei Torah earn a generous annual stipend, although they must also commit to working in a rabbinical post for three years after graduating.

For the 20 graduates of Chovevei Torah in the past two years, finding a position post-*semikha* has been relatively easy. Many congregations across the country are eager to hire YCT graduates. Last year's class saw three newly-ordained rabbis

attain full-time pulpit positions. According to the administration, YCT students are more prepared to take on the multifaceted responsibilities of becoming a congregational rabbi than are new rabbis from other *semikha* programs. YCT's curriculum includes a number of courses focused on the non-Torah skills that rabbis need, such as pastoral counseling. Although *gemara* remains the primary focus of study, students are also required to take courses in contemporary ideological issues, and to pass exams on all of *Tanakh*.

An additional aim of the yeshiva is to train rabbis who are considerate of all Jews, regardless of their background, as many congregations are composed of members with a variety of outlooks. Some have noted that YCT's outlook towards spreading Torah knowledge to members of all denominations in *Am Yisrael* is reminiscent of the outreach-oriented Chabad Lubavitch.

Although most discussion relating to YCT usually involves some debate about the yeshiva's *hashkafa* (what is "open Orthodoxy," anyway?), another facet of the yeshiva that has turned heads is the program that it runs for undergraduate men and women, called the Meorot University Fellowship. Participants are required to read scholarly articles on topics that are relevant to contemporary Orthodoxy, and meet each Tuesday night throughout the academic year to discuss the arti-

cles and listen to lectures by prominent Orthodox and non-Orthodox scholars on the topics. Currently, one SCW student, junior Julia Frankston-Morris, is a Meorot Fellow.

YCT has found that its potential impact on the Orthodox scene is prone to spread throughout the years. Interest in the yeshiva continues to increase, and a small number of RIETS students have switched over to study at YCT. Chovevei Torah tries very hard to protect a fair reputation in the face of criticism. Considering that the left-wing approach of the school has not earned the blessing of many Modern Orthodox leaders, students of the yeshiva are not allowed to talk with journalists without administration consent.

However, putting the *hashkafot* and the secrecy aside, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah offers learning options that aren't available anywhere else. The students have a tremendous amount of passion for *avodat Hashem* and making positive contributions to society by being rabbis. "Ignoring what I think about the *hashkafa*, I think that it's a really good thing that there are alternative Modern Orthodox *semikha* programs," says Deena Zanger, an SCW sophomore. "Why should YU have the only one? There certainly is a niche for another program in America, and in this regard, YCT is beneficial."

Brookdale Neighbor Viva Natural to Reopen as non-Kosher Pizzeria

BY SHOSHANA FRUCHTER

Viva Natural, the vegetarian pizzeria located just a few doors beyond Brookdale Hall, has closed. Viva advertised "healthy, natural and delicious pizza, pasta and salads" and served whole wheat, spelt, and cornmeal options to provide Midtown with a healthy pizza shop, an outlet much appreciated by the hundreds of women who attend SCW.

As of January 20 of this year, Viva was no longer under the *hechsher* which had been provided by the Vaad Harabbonim of Flatbush. While until now Viva served only *pas yisrael* and *cholov yisrael* products, now the *kashrus* division has announced that "this establishment is no longer kosher."

Siblings Frank and Rose Pecora bought the store at 64 East 34th St. and plan to open their own pizza place, Squisito, "which means exquisite" in Italian, Mr. Pecora explained. Signs flanking the entrance to the store clearly indicate the *kashrus* change, stating, "Upon our reopening in about one week, we will no longer be kosher."

Pecora explained that the staff "would love to have it still be kosher—but unfortunately this is not what I know," he admitted. "I don't know the religion, I don't want to offend anyone" by making *kashrus* mistakes. Pecora noted that "it's too bad" because "I know there's a lot of Orthodox Jews around here" who benefited from the restaurant.

Deterred by more than just the unfamiliar, Pecora learned of the responsibilities involved in running a kosher eatery, saying, "I heard that the rabbi—if you don't do certain things according to the religious code and procedure—comes and takes the [*kashrus* certification] sticker away." He mentioned that "a

while back some workers sent out pizza without the tape on the box" which led the *mashgiach* to threaten that if that happened again, he'd take away the certificate. "But," Pecora stressed, "we welcome everyone."

After the Vaad Harabbonim of Flatbush reported that there was no *kashrus* scandal that led Viva's owners to sell their restaurant, Pecora supplied the only available information on the sale. "I guess they weren't generating enough revenue," he speculated, mentioning that he heard that one of the Leifer sisters who ran the store previously, who originally "were very enthusiastic to make it go," were recently offered "a job that would pay a lot of money and she had to make a decision. I guess she went for the money," Pecora concluded. "I don't know if it's true or not—that's what I heard."

As the signs hanging outside the restaurant indicate, the space is undergoing "cosmetic renovations." Pecora says new ovens, refrigerators, and whole new electric and plumbing systems are being installed. The whole place will be redone, except for the left wall of the store; pointing at the wall, Pecora said, "I like the way it looks—whoever did it did a great job."

Viva's closing, though heart-breaking to some Stern women, is at least well-coordinated with the SCW cafeteria's newly extended hours. The store was not visited that often by SCW students during the week when the cafeterias are available, but was a convenient eatery often turned to on the weekend when the caf was closed. Thanks to the efforts of the Student Life Committee and the SCW administration, and the cafeteria weekend hours have been expanded.

Who are the People in Your Neighborhood? A Look at the Murray Hill Neighborhood Association

BY ABBY ATLAS

Standing at the corner of Park Avenue and 34th Street, one of the busiest intersections in the city, one would hardly describe the surrounding area as a "residential enclave nestled in Manhattan." However, to many, this area is considered just that. Stern College is located in this Murray Hill neighborhood. Murray Hill Neighborhood Association (MHNA), an organization committed to maintaining the quality of Murray Hill, is composed of a group of volunteers whose goal, as quoted from the organization's mission statement, is "preserving the residential character" of the area.

The group is made of many different committees. Each committee has a specific responsibility that furthers the goal of the organization in some shape or

form. For example, the "Quality of Life Committee" confronts issues that detract from the quality of life of Murray Hill residents. Many of these issues arise because of the specific nature of Murray Hill's location. One of the committee's victories was the successful resolution of traffic issues, the number one disturbance to Murray Hill residents. Another committee, called the "Third Avenue Improvement Committee," attempts to beautify the Third Ave. section of Murray Hill by planting, pruning, and protecting greenery.

In addition to organizing these committees, the MHNA also plans a number of events for the residents of Murray Hill each year. These events foster feelings of community between the residents. The major event of the year is the annual block party. This past year, the 33rd annual

block party was given the theme "A Small World/ Murray Hill." As described on the organization's website, this event was a celebration of the international flavor of the Murray Hill community. The event highlighted the incredible diversity and uniqueness of this Midtown neighborhood.

Much of MHNA's activities revolve around protecting historic buildings in the neighborhood from demolition. Its 1,000+ members are constantly on the lookout for construction news



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Jews for Jesus: Close to Home...Literally

BY YAFFI SPODEK

Jews for Jesus: a name many people have heard before, but don't know very much about. Jews for Jesus is so named because, although slightly controversial, it accurately and succinctly describes the organization's position. Moishe Rosen officially founded Jews for Jesus 33 years ago in September of 1973. However, when asked how long Jews for Jesus had been around, members like to say, "Since 32 A.D., give or take a year." The group uses this little joke to remind people that a small minority of Jews has always believed and proclaimed the gospel, and that Jews for Jesus now follows in that same tradition.

The New York branch of Jews for Jesus was established in 1975, but it wasn't until 1984 that they purchased their seven-story building in midtown Manhattan.

Located at 109 East 31st Street between Park and Lexington Avenues, Jews for Jesus is just a few short blocks from Stern. It houses the administrative offices, a chapel, meeting rooms, and the Louis B. Goldberg International Missionary Training Center and Library, where the organization's English-speaking missionaries are trained and prepared for their world-wide service.

This Jews for Jesus complex would likely go unnoticed by the unassuming passerby since its appearance is quite deceiving. All that is visible is what resembles a storefront, which could easily be mistaken for an early Valentine's Day window display. Adorned with pink and yellow hearts decorated with the word "love," it has a banner across the front displaying the famous Beatles song lyric, "Love, love, love...all you need is love." Another sign, perhaps more appropriate for the venue, alludes to the religious nature of the place, proclaiming, "God's love cost him everything, but it was a free gift to you and

me." To the right is a small innocuous plaque, stating "Jews for Jesus," and under that, their catch-phrase, "founded 32 A.D., give or take year."

Jews for Jesus' mission statement proposes "to make the Messiahship [sic] of Jesus an unavoidable issue to our Jewish people world-wide." This task is known as evangelism, which "is an active way to tell others the good news about God's desire to reconcile people to himself through the Jewish Messiah Jesus." Jews for Jesus believes that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel and of all nations. They refer to him as "Y'shua," a Hebrew term which they translate as "the way, the truth, and the life." Followers commit themselves to being under the authority of God and his word, honoring "Messiah Y'shua," and depending upon the "enabling power of the Holy Spirit."

Today, there are estimated to be somewhere between 30,000 to 125,000 followers worldwide. The estimate has such a wide range because there is no way to take an accurate census of Jewish believers in Jesus. Jews for Jesus has missionaries in 11 countries around the world, and 80 chapters run by specially trained volunteers, known as "Co-Laborers in Messiah." They also send out evangelistic teams, which use Jewish gospel music, drama, and leaflet distribution to reach people throughout America and overseas.

Jews for Jesus prides itself on communicating creatively, which is necessary since "Jewish people tend to dismiss evangelistic methods that are couched in Christian presuppositions and lingo, because they reinforce the assumption that Jesus is for 'them' not 'us.'" In order to penetrate that ideology, they write and illustrate pamphlets with plenty of humor in an informal, conversational tone. As they like to say, "We take God seriously, but we try not to take ourselves too seriously." They refer to their

gospel tracts as "broad-sides" and they deliver more than eight million "invitations to interact with the gospel" each year. They publish evangelistic books, which include testimonies of Jewish people who believe in Jesus, and they carry out "witnessing campaigns" which are "super-concentrated times of short-term outreach" all over the world. They place gospel proclamations as ads in newspapers and magazines, and broadcast evangelical messages on billboards, trains and radio stations. A highlight of their outreach agenda is an annual summer witnessing campaign, when Jewish believers from all over the world come to New York for a month of witnessing, generating hundreds of contacts with Jews.

They find these methods very effective for recruiting followers who see these ads and contact them for follow-up information. They claim that many of the Jewish people who are willing to study Scripture are referred to Jews for Jesus by Christian friends. Every year, they have special outreaches at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and the New Year's Eve celebration in Times Square.

Jews for Jesus has been criticized by Jews and non-Jews alike for its often deceptive proselytizing. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, the United Church of Christ and Presbyterian Church USA have denounced Jews for Jesus' promotional activities. Their methods are "harmful to the spirit of inter-religious respect and tolerance," concluded the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington.

All year round, missionaries and volunteers can be found on the New York streets and subways, handing out broadsides, and searching for impressionable Jews to become their newest followers.

Jews for Jesus is closer than you think!

Between the French Final Exams Schedule and the Yeshiva Community

BY CLAUDIA AMZALLAG

The history of the Jews of France dates back over 2,000 years. Since then, France has always had a center of Jewish learning. However, because of various persecutions during the 15th century, many French Jews suffered tremendously. France was the first country in Europe to emancipate its Jewish population during the French Revolution in 1789. Legal equality had already been established by then however, as evidenced by the Dreyfus Affair anti-Semitism.

The history of the Jew in France has always been unique. A quarter of the Jewish French population perished during the Holocaust. Yet France still has

the largest population of Jews in Europe. During the last decade there has been one of the biggest waves of anti-Semitism in France, thus creating a very tense situation for the Jews who live there.

These current events have led to the increase in the number of international students attending Stern and Yeshiva Colleges. Another more technical reason for the increase of specifically French students at the undergraduate schools is the final exams schedule in French universities. Final exams usually fall out during Shavuot. Failure to take these exams would result in failing the course. Though some people complain that this is tied to anti-Semitic undertones, according to Rina Cohen, a French student

who is currently an SCW sophomore, "Exams are not purposely given on Shavuot. The government makes those decisions despite any religions. At the same time," Cohen continued, "it seems that the holidays are based around the Christians since that was the first religion to debut there." These two causes have led to an unprecedented large community of international students.

Although some insist greatly on the pressures of anti-Semitism, others acknowledge some anti-Semitic attitudes in France but maintain that the conditions are still livable. Cohen, who is majoring in international business, says, "Since the Intifada in 2002, there has been a lot more anti-Semitism." She described two types of families in

Presidential Fellow Profile: Rebecca Stone

BY SURI GREENWALD

One of the post-graduation opportunities offered at Yeshiva University is the Presidential Fellows program which sets up a selected group of students from Stern and Yeshiva Colleges and Sy Syms School of Business in different administrative settings. The one-year program is a 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. job in which fellows work on one of the YU campuses, under some guidance. They work on various projects with their administrative guides, ranging from sending out emails to setting up programs. There is a salary of \$18,000, as well as paid-for housing, and health benefits are provided. Additionally, seminars are given, ranging from topics on communications to leadership, for which fellows can earn a total of six graduate credits per year.

In a recent interview with one of the fellows, Rebecca Stone described her past work, current projects, and future goals she has in her effort to make YU a better place. Stone works in the Office of University Life located on the Wilf campus, and is guided by Vice President Dr. Hillel Davis, whom she describes as "the best boss ever." She says their office cares for everything non-academic, from issues relating to security and building development on the NY campuses to issues relevant to the Gruss campus in Israel.

Stone's past projects include organizing the film festival this past semester, working on research projects with Dr. Davis, and coordinating YU summer courses to be given in Israel. Last year, as a senior at Stern, she was largely responsible for raising awareness in the YU community about major global issues like the current genocide in Darfur. Last year's campaign culminated with a rally held in Central Park which was planned by Stone and a committee of YU students determined to inform YU students about the

genocide in Darfur. In her administrative position this year she hopes to publicize this issue even further to propel the students and the whole YU community to action.

Last semester Stone spent much of her time coordinating a joint American Jewish World Service-YU alternative break trip to Las Bendiciones, Honduras. Stone, along with 16 undergraduates from YU, two counselors from the American Jewish World Service, traveled to the developing village to build a school for impoverished children. Besides helping to build the school, the students discussed important matters regarding the developing world. When asked how this idea came about, Stone replied that she and Cindy Bernstein had approached Dr. Davis to initiate it, "being that college Hillels all over the country send their students on this trip," and they felt that "YU too should offer it for their students." Stone reports that it was a most educational experience for her, as well as for the group of students. As YU had never before participated in a humanitarian effort quite like this one and the AJWS had never previously organized a fully Orthodox trip, this arrangement was monumental for both parties.

As for next year, Stone plans to apply to graduate school for public administration and hopes to work for the American Jewish World Service or an organization that helps to promote awareness and aid to the developing world. Though her exact career path is unclear, she hopes to "ultimately focus on communal or international leadership." As such, the presidential fellowship has been a great learning experience for Stone, especially in leadership and community activism and she "loves it."

To learn more about the Presidential fellowship program, visit the YU website.

than religion," she says, relating the growing anti-Semitism in France today to the crisis in the Middle East.

Cohen also believes that the government is still fair to both parties. As an example she noted, "A kippah cannot be worn in public school, but at the same time the veil [for a Muslim woman] is not allowed either, so there is a fairness in that."

Yeshiva University has opened its doors to students from all over the world. Upon acceptance of foreign students into the university, YU plays an essential role in ensuring that foreign students have the opportunity to pursue a vigorous academic program in secular and religious studies.

THE ISRAEL SECTION

YU Students Help Rebuild in Aftermath of Disengagement

BY SARAH MATARASSO

As has been the case in the past, YU ran programming in Israel, open to both current students and alumni, over winter break. Entitled *B'Leivav Shalem* (with a complete heart), the mission took place over two days, Monday, January 16 and Wednesday, January 18. The funding for all programming came from the CJF, TAC, the Israel Club and YU Israel.

"The theme of the mission was Gush Katif," explained Hillary Lewin, an SCW senior and president of TAC. Lewin and Yael Schiller, president of the Israel Club, designed a program that they hoped would contain educational and social components. This past summer, as a counselor at Camp Kobi, Lewin worked with Israeli children who had in some way been affected by terrorism. She described how everyone would show up in orange, the official color of those against the plan for disengagement, and that one child who had lost a family member in a terrorist attack was now losing his home. Needless to say, as she left for New York on the day of the disengagement, Lewin felt that she needed to bring something back with her to the YU community.

Upon her return, before the school year had even begun, she met with Rabbi Kenneth Brandler, dean of the CJF, and explained why she felt it necessary to provide an educational opportunity for YU students to understand what was going on in Israel concerning the disengagement. In retrospect, Lewin recognizes how instrumental the CJF was to the program's success from a financial and logistical point of view, saying "CJF is here to remove the burden of the nitty-gritty issues from the students so that they can maximize their initiative." Lewin really felt that she was able to better focus on putting together a great program without getting caught up in the many other details that needed to be taken care of. She worked closely with Shuki Taylor, a newly hired CJF employee who works from an office in Israel. Abby Weiss, who works for YU Israel, was also extremely instrumental in making logistical arrangements, whether it was organizing transportation, catering or anything else that needed to be taken care of.

Monday's itinerary involved

visits to four different communities that had been relocated following the disengagement. At each visit, the group of approximately 30 YC and SCW students heard from representatives of the community, who shared personal accounts and explained where the community was headed. The messages, while mainly expressing hope for rebuilding and unwavering commitment to the land, contained elements of bitterness and resentment. The residents of Ir Emunah have begun to rebuild their community in what Lewin could only describe as "an empty field" in an area near the



city of Ashkelon. The representative of the community displayed much optimism and hope that the rebuilding will be successful. She even described the hardships that go along with their current living conditions—the families are living in cramped trailers without toilets or running water—by adding in humorous comments and trying to put a brighter spin on things.

In contrast, the representatives of the community of Alei



Sinai described their situation with much more bitterness and resentment; the members of the community are currently living in tents on the highway and they refuse to receive money from the government in order to rebuild. Shoshana Agatstein, an SCW junior who joined the mission, commented how "people think of all the Gush Katif residents as right-wing, religious fanatics. This stereotype isn't true and that's what I saw firsthand by interacting with the secular members of the Alei Sinai community."

The communities of Nitzan

and Neve Dekalim (whose members are living, for the moment, in the Jerusalem Gold Hotel) were also visited. Last semester, YC senior Menachem Menchel organized a raffle fundraiser and \$5,000 was raised in anticipation of the mission; the money was divided and presented to the four communities visited by the YU students. However, Lewin explained that the \$1,200 or so distributed to each community is almost nothing in comparison to the amount of help they still need to rebuild. For this reason, there are plans to continue the project, which will include a major

telethon during the spring semester that will be extended to include high schools nationwide. This project is being spearheaded by SCW students Ariella Weisz and Miriam Kahn.

That evening, a small art exhibit and a panel discussion were planned. The exhibit included artwork—sculptures, pottery, paintings and photographs—portraying the artists' feelings about the disengagement. In one series of photographs, normal, everyday scenes of Gush Katif life were captured, with one piece cut out and missing from the scene. In one picture a boy was missing; in another, a dog was cut out. Instead, there was blank space representing the void created by that which had been removed. Lewin found this display to be especially meaningful. Following the exhibit was a panel discussion, with four participants speaking about the disengagement from different angles. Rabbi Malchior and a political activist represented the pro and anti-disengagement camps, respectively. In addition, Yaakov Katz, a journalist from the Jerusalem Post, as well as a psychologist working at a trauma center in Jerusalem, contributed to the discussion.

While the number of students who made it to Monday's programs was relatively small, almost 90 students took part in the greenhouse program which was the day's activity on Wednesday. While the visits to the community mainly involved

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Hamas Wins PA Elections: What Now?

BY TALIA KAPLAN

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's coma, Israeli elections taking place in a month, the evacuation of the Amona outpost located North of Jerusalem: each one of these major events within Israeli society is liable to shock and leave those concerned with the welfare of the State of Israel in wonderment. However, one event that took place on Thursday, January 26, made many do a double take and wonder what the future will bring. This event was the victory of Hamas in the Palestinian Authority (PA) elections. Even United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was quoted as saying "I don't know anyone who wasn't caught off guard by Hamas' strong showing."

Hamas, an Arabic acronym for Islamic Resistant Movement, is a Palestinian Islamist movement that was created in 1986 by Sheikh Amhed Yassin. Its charter calls for the destruction of the State of Israel and any secular Palestinian government that may be set up. Along with launching numerous terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians, including the infamous No. 2 bus bombing, the Park Hotel Pesach bombing, and the Sbarro's bombing, Hamas has denounced the Oslo Peace Accords. While it is involved in social and welfare programs, it is also listed as a terrorist organization by many countries, including the United States, Australia and Canada. Approximately two years ago a senior Hamas official, Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi, offered a ten-year truce with Israel if it retreated to its pre-1967 borders.

The big question that arose immediately after the victory was how the leaders of the western world would react. Would they continue to supply aid to the Hamas-run Palestinian Authority or would they refuse to engage in talks with a known terrorist organization? In a desperate attempt to continue a peace process between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, many have stated that if Hamas would give up its call for the destruction of the State of Israel they would continue to send funds to the PA. Acting Prime Minister Ehud

Olmert said that he would work with Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas as long as Abbas does not cooperate with Hamas. Egypt has been pressing Hamas to keep to the agreements made by previous Palestinian governments.

While the European Union has stated that it would not continue to send aid to the Palestinian Authority as long as Hamas does not end its violent ways and recognize the State of Israel, Hamas chief Mahmoud Zahar stated that the European Union and Hamas would likely hold official talks within six months. Russian President Vladimir Putin would not cut off assistance to the Palestinians. On the other hand, the U.S. has threatened to cut off its substantial aid if Hamas members hold positions in its governmental organization. The response of many other countries to the Hamas victory falls into one of these two categories.

The Associated Press reported that a top Hamas official said that while the group would not recognize Israel, it would abide by past agreements Palestinian leaders had made with Israel. Hamas has invited Fatah (considered the more moderate party and the party people had assumed would win the election as the party had been in power for so many years) to form a coalition government. Fatah has refused this offer so far. Hamas is considered the less corrupt of the two groups by the Palestinian people.

The question remains where this unfolding of events will leave the State of Israel. There are two prominent views. One view fears the potential evils that a government led by a terrorist organization is capable of. Others see this as giving the enemy a face. The world can no longer be wishy-washy on its stance to the Palestinian Authority; they are clearly dealing with a terrorist organization and must act appropriately. Whatever view a person takes, it is vital to at least keep up with the erupting news in the State of Israel today as it is ever changing and crucial to its future.

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Back From a Village Above the Clouds

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American Jewish World Service teamed up with PAG and supplied them with us, a group of curious college students eager to help out. In this way the project is sure to succeed; instead of an imposition of "we have this in America and it will help you," we worked on something they needed and will be able to sustain.

Whether we were working with the villagers or simply playing soccer on the plateau, we were able to communicate verbally with the help of our group leaders and two foreign exchange high school students who came along as translators. More significantly, we were able to communicate via man's universal language. Gestures and expressions were indispensable. The children loved our tricks, including my trumpet imitation and fitting cups in my mouth. Don't get me wrong: communicating was not so simple, but amazingly it didn't get too much in the way of creating relationships with the natives. Returning to the soccer game for a moment, we started the game as a group of YU kids and same-aged (only) Spanish-speaking natives. Walking away from the field smiling and joking with each other about the game, we were simply a united group of panting 20-year-olds.

In between the hours of work we spent a couple of hours each day discussing major issues like poverty, globalization, and social justice. Each session was guided by text study and directed by our American Jewish World Service group leaders, Ira and Rachel, two extremely informed Midwesterners who provided us with tons of historical, political, and cultural information. The best part of these sessions was the approach. It was NOT: these are the AJWS' values, learn them and swear by them. Rather we discussed each topic from various angles and argued for hours. Globalization, for example, we discussed has many negative effects (exploitation of impoverished people) and many positive effects (communication, cross-cultural exchange, developed countries advancing and able to pass on their successes to developing countries). At the end of the day we concluded that without globalization our awesome trip would never have existed! But also that exploitation of farmers—via commercial companies of the developed worlds pushing the developing countries even further away from progress—is unacceptable, and that our day-to-day purchases

feed into that exploitation. To ignore that fact is terribly irresponsible. It is admirable and important to buy fair trade. I'll sadly admit to you that I don't think I'd heard of fair trade before my trip, for sure never gave it thought. International trade has a way of seeming so distant and removed from us, but in reality everything we do, certainly politically and economically, affects the rest of the world.

Fair trade protects small-scale producers, people like Don Mario, our host father in the village, from falling into crippling debt when commodity prices fall dramatically. Each day the market price of coffee, for example, changes, and based on that Don Mario sells his beans to the middleman in a nearby village. Development agencies recognized the important role that consumers could play to improve the situation for producers. Buying direct from farmers at better prices, they help strengthen the

need to act. There's a world out there that we are responsible for.

Remember I mentioned the original school house? The school in the village is an elementary school which goes up to sixth grade. Since education is not yet a top priority in Honduras and because of economic struggles, many parents pull their kids out of school to have them work on the fields. It is a big deal to graduate 6th grade; in the school house there was a picture of graduation featuring 3 beaming students. The village was very proud. Las Bendiciones has an education committee that works hard to encourage all of the parents in the village to keep their kids in school. Sometimes those that graduate make it to high school in Comayagua, a nearby city. One young woman in the village, Nanci, graduated from there, too, and is off to study medicine in Cuba next year. A bunch of us YU students who are pre-Med really enjoyed speaking to her about that. The village is

extremely proud of her.

It takes a lot longer to get to Las Bendiciones than I thought. I told people it's a bunch of hours on a plane. Not so. To get from NYC to a rural village

in Honduras takes about a total of 17 hours. In reverse, since the way back is clearer to me because it just happened: We left the village early Sunday morning, and by 6 a.m. we were walking down the mountain (the roads were too muddy and windy for autos). Once we got to a less windy area we hopped into pickup trucks which were the only type of auto that could handle these roads. After a bit we packed into two vans, took a 20-minute break in Copayagua for the group leaders to buy us food for the day—at which point we played an awesome game of Ultimate—and were off to the capital city, Tegucigalpa. The airport is really small. We flew from there to Houston and after a small layover flew to NY. We arrived at about midnight.

So the natives do know what cars are, and some end up sending their kids to high school and university in the cities, so those kids are exposed to all of the technological advancements there, but the village itself is bereft of many things we consider indispensable. They use outdoor plumbing and a hose for their sink and shower. There were no refrigerators or electrical ovens. A small oven is built into their kitchen room—our rabbinical student told us it was exactly

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Murray Hill Neighborhood Association

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and practically beseech the New York City Landmarks Preservation Committee to impede demolition plans. Two successful campaigns include the extension of the historic district to East 39th Street and the inclusion of the east side of Park Avenue in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The Preservation and Design committee of MHNA "continues to monitor the historic district for violations, and works with owners to maintain their properties in accordance with preservation guidelines."

Why is this neighborhood called Murray Hill? In 1753, a man named Robert Murray came to New York. His family's estate, which they called Belmont, stretched from 33rd to 39th Streets, and spanned the area that is now enclosed by Madison and

Lexington Avenues. The estate became known as Murray Hill. After the deaths of these original Murray family members, the real estate remained in the family. Thus, the area continued to be known as Murray Hill and is still known by that name today.

Regardless of whether or not one agrees with the mission statement of the organization, it is interesting to note that even in a city the size of Manhattan, there is an attempt to unite and maintain a sense of community. Even though this eastern part of Midtown is always hustling and bustling with business, it is eye-opening to consider that even residents of "the city that never sleeps" want to feel part of a community.

Additional information about the MHNA is available online at www.murrayhill.org.

Counterpoint Germany

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responsibility and initiative in abetting and incubating these communities was probably a corollary of this trip that Bridges of Understanding could certainly not have foreseen. Whereas after Heritage we had mourned the loss of Jewish life, after Counterpoint Germany, we were not only driven to continue asking those questions which had previously pervaded our minds, but were more importantly enthused to rekindle and nourish the flickering flame of Jewish existence in places where the warmth of Torah was not disseminated.

Perhaps this trip was indeed the Center of the Jewish Future and Richard Joel's dream expedi-

tion; Rabbi Ehrenberg, the Orthodox community leader in Berlin in his Teutonic sermon on Friday night proclaimed that we were a paradigm of precious Jews who were infused with both "Torah" and "wissenschaft" (science). In the words of Richard Joel, there was nothing more "enabling" than having the proper tools to ask the right questions, and there was nothing more "ennobling" than having the opportunity to make the voice of Torah so audible in a place where it has been so stifled.

New Sunday Cafeteria Hours

Kushner Dining Hall

Lunch
12:30 - 2 PM

Dinner
4:30 - 7 PM

Arts and Culture

Brooks Goes Looking for Comedy, but We're Still Looking

BY SHIRA MARGULIES

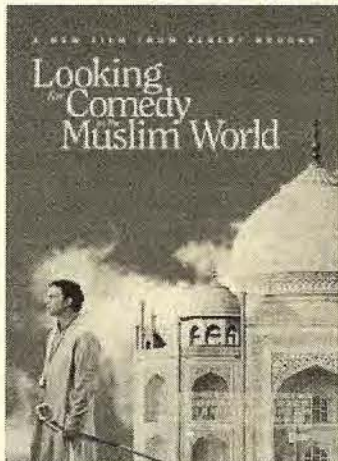
Whenever an enemy is present, he is considered almost sub-human. His country is one of war, and he is constantly conspiring and plotting. Entertainment and laughter can be found only in civilized, humane cultures. Only if laughter was uncovered in the enemy's terrain, then perhaps it would be possible to negotiate with him and come to an understanding.

Such was the mentality of the United States government in the Warner Independent movie, "Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World." The government believes that if it can discover what makes the Muslims laugh, then it will be one step closer to peacefully resolving America's war against the Islamic world.

With this in mind, the U.S. government ultimately decides to send comedian Albert Brooks to both India and Pakistan to accomplish the feat and write a 500-page report on his discoveries. Partnered with two assistants from the government, Brooks makes his way first to India, where he begins searching for someone to assist him in compil-

ing his report.

A very cute scene follows, during which Brooks interviews several women to be his personal assistant for the project. Each interviewee is based on stereotypes we have of the Indian and Muslim worlds: women who don't know how to type, a woman who questions Brooks if he is Jewish, and women who aren't even capable of speaking



English. But while the scene has its comedic moments, it could have been made to be a lot funnier.

Brooks eventually comes across a young woman who actually speaks English and is educated enough to help him with his

project. A small twist is thrown in that the woman, named Maya, cannot understand comedy—specifically sarcasm; all of it just goes right over her head. Again, this could have added a very funny edge to the film, but was not pulled off successfully at all.

This continues to hold true when the story moves to Brooks and Maya meandering their way through the city of New Delhi, interrogating various passersby about what makes them laugh. The overall response: no one in New Delhi appears to have even the slightest trace of a sense of humor. Realizing that their interrogation has not been very successful, Brooks decides to stage a comedy show for the general public of India. In an extremely disappointing scene, Brooks is terrible at pulling off any of his routines and there is not really anything humorous in the responses from the audience.

An interesting side plot develops at this point, where the Indian government begins to grow suspicious of Brooks and his odd interests. Apprehensive, they start keeping tabs on him.

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Juanes, the Man that Breached a Barrier

BY MYRIAM CAMHI

Six years ago, Juan Esteban Aristizábal—better known as Juanes—left his native Colombia with his guitar, a pocketful of demos, and a heart full of hope for Los Angeles, the jungle of dreams. Some months earlier, he had split up from Ekymosis, the band he had created more than 12 years ago and with whom he had recorded five rather successful albums, in order to pursue his goals as a solo artist.

After weeks of spending his days in public libraries and college cafeterias, moving in buses all over town and changing sleeping quarters every few days, Juanes ended up at producer Gustavo Santaolalla's office, when his savings (as a musician that could only afford one guitar in his entire career) were nearly gone, and despair had started taking its toll.

In the end, or better said, in the beginning, Juanes was signed by Surco Universal and met his manager Fernán Martínez. His first album, "Fijate Bien" ("Look Closely"), impressed the critics, but did not have the same luck with the radio, which considered

him too different and unusual for the audience's taste. Not letting this disappoint him, Juanes knocked on every alternative radio station's door, made showcases at colleges and made his first video circulate MTV with some frequency.

"Fijate Bien" was a very obscure and pessimistic album, thanks partly to Juanes' background that of a young Colombian who does not know what it is to live in a peaceful country. His first single derived from the "minas quebrapatas," or "antipersonnel mines," which had blown up soldiers and children's feet in Colombia, as well as Angola. Juanes' intense feelings of belonging to his native country could not be absent in his music.

At last, when the nominees for the first edition of the Latin Grammy's were announced, the nearly unknown name of Juanes was mentioned seven times, and all eyes turned to this very nervous, humble, talented young man, whose moment of well-earned fame had finally arrived. With seven nominations, he was the show's main attraction in Los

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"Elliot, A Soldier's Fugue" Stays True to Title

BY CHAYA SARAH SOLOVEICHIK

Meet Elliot Ortiz. At the age of 18, he is one of the first soldiers sent overseas to combat in Iraq. He returns home a year later with a Purple Heart, but soon decides to head back to war and rejoin his comrades. Meet his parents, "little George" and Ginny. George braved the battles of the Vietnam War and received a similar injury to his leg, whereas Ginny served as a nurse overseas. And lastly, meet Elliot's grandfather, a veteran of the Korean War, also known as "The Forgotten War."

Seamlessly weaving together the war stories of a family spanning three generations, the Page 73 presentation of "Elliot, A Soldier's Fugue" accentuates the commonalities observed in each of their personal experiences. There are no real surprises in the show, and viewers won't find themselves in suspenseful anticipation, wondering what will subsequently occur. But what makes "Elliot" an enjoyable experience is its poetic, almost musical nature—the way one character blends into another, and the way they sometimes come together simultaneously.

Playing at the 45 Bleeker Theater until February 19 alongside the off-Broadway show "RFK: A Portrait of Robert F.

Kennedy," "Elliot" allows for audience members to be pleasantly arranged in folding chairs along three sides of an open area. The indented circle in the wooden floor contains merely a bench as its furnishings, while the back wall is a meshed assortment of green and purple flowers that functions as a garden throughout the production.

Written by Quiara Alegria Hudes and directed by Davis McCallum, the show begins with Elliot Ortiz (played by Armando Riesco) leaving for Iraq after war is declared. From the start, viewers are pulled into "Elliot" by its swift progression as the four sole characters quickly switch off speaking. Employed throughout the presentation, this tactic is especially poignant when Elliot and his father (Triney Sandoval) are each compelled to kill an enemy combatant for the first time. The scenes flit fluidly and repeatedly between the two characters, thereby emphasizing the similarity of their experiences and complex emotions. By the end of this exchange, they're even acting at the same time.

In another scene, the distinctive music and singing of "Grandpop" (Mateo Gomez), "Pop" and Elliot fuse together. The grandfather lovingly plays the flute he carried with him to Korea, while George simultane-

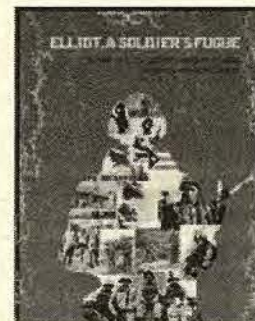
ously intones a boisterous army chant and Elliot hums to the strong, rollicking beat of his contemporary music. Without using any words, the concurrent correlation and detachment between the characters is evident.

Music, and more specifically the grandfather's flute, runs like a refrain throughout the show. "Everyone asked me about my service—how old I was—but all I know is the music I played at the time," Grandpop comments softly to the audience. He eventually confers the instrument to "little George" with the directive, "You're a man. Teach yourself how to play." But George, who honestly intends to bestow the flute to his child in the future, ultimately discards it in anguish after his comrades are killed in battle.

"Elliot, A Soldier's Fugue" is not a political commentary on the current situation in Iraq and was never intended as such. Rather, as Hudes explained in the panel following the February 2 presentation, the show concerns "personal connection more than anything." This is clearly manifested throughout the play: when the characters depart home for war, when they are obligated to kill others, when a sense of solidarity is conveyed between the family members, and when they return home and opt whether to talk

about their experiences or remain silent and detached. Humor is also incorporated, including the scene with Elliot in Iraq discussing the various cereals he would have to choose between were he eating breakfast at home, and this consistently lends a light touch to the play.

The panel itself was interesting, owing both to the members comprising the panel and the



involvement of the audience. Participants included the playwright; Ned Parker, a war correspondent stationed in Iraq from March 2003 until May 2005; and Beth and Michael Norman, both authors and professors at New York University. Michael in fact fought in the Vietnam War.

Aside from the entertaining trivia (Beth Norman's favorite war movie is "The Best Years of Our Lives," and Hudes loves Tim O'Brien's novel, "The Things They Carried") as well as the friendly, often humorous banter of the panelists, the discussion

pertaining to the play itself and war in general was of especial interest. Parker alluded to the noted Samuel Fuller, who was involved in the production of many films relating to war and claimed that depicting war requires placing a machine gun on the stage and drawing the trigger. Hudes countered that her play focused on what soldiers experienced "internally," to comprehend "someone's experiences through their psyche and heart."

Hudes essentially based "Elliot" on the war experiences of her own relatives, specifically that of her younger cousin fighting in Iraq. "I just couldn't get it out of my mind," Hudes said, "what that would mean for the rest of his life. I didn't know what that would be, but that question led me to write [the play]." One audience member in particular was glad she did, claiming near the end of the evening that "Elliot, A Soldier's Fugue" was moving and "quite skillfully written." It was certainly an enjoyable watch—and the intermittent rumbling of the subway running nearby only added to the poignant effect.

A Plot Revealed, Picture by Picture

BY CHAYA SARAH SOLOVEICHIK

At roughly 150 pages, Will Eisner's "The Plot: The Secret Story of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion" reads like a lengthy comic strip. But unlike other comics, "The Plot" is not an attempt at humor or to garner laughs, leading the Italian author, Umberto Eco, to dub it a "tragic book" in his introduction. Eisner tackles a serious issue, guiding his readers step by step through the origins of the "Protocols" and its adverse consequences.

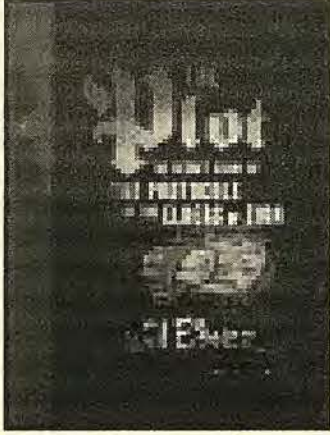
Extremely influential in initiating the production of comics during the 1930s, Eisner went on to create many notable comic strips and produce what's considered to be the first "graphic novel." He is also the beneficiary of the second Lifetime Achievement Award to be granted by the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, and it is consequently no surprise that "The Eisner" refers to the highest possible honor for an individual to attain for his accomplishments in comics.

In "The Plot," Eisner only continues to impress. This is certainly fitting, considering that he worked intermittently on this undertaking for approximately 20 years, managing to complete it only a month before his death on January 3, 2005. Growing up, Eisner encountered much anti-Semitism and was interested in the methods employed by such oppressors to spread their hate. He explores this issue throughout "The Plot" and blends historical facts and drawings to make for an exciting and absorbing read, taking readers from the mid-1800s to the present.

Eisner immediately introduces readers to Marcus Joly, a Frenchman known for authoring "The Dialogue in Hell between

Machiavelli and Montesquieu" in 1864, in which he censures the current ruler, Napoleon III, by comparing him to the notorious Machiavelli. Joly is a passionate man, seen raising his arms in defiance and glaring in determination as he condemns the French despot.

The scene swiftly changes. Mathieu Golovinski is a child growing up in Russia, later exiled to France where he works for the Russian secret police, dedicated to supporting the tsar. In 1898, he



essentially plagiarizes from Joly's book to produce "The Protocols of Zion," accusing the power-hungry Jews of causing the impending Russian revolution. Eisner creatively incorporates parallel sections from the "Protocols" and "Dialogue in Hell" to show how Golovinski primarily copied from Joly's text, merely altering the wording slightly and changing, for instance, the word "humanity" in "Dialogue in Hell" to "goyim" in the "Protocols."

Throughout the remainder of the book, Eisner emphasizes how the "Protocols" continuously impacts history although its counterfeit nature has been revealed time after time. One character can be found exclaiming, "Well, that puts an end to the 'Protocols' once and for all! No

one will be able to use it again!" and this refrain resonates throughout "The Plot." Reporting for The Times in London, Philip Graves exposed the true origins of the "Protocols" in 1921. A judge denounced the "Protocols" again in a 1935 court case in Bern, Switzerland. And in 1964, the United States Senate even released a document condemning the infamous forgery. Even so, the "Protocols" was an influential factor during the Holocaust and additional copies have been published over the years. Eisner includes drawings of the various book covers issued, thereby incorporating history even into his illustrations.

Towards the end of "The Plot," Eisner keeps the scenes brief and succinct, transporting readers successfully and quickly from one incident and point in time to another. He doesn't dwell on unnecessary details, and in an unexpected twist, he incorporates himself into the book as well. It's especially interesting to see how Eisner portrays himself as a character, and readers can't help but notice that he neglects to mention his own name.

The background to the "Protocols" is fascinating, and Eisner merely covers the main points throughout "The Plot." Writing primarily in an engaging comic strip style makes it harder to express a lot of information about an issue in a short span of pages. But as a graphic novel, "The Plot" lends itself to a larger audience and allows Eisner to express himself to a greater amount of people. The graphics are extremely well-done and make the personalities involved come across as less remote, all the while bringing readers into the thick of history.

Kabbalah: A Band Revisited

BY PEREL SKIER

It's a frozen morning in Milwaukee, and with a blanket wrapped around my shoulders and cookie dough waiting for me in the kitchen, I'm browsing through my dad's CD rack. The house is abandoned: the kids are at school, my parents are at work. A morning of cookie-eating and laughing at sad '80s albums lies ahead of me, and I think—there are definitely worse ways to spend the winter break.

After thumbing aside the expected medleys of Duran Duran and Led Zeppelin, I make an intriguing discovery: a clearly hand-labeled CD titled "Kabbalah." A glance at the back of the jewel case confirms my suspicions. This is a relic of my father's Yeshiva University band-that-was, Kabbalah. My father has played in many bands, including Shlock Rock when I was little and his own blues-and-rock act more recently. But I don't remember listening to this album. Curious, I collect my cookie dough from the kitchen and pop the CD into the stereo.

Surprising myself, I find my father's CD fascinating. Before describing the music in further detail, however, there's something I must explain. For a long time, I've actually felt strange discussing my father's YU band. It's so easy for anyone to dismiss my enthusiasm with, "He's her father—of course she likes it!" But if you only knew. I can't resist laughing when I hear that, because if you knew our history, you would realize that, oddly enough, the inverse is closer to the truth.

My dad has been recording and performing all my life. As preschoolers, my brothers and I used to dance around in the living room to Shlock Rock records (lit-

erally records—turntables and all). But the songs were as familiar to me growing up as the wallpaper in the kitchen: something you know so well, you don't even see it anymore. I suppose it's somewhat similar to religious children who are taught to daven from an early age. You know the words so well, you have no reason to stop and think about their meaning. My father's music was a fact of life, and to me, there was a stark difference between that and the kind of thing you lay in bed all night listening to over and over.

As a teenager, I also dismissed my father's music. In the first place, he writes Jewish music, and I was bitterly disappointed in Jewish music by the time I was fourteen. All the students in my day school merely listened to Journeys, the Chevra, Lev Tahor, and the Miami Boys Choir (possibly a different boys' choir?). They all sounded the same to me: overdone, heartless and boring. I wanted music to express itself in ways I had not thought of before, to be emotive, to understand me, to represent me, to capture moods and stories and ideas. Above all, I just wanted to hear something interesting. This was a need that Jewish music, or my concept of it at the time—with its cut-and-paste lyrics and computer-generated harmonies—could not fully satisfy for me. My father? Less than that.

Throughout high school, the albums sprawled across the nightstand under my stereo came from increasingly obscure artists. "Eclectic" is probably the nice term for it. My father, however, just thought I was nuts. Nothing I listened to was good enough for him. Either the chord progression

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Conquering the World, One Song at a Time: One-on-One with Anita Rogers

BY ESTHER FISCHER

Anita Rogers was described to me as "an extremely talented, beautiful opera singer from Greece." So imagine my surprise when in walks an undoubtedly beautiful and young Jewish girl—but sporting an impeccable British accent. "I love the accent," I tell her. "But I'm confused; where are you from?" At which she gladly tells me the story of her life.

Anita was born in Dorset, England to a non-Jewish father from Ireland and a Jewish mother originally from England, but raised in Prague. At the age of four, she moved with her family to Wales, but her father, a painter, was seeking something innovative and undiscovered—and he was in love with Greece. When Anita was seven, the family consequently purchased a camper van and traveled around Greece and the nearby islands in search

of beautiful landscapes that served as inspiration for her father's paintings. They ultimately settled in a picturesque house in the countryside, where they lived off the land and maintained chickens and vegetables in the backyard.

Artistic talent runs in the family. Anita's great-grandfather was an opera singer who even sang with Enrico Caruso, and her uncle Graham Rogers was also an opera singer, and a violinist as well. Her father loved not only painting, but also music. Walking the streets of Greece one day and carrying a bouzouki (a traditional Greek instrument), Anita's father was stopped by a passerby who requested that he perform. They played and sang together for 12 hours, while many townspeople took out their chairs and tables and sat down to listen leisurely. Anita's parents were essentially more interested in folk music, however, and it is her

uncle who is primarily responsible for introducing her to the world of opera.

Anita began studying with a teacher who taught her the German technique of singing (which, as I understand, is somewhat different from the Italian school) and spent a year at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, where she enrolled with the harp as her second "instrument." She subsequently went on to Trinity College where she sang much Baroque music, including Bach and Handel. In London, Anita enrolled in University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies to study Jewish music. But she did not want to remain in England for long. "The way of thinking is too rigid within so much of the classical world, with not enough cross over into other areas—it was either folk or classical," she says and maintains that an individual cannot develop

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A Line like No Other

BY OBSERVER STAFF

You would expect "Line" to be humorous. Even the premise of this off-off Broadway show indicates inherent comedy: five dissimilar people waiting on line for approximately an hour, each one vying to be first. What's more, they all seem rather unaware and indifferent as to what exactly they're waiting on line for. Currently in its 35th year, Israel Horovitz's "Line" is also often hailed as the "longest running play in off-off Broadway history" and has been presented throughout the world. But in spite of all this, many of the jokes spewed throughout "Line" come across as somewhat repetitive and expected, and the show, currently playing at the Thirteenth Street Repertory Company, is not so much humorous as it is thought-provoking.

With its red awning sticking out over the sidewalk, the theater itself is worth seeing. The entrance is down a few steps and



opens into an attic-like room: small, cluttered and cozy. Multiple chairs are strewn somewhat haphazardly throughout the area, various pictures adorn the walls, and a door at the back of the room leads into the actual theater, containing only a few rows of chairs facing a rusty-looking stage. But in this case, the smallness merely enhances the experi-

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Back From a Village Above the Clouds

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like the *mishnaic* ovens described in Jewish literature. We ate in one family's living room, which had a small, very broken wooden piece of furniture in the corner and a tiny black-and-white TV which was probably bought multiple secondhand which shows, very fuzzily, Mexican soap operas. The one time that it was on over our trip the entire room filled up with village kids to watch. To operate it they must connect it to their car battery. They have a light bulb which lights up the living room area which they could also use their car to operate. Not both at the same time. They wouldn't be able to keep something like a refrigerator running all the time and also really cannot afford it. Because of that they can't keep food for very long. The kitchen had a small bookshelf with a few small things. It is unclear what they eat because all week all we saw in the kitchen was our food being prepared by Donya Arlinda, a Honduran woman who works for the AJWS when they have trips out there. They don't have telephones in the village—the area is way too high up for anyone to bother with setting up telephone poles. Yet the girl going to med school in Cuba has a cell phone. The discrepancies in development and technology seemed random and very uneven—basically the families can't afford any more than what they have, and will choose to have that tiny TV over a fridge because a fridge would require a ton of investment and energy to sustain, which they can't afford. In terms of the village setup, each house is pretty far away from each other, about 10 minutes up or down hill. Because of that we stayed in largely the same area for the week with a few explo-

rations in the middle. It's hard to describe the houses because the same basic ingredients make it seem like ours: a front door, walls and a roof. But otherwise it is hardly comparable to our forms of shelter. The kitchen window is just a hole in the wall, no screen, no glass. The bedrooms off the side of the living room have cloths as doors. It is so simple. Maybe too simple, maybe not. It's an interesting debate. The small stream in the pictures was about 20 minutes away from where we stayed.

Because of all this the village provided us with what we think of as a camp environment. That combined with mixing cement, spackling, and other such manually laborious activities allowed us a rendezvous with nature, something which, as I look out from the 20th floor of my dormitory window in Manhattan, I realize is very lacking in my life. From the latrines to the lack of mirrors—at one point during the week I found myself standing in front of a van's rear view mirror and took a double take, whoa that's me in a mirror—we were able to ignore silly things that a lot of us get hung up on in the city life. That naturalness and the escape from our usual contexts made everyone in the group's personalities really come out and we all experienced the amazing week together. Working and spending time with the villagers and our discussion groups culminated with a super-special Shabbos experience. We couldn't have freshly cooked foods and couldn't work so we ate small meals, had a bunch of sessions and sang and sang and sang. By the end of the trip we created a community of dedicated YU students who are going to try really hard to raise awareness on and off

campus about important global issues. It's true that in the past the Orthodox Jewish community has not been extremely involved in some of these issues, as it is very insulated, and often that is a good thing. But things like the genocide in Darfur and the poverty in two-thirds of the world cannot be ignored. I urge you to use at least all your political power to fight for what we all know is right.

The name of the village where all this happened, you'll recall, is Las Bendiciones. There could be no more an appropriate name for such a place. It is a small village whose community is blessed with happiness despite its simple lifestyle. It is a community that made all of us realize that we must recognize what we have in our communities and thank God for them. It is a community that's caused me to see a larger context in which to place our busy New York lives and to think twice before each blessing and to say it with so much more intent. Thank God for Las Bendiciones.

Basically the trip was amazing on every level: we were extremely productive, back to nature, created a community of YU students that will raise awareness about public issues. Each of us being plucked out of our comfort zones and groups of friends allowed for us to learn of each others' sincerity in their service of God and dealing with other people. Together we learned we can do it and will continue to work together, with you, to help improve this world.

YU in Israel Over Winter Break

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learning about the relocated communities and the disengagement in general by listening to speakers, Wednesday's activity was more hands-on and interactive. The group visited a greenhouse in Ashkelon that had been moved from Gush Katif by the woman to whom it belonged because she wanted to ensure that it would not be damaged or destroyed. Since the summer, thousands of Israelis have volunteered their time and hands to this cause; there is even who quit his job and dedicates his time to helping her plant and weed. So while Israeli volunteers abound, the YU students were the first individuals from outside the country to help with this cause, an effort which was greatly appreciated.

As the mission came to an end, Lewin explained that the activities thus far had been rather disheartening and one could easily walk away with feelings of hopelessness. She said that this

mood was offset by the final program, a dinner which was open to YU students, alumni and university-aged Israelis. With a turnout of about 50 YU students and a corresponding number of Israelis, the evening was about dialogue and understanding Jewish and Israeli identity. With ten seated to a table, the participants engaged in discussions prompted by cue cards set out on each table with different questions. For example, the initial "icebreaker" question asked each person to introduce himself or herself and name his or her hero. With Israelis from varying backgrounds participating and contributing to the discussion, it allowed the YU students to gain a broad perspective on how the disengagement affected the different segments of Israeli society. Lewin mentioned that until the dinner, it was difficult not to feel shocked by the realization that people had forced their own families, so to speak, out of their homes. After meeting with these different students, she felt

that a certain gap could be bridged in trying to come to terms with that issue. The program also included speeches from President Joel, Menachem Menchel and a number of the Israeli participants.

In describing the goal of the mission, Schiller explained that in putting together the programming the organizers had hoped "to provide educational opportunities that were exciting and that allowed the students to take a few hours or days from their limited vacation time and perform acts of *hesed*." Agatstein, who had spent the summer in Israel and who was there at the time of the disengagement, felt the programs helped her better understand the aftermath. "I was involved in the raffle and the fundraising before going on this trip," she said, "but seeing it for myself and listening to individual stories motivated me to let people in America know that there is work to be done, and that they must reach out to their brothers and sisters in Israel."

Kabbalah

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was recycled, or it was too simple, or too strange. Anything I liked about a song was dismissed—he knew another band that did it first, and not only first, but *better*. Oh, how I fumed. I was just learning to play guitar then, and it frustrated me beyond words, that claim of "better." Why did more complicated mean better? Why did *older* mean better? I related to my new, simple songs; they meant something to me. Why couldn't he hear what I heard? No, my father didn't even understand what I wanted from music. There was no way his music could stand for me.

And, with the hypocrisy unique to the self-proclaimed open-minded, I wrote my dad off.

Now fast forward to winter break. I am a little bit older and perhaps a touch less eclectic, but with my background, it's clear that my dad would have to work pretty hard to score any points with me.

The album I play in my kitchen is really a random mix of two releases—"Kabbalah Classic" and "Kabbalah." The distinction between the albums is immaterial, though, because—hold on to your hat, Virginia—each song maintains a completely different style and structure than the next.

"Adon Olam," for example, opens with a quiet, delayed arpeggio on the electric guitar. The bass line kicks in with the drums, and it has its own clear, simple melody. Not just the four notes necessary to anchor the other instruments in the song, but also not an overblown exercise in technical musicianship, it gives "Adon Olam" a distinct mood: the song has a slightly dark, introspective feel. Think of some of the more melodic 80s rockers, such as U2 and The Police.

Then there's "Va'ani," with a layered intro of synth, sequencers, and a few ringing notes on the electric guitar that

would make the Moody Blues proud. It eventually breaks down into a power-pop dream of harmonies, dangling guitar lines, and a bassline that bounces over the spectrum. The song fades out over another layering of synth and a saxophone solo that makes you feel the instrument's sad and cheesy employment in the Chevre albums is undeserved.

But if you think you now have Kabbalah pegged as a moody synth band, you would be wrong again. Witness "Ashrei," a two-minute fifteen-second clock-er (most Jewish songs aren't even *started* by then!) that simply rocks out Ramones-style. You have your garage-rock guitars, a piano that tap-dances over the song, and a brief but wild solo that inspires air guitar. Not that you heard it from me.

What makes "Kabbalah" so interesting is the band's ability to carefully construct a song with its own atmosphere, its own idea—and not bloat it with meaningless solos. In stark contrast to the gaudy and garish albums with the biggest sales, they keep their songs simple, focused and intriguing. Each instrument has its own hooky line to play, and when they do solo, rather than hitting every note in the scale, they hit the ones you don't expect them to play. And most of the time, you are pleasantly surprised.

Sitting in my kitchen over winter break, I know that I was. All the things I had been looking for in Jewish music was on an old CD in my kitchen. Who would have thought?

Maybe I ought to score my dad a few points.

If you would like to listen to the songs I referenced here or other Kabbalah songs, as well as read the band's official and amusing biography, go to www.mosheskier.com.

New Library Hours

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The Strangers Who Were Not So Strange

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and wheel-barreling concrete, spackling, and painting as well as several other tasks. The other group's mission was to create a huge map of the world to cover the wall of the building adjacent to the school we were constructing. On one side of the mural, the verse "Vchol bonayich limudeih hashem vrav shalom bonayich" was to be written in Hebrew and on the other side in Spanish.

When the sun was just over our heads, we all took a break for lunch followed by a session led by our fearless American Jewish World Service leaders, Ira and Rachel, and a Peace Corps member, Amanda. We discussed such issues as the roots and meaning of poverty, globalization, the values Americans live by, the various implications of the term "tzelem elokim" (image of God), the balance between helping the Jewish community and the global one, as well as many other thought-provoking topics. After this—back to work until dark.

While this was the basic routine for the duration of the week, we learned very quickly to expect the unexpected. After all, we did not expect to see three pickup trucks filled with Honduran children from the surrounding area coming to play with us. Additionally, we did not expect that when Cesar Armando Acosta said that he wants us to love God together he meant that he was bringing his Evangelical serv-

ice to the village to pray with us. We certainly did not expect to participate in soccer games (by this I mean run back and forth while the Hondurans play) in which, to get a ball that went off the cliff, you simply jump off the cliff after it.

Though many of these experiences transformed some of my assumptions coming in, one in particular was indicative of this change. Leaving one of our night sessions on our second day in Honduras, we were greeted by a large number of the villagers, old and young, standing around a bonfire waiting for us to join them.

Positioned opposite the Hondurans, the flames and smoke separating us, I realized again the division—it was us on one side, with our fiberglass nalgene bottles containing purified water, and them on the other, barefoot and lacking the malaria pills we were so careful to take. Before I could finalize my thoughts, our group started singing "Od yavo shalom aleinu." Once we had finished, without saying a word, our hosts began a song in Spanish that we followed with another song in Hebrew. This exchange went on

for at least half an hour in what became a Honduran-American color war (we made sure to fit in the theme song to the Fresh Prince of Bell Air). Finally, we began a song that we had heard them sing the day before, "solo dios hace al hombre feliz," at which point they joined in and we were all singing together that "only God makes man happy." While it would be a lie to say that I then realized that we were all the same and that we could fully relate to one another, I did recognize that the division might not be as big as I had thought and that the similarities in our values, aspira-

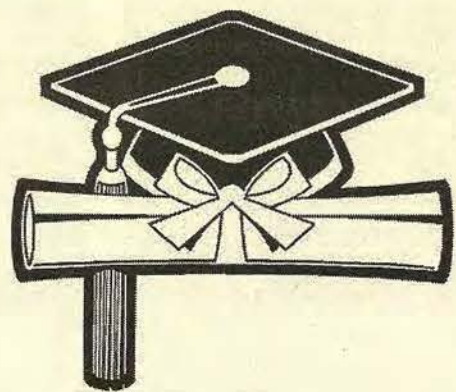
tions, and struggles possibly outweigh the differences. that there was a mutual connection made. There was us—the YU students who value family and friends, have hopes for the future, and believe in the kingship of God—and them, the Honduran natives who value family and friends, have hopes for the future, and believe in the kingship of God. I understood them and now I wanted to help.

It is for this reason that I am now working with the rest of the amazing YU group on several ways to bring the issue of social justice onto our campus. Several projects that we're working on that I'm sure you'll hear more about are Darfur awareness, promotion of Fair Trade coffee on campus, Friday with the Congressman, and a movie series. We are also planning to put together a lecture series about the responsibility we have as Jews to the world, featuring various Roshei Yeshiva as well as world experts on the subject. If anyone would like to help with any of these activities or if you have other ideas, contact Rebecca Stone at rstone@yu.edu.

Up on the Honduran hills, we built many castles in the air...and a school. While after much hard work we put down the foundations for the school, it's now time to build the foundations for these castles, and in doing this, we need your help.



through laughing with Mario and Sandy, discussing the Bible and belief in God with Don Gonzales, helping Doña Erlinda in the kitchen, going mud-sliding with Edwin, or listening to Don Mario discuss his hope that his children receive the education that he never got. By the end of the trip, after all the hugs and the goodbyes, I really felt



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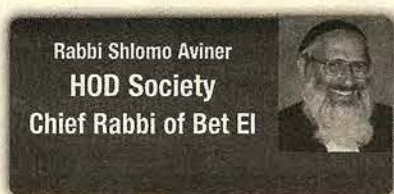
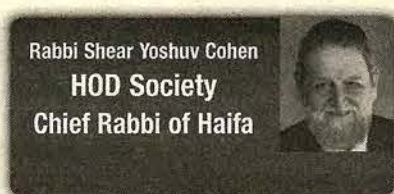
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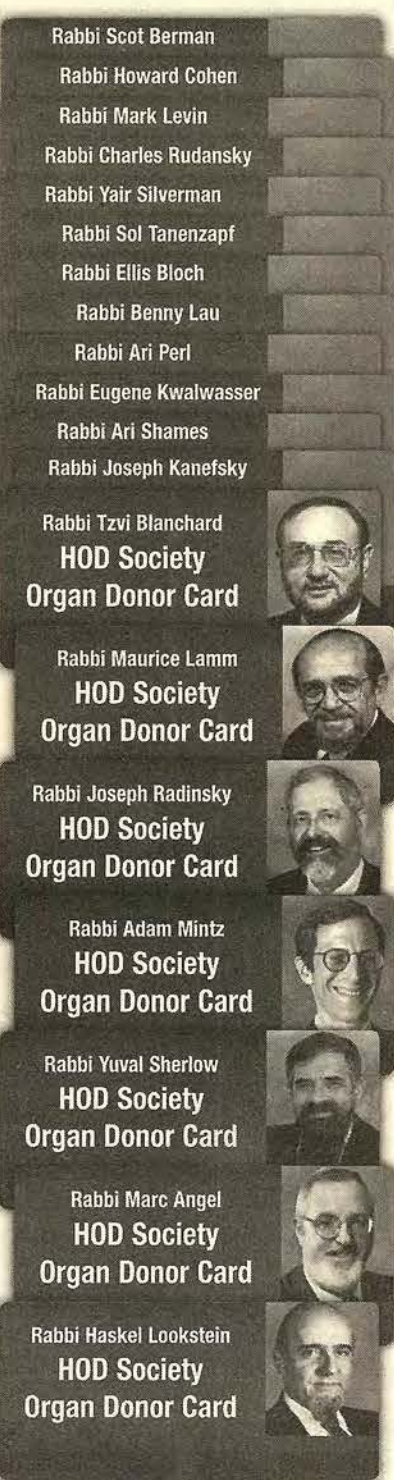
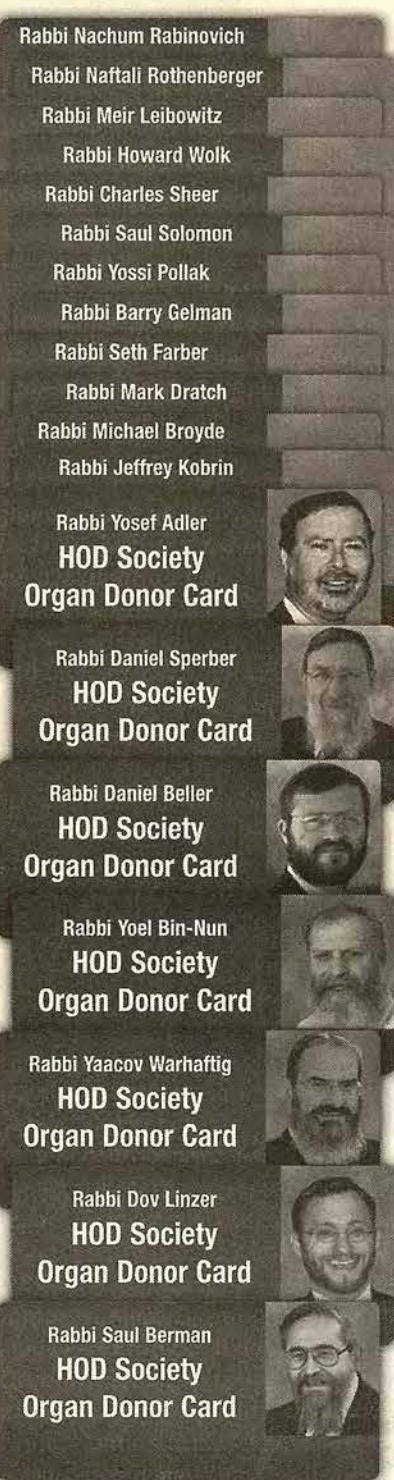
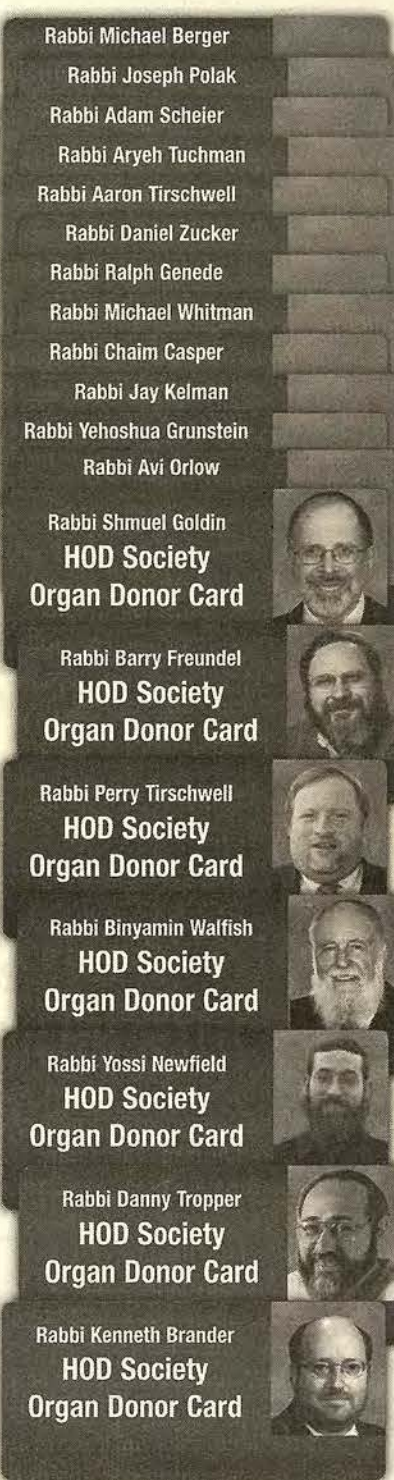
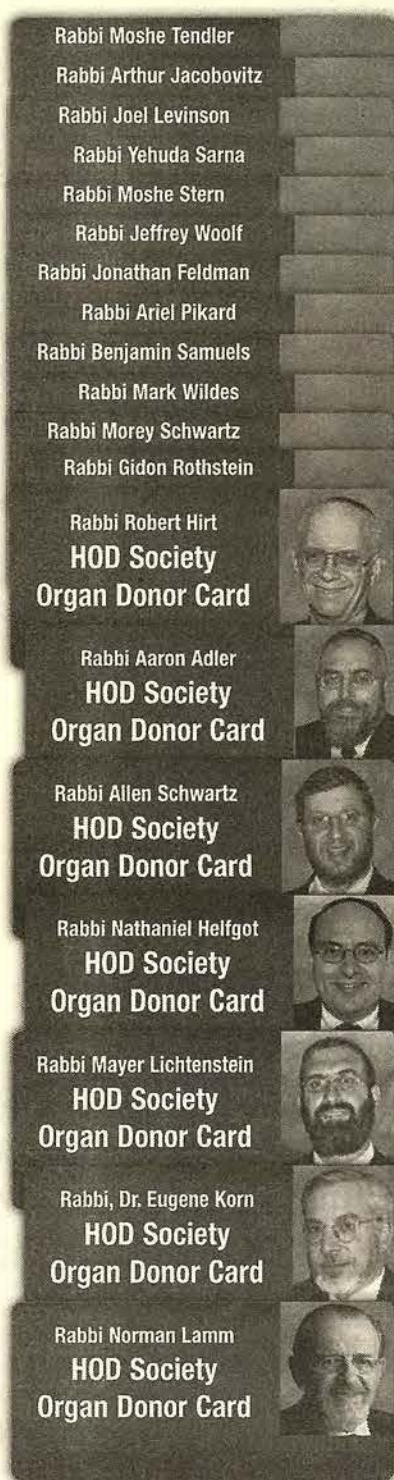
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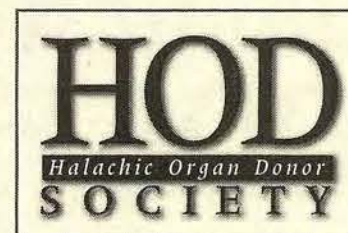
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Comedy in the Muslim World

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Meanwhile, Brooks has just learned that he cannot actually enter Pakistan to observe Pakistani comedic tendencies. However, his two government assistants claim they can transport him secretly over the border to spend a few hours with some Pakistani comedians who are extremely interested in meeting him. Brooks tentatively agrees, and having crossed the border, discovers that the few Pakistanis meeting him actually seem to have a sense of humor. They laugh at everything Brooks does as he reenacts his unsuccessful comedy act from New Dehli for them. However, they also can't understand anything he's saying, because they don't speak English.

Now, both the Indian government and the Pakistani government are keeping an eye on Brooks. His secret mission over the border into Pakistan becomes known to them, and each country strengthens its security there. The news in America also suggests that a war might be brewing.

Brooks' government assistants caution Brooks to leave India immediately for the sake of security, whereby Brooks reluctantly abandons his project and returns to his home in America. Brooks' report, at approximately four pages long, is rejected by the government, and a huge weapon is created instead. Therefore, not only does the mission fail, but comedy apparently just does not exist in the Muslim world—or at least not in New Dehli, India. The U.S. government resorts to warfare.

The idea of the movie was a good one, and it had a lot of potential to be extremely funny. But sadly, Albert Brooks was unable to pull it off. Brooks plays the voice of Marlin from the movie "Finding Nemo," and in that movie, the joke goes that although Marlin is a clown fish, he is extremely unfunny. Though I'm sure this was not the intention, Brooks seemed more like the humorless clown fish Marlin in "Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World" than he did a comedian.

"Line"

continued from page 17

ence—and when one of the characters roams the aisle between the two columns of seats during the show, the audience is really pulled into the play.

The show begins strongly, with the character Fleming waiting first on line. His name embroidered on a blue-and-white striped baseball jersey, the somewhat dazed Fleming sings to himself "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" haltingly and deliberately. He doesn't quite know how to handle himself when Steven "the kid" arrives and can only muster in response to Steven's attempts to steal first (involving pictures in his wallet and Mozart humming), "I'm first. All I know is I'm first." But the situation only grows more complicated with the subsequent swift arrival of the other characters: the only female character, Molly; the somewhat aggressive Dolan; and Molly's nervous and stuttering husband, Arnall.

Much of the characters' attempts to slyly gain the acclaimed first position in line are predictable, including the actual fighting that occurs near the end of the play. But certain aspects of "Line" are intriguing. When Steven eventually finds himself last in line, for instance, he resourcefully positions himself on the other side of the line, opposite the character currently first in line, and claims that the line actually faces in the other direction. Of course, the others believe him. The end of "Line"—although somewhat unbelievable—is also thought-

provoking and makes for one of the best scenes in the show.

Of all the characters, the extremely anxious and obsessive Arnall is portrayed the most effectively. Unlike other attempted jokes throughout "Line" which fall flat, Arnall is humorous without even trying—or, perhaps, because he doesn't try. When he digresses into a short monologue about the origin of his name, he addresses the audience in complete sincerity and stammering seriousness: his mother wanted to name him Arthur, his father—Nathan, and his grandmother—Lloyd, so they merely took the first two letters of each to create Arnall.

The play primarily concerns itself with the intense competition to be first, but an underlying theme throughout the show involves the relationship between Molly and Arnall. Molly is obviously an unfaithful wife, but her husband repeatedly declares, "Never leave yourself open for surprises, and you'll never be surprised." This subplot adds an interesting dimension to "Line," but is occasionally emphasized too much and sometimes seems to overtake the rest of the play.

Although "Line" isn't as satisfactory as you would expect the longest running off-off Broadway show to be, the 13th Street Repertory Company is a theater worth visiting, even if for another play. And in all likelihood, you will not have to wait long on line to see the show.

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Angeles, which was scheduled for the fateful day of September 11, 2001. The ceremony was obviously cancelled and rescheduled for a new date, and Juanes had even considered the notion of not going, nervous and surprised as he was because of the nominations, thinking he would be lost amongst the famous people that would be attending. But ultimately, everyone was applauding his accomplishments.

The second album served as proof that the first was not mere beginner's luck, and it surpassed all expectations. "Un Día Normal" ("A Normal Day") was simply one of the bestselling Latin albums in the world. Five of its songs were instant radio hits, and the album did not leave the Billboard 10 for nearly 100 weeks. Juanes' reputation took hold in Latin America as well, and soon enough, his music also started to gain popularity even in Europe, which was a great feat considering the fact that it was a Spanish album.

Juanes' recorded duets with Nelly Furtado and the Black Eyed Peas, his global sales reached nearly two million albums, and his world tour consisted of 138 concerts in 17 countries. His concerts sold out in New York, Los Angeles, London,

Paris, Amsterdam, Bogotá, and many other cities.

The triumph of "Un Día Normal" had placed Juanes in a nearly unreachable place, and the public was waiting for his never-ending tour to finish so he could begin writing the songs for his third album. But surprisingly, he had already written them in the portable studio he used to set up in hotel rooms, tour buses, air-



ports, and whenever he had a minute between rehearsals and concerts. The traveler's solitude, the news on CNN, the war in Colombia, his newborn daughter, his nagging mother and all the people he saw and heard served as the inspiration for the 12 songs presented in his new work, once more accomplishing what no one thought could be done. "Mi Sangre" ("My Blood") was immediately considered a great success, with more than 12 weeks at the number one spot in the

Billboard charts. The album continues to sell nearly a million copies globally only five months after its release, and has gone platinum in Spain, Argentina and Chile.

Juanes is clearly a consolidated artist who is only starting, although judging by his fruitful career full of triumphs and achievements, it would seem like he had been in this variant music planet for a much longer time, where phenomena like these appear only once every 20 years.

In the wake of the crossover mania that characterizes the Latin music industry nowadays (Shakira, Ricky Martin and Thalia, to name a few, have released their English albums quite recently), what most amazes me about this brilliant and talented young man is that to be so great an

artist, he only needs to write, sing and play his own songs in his own language, an act that proves to be enough to make him the biggest and most important Latin artist throughout the world. His music knows no boundaries, and his voice is heard in countries as foreign as France and Germany, where he recently went platinum, showing us that the language of music is truly universal and its message truly everlasting.

Anita Rogers

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musically within that framework.

And so Anita continued her studies in a summer program in Rome, which she describes as "amazing." From the forty-odd students, Anita was the only singer selected to stay on in an apprenticeship based in Italy, where she sang for Luciana D'Intino, who set her up to study with her teacher, Mirella Parutto. Her coach and rock was Eddie De Nadai, and it was then that she was introduced to more operatic composers such as Puccini, which required a stronger singing technique for the increased volume. Anita only started singing opera from Italy onwards. Before then, she was interested in many different types of music, especially Jewish music. So it was with this notion in mind that she had the opportunity to cross the Atlantic.

After coming to New York, Anita was (and continues to be) employed as a Sephardic music teacher at the Chabad of Roslyn by Rabbi Aaron Konikov, since her second degree from SOAS was in Sephardic music. But she has bigger plans for herself and, with the assistance of her extremely fine teacher David Jones, is preparing for auditions for several fellowships, including Virginia Opera's IOA and the Tucker Foundation, which David Tucker, son of the famous

American tenor, Richard Tucker, suggested to her. As both a soprano and mezzo, she crosses much of her repertoire. But her favorite of the moment is La Cenerentola (Cinderella) by Rossini. "It is fun and fits my voice perfectly," she says. Other favorites include Mahler (her big obsession), Bach and Brahms.

Opera students, however, must do more than practice singing. In fact, schools emphasize learning languages and pronunciation, because that allows singers to imitate foreign lyrics incorporated into the pieces they sing. Anita now speaks Italian, French, Czech and German. Opera students also take acting and dancing classes. According to Anita, it is merely a myth that opera singers must be fat to sing properly, although this was the popular belief years ago. Anita keeps herself in shape by doing regular yoga exercises, thereby keeping her support muscles strong and elastic. These exercises also help her control her breath, which is very important to singing technique. Every day, she practices yoga for an hour and a half and works on her breathing all day. She vocalizes for no more than an hour, since it is important not to vocalize too much. Posture and relaxation are also key aspects.

In response to my interest regarding the difference in the mentalities of American and

European audiences to classical music in general and particularly opera, Anita discusses the exciting opera scene in New York. People have a lot of gumption and are more open-minded, while singers such as Renee Fleming are more into crossing genres (she has, for instance, been known to sing jazz music). Anita has also been fortunate to find a fantastic teacher (the key to being a successful singer), and she feels the opportunities here are very good, especially for a diverse singer. And as to my concern about declining opera audiences, she rapidly shakes it off, saying "More people go than you think." Opera is classic and will continue to live on.

Finally, we discuss her advice for aspiring singers. "A good teacher is the most important thing," she enthuses, and if your voice ever hurts while singing, you should leave the teacher. They must discuss breath and work on your body, while not enough stress can be placed on technique. But when performing, you need to express yourself individually and move audiences. Don't think about technique then—just think about the music and become genuinely immersed in it. This is not difficult, considering the vast amount of beautiful music in the world. Anita performs many times, sings a lot and smiles, because she loves every moment of it.

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FASHION

Love Your Neighbor—Buy a Shoe

BY CHAVIE MACHEFSKY

Those of you unfortunate shoppers who missed the Shoe-Inn Last Call Warehouse Sale this week are probably lacking what I now have in abundance—namely, bruises, scrapes, and carpet burn. I've never been one to fancy being knocked around by several dozen leather purses slung over an equal amount of women's pointy shoulders, but I was hoping this shopping trip might be worth the masochistic plight. I, therefore, found myself in the majestic Gotham Hall on Broadway and 36th Street. Walking into the grand ballroom, there were tables set up with shoe boxes as far as the eye could see. In fact, it was all my eyes did see for a good ten minutes. It was only after my first run around the size 7 1/2 table that I noticed my surroundings.

Marble floors, limestone pillars, a gilded chandelier and a 120-foot ceiling crowned by a 300-square foot stained glass dome left me spinning and wondering to myself, "Where am I?" However, I could not stand to marvel for long, as none of my

fellow shoppers seemed to notice the Art Nouveau architecture, and at any moment one of them might snatch my perfect pair of shoes—you know, the ones, *the* perfect pair, the ones I was quite possibly separated from at birth—my *sole*-mates.

After one more round rummaging through the piles, I discovered that the components of this extravaganza were exactly what one would expect to find at a last call sale—the dregs and vestiges of not only this season, but many preceding ones as well. Which is quite possibly good news for those of you who may have some abnormal urge to relive your adolescent fashion mistakes; there was an abundance of Shoox. But before you go running out to purchase the nostalgic footwear of your teen years, allow me to recommend you ask one of your friends to break both your legs.

Among the wreckage and remains I found a blast from my past, as well. A single pair of green glittery jellies caught my eye and my breath. I lifted those fun gals out of their box and rammed them on my feet, only to

discover that without proper support, my feet look as wide as they are long. Maybe there's a reason I haven't worn jellies since I was eight.

It was then that I discovered there were shoes *under* the tables as well. Yes, of course! That's where *the* pair of shoes are hiding! Down on my hands and knees (hence the carpet burn), I slowly crawled in between other women's legs, trying not to



attract any attention to myself, or the treasure trove of shoes I had just found. And then I saw them! A darling little pair of Marc Jacobs Mary Janes—so retro, so sweet with their soft gold piping, and I could wear the neutral color with *anything*! I quietly held my breath until the woman standing above me moved on and then I pounced on my prey.

Unfortunately, once *on* my feet, the shoes looked to be an almost exact replica of those that my china dolls wear, and as cute as those porcelain heads and stuffed bodies are, I would rather not walk down the street with even one part of my body bearing resemblance to them.

It was beginning to become quite apparent that I would not be reunited with *the* pair of shoes that day. I was also learning the important lesson that, yes, even famous designers make mistakes. Terrible, hideous mistakes. Hey, they're human, too. Turning my attention from the show mutants, I allowed myself the luxury of admiring the room and observing the madness unfold. Frenzied women ran over to sales associates, while the bored and exhausted employees then tried to find the left lavender Stuart Weitzman, or the beaded Steve Madden flats in a size 6. Taking in the whole room, I noticed for the first time the clock impressed upon one of the walls. The engraving around it read, "Waste neither time nor money but use both for your own good and your neighbor's good." And on the

other side, "There is no gain so sure as that which results from economizing what you have." The sheer irony of the engravings magnified the absurdity of the whole scene, and I suddenly felt I had to leave. But not without my patent leather round-toe sling backs, or my lime green suede kitten heels. After all, those engravings had me thinking about the good of my neighborhood, and surely *everyone* in a community benefits from nice footwear—beautiful shoes are like good public schools; even if you don't make use of them yourself, they still drive property values up. And as for economizing what I have? Hey, nothing extends a wardrobe like great accessories.

So I didn't find my sole-mates that day, and I left with more battle wounds than I'd anticipated, but even the red "FINAL SALE" stamped across my receipt couldn't diminish the elated feeling one gets from economizing and giving to one's neighborhood. After all, that's all I was really looking to do at the sale, wasn't it?

SPORTS

A Devil of a Comeback

BY BELLA BELSKY

It all started around December time when the Devils really began their slide. They had a record of 12-9-2 (11/30) and then went on to lose 12 of their next 16 games. At one point the Devils were only 3 for 81 on the Power Play (12/20). Brodeur was great, but they were just not scoring enough goals to be able to win in the new NHL. The Devils also lost one of their leading scorers, Alexander Mogilny, who missed games due to an injury and was placed on waivers and later assigned to Albany.

Many people were asking what had happened to the Devils. They were always at or near the top of their division. Additionally, they have won the Stanley Cup three times in the last 11 seasons (1995, 2000, and 2003) and usually make an appearance in the playoffs each

year. But, for the majority of this season, New Jersey has wavered around the .500 mark (October record of 6-5-0).

Furthermore, to top it all off, the Devils head coach, Larry Robinson, resigned on December 19 due to the stress of the team's mediocre performance. At that point, the Devils were 14-13-5 and in fourth place in the Atlantic Division. Robinson said the pressure was bad for his health. So Lou Lamoriello, the team's general manager, took over the coaching responsibilities. Lamoriello said he only planned to coach the team until he found a replacement.

The Devils finally turned it around in the month of January.

New Jersey played to a record of 10-2-1 in that stretch, which included a nine-game winning streak. The return of star forward Patrick Elias played a key role in



the team's quick turnaround. Elias missed the first 39 games of the season because of Hepatitis

A. Since his return the Devils have stormed back, thanks to Elias' 14 points in his first 9 games back helping the Devils to win all those games. At the end of January the Devils also gave a six-year contract extension to their goaltender, Martin Brodeur.

The Olympic break is fast approaching and the Devils have no games on the schedule from February 12 through the 28th. The Hockey Tournament itself will begin on the 15th and end on the 26th. Some of the Devils will get a well deserved break, but others are taking part in the 2006 Olympics. Brodeur is the goalie for the Canadian Olympic team, and Kozlov is on the Russian team. Additionally, Brian Rafalski, Scott Gomez, and Brian Gira

are on the USA Olympic team.

With only three games left for the Devils until the Olympic break, they are 28-21-6 and third in the Atlantic Division. At 62 points they are only 10 points behind the division leading Rangers. After New Jersey's shaky beginning, they are once again skating hard and are one of the hottest teams in the NHL at the moment. The New Jersey Devils found a way to turn it all the way around and are now once again in contention in their division. Furthermore, with the chemistry on the new offensive line of Gira, Elias, and Gomez, the second half of the season looks more promising than the first.

SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Medical Ethics Society Presents Spring Inaugural Lecture

BY ELISHEVA LEVINE
& REBECCA SINENSKY

On Wednesday, February 2, Yeshiva University's Medical Ethics Society hosted Rabbi Kenneth Brander, a renowned expert on fertility and halakha. He delivered a lecture on the halakhic aspects of Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD). This spring inaugural lecture for the Medical Ethics Society was entitled "Playing God: Can I Choose My Child?: A Torah Perspective." It attracted approximately 200 Yeshiva University (YU) students and faculty, as well as students from other universities, including NYU and Columbia.

Rabbi Brander is the dean of the Center for the Jewish Future at YU. He received his ordination from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary in 1986. He also received special ordination from Machon Puah, a center of medical ethics in Israel, in 1999 and from Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu in the field of medical ethics—infertility, gynecology, and halakha. Rabbi Brander also serves on the Medical Ethics Society's advisory board, along with Rabbi Dr. Edward Reichman and Dr. Fred Rosner.

Rabbi Brander began with defining PGD, its methods and the ethical concerns involved. PGD is a procedure which consists of testing pre-embryos for various traits and genetic diseases before it is implanted in the uterus. Rabbi Brander focused on the issue of whether one can choose to implant only a pre-embryo which will have the characteristics he desires, for example, blond hair and blue eyes. Does halakha permit this? Are we allowed play God and choose our offspring?

The answer Rabbi Brander gave was based on various halakhic sources, mostly modern day responsa which to date have not been published, due to the evolving nature of the topic. He discussed the opinion of the Meiri in Sanhedrin who believed that since science was given to us by God, we are therefore obligated to use it for the advancement and improvement of mankind. Rabbi Brander concluded that one is allowed to test embryos for genetic diseases. However, one is not allowed to choose the gender or other traits of a pre-embryo.

Amanda Weiss (SCW '07)

remarked, "Rabbi Brander addressed truly relevant issues pertaining to the modern halakhic Jewish world. His talk opens discussion on the role of scientific discovery and advances in halakha and Jewish life. I am looking forward to future lectures organized by the Medical Ethics Society." Additionally, Chava Fischer (SCW '07) said, "The issues discussed are very important for the Jewish community. I was privileged to be a part of this memorable event. I really learned a lot and feel informed about this topic."

Yonah Bardos (YC '07), the Founder and President of the Medical Ethics Society, hopes to build off the success of the event. He commented, "With over 200 students, we [the society] were extremely happy with the turnout and hope that we can quench the thirst that the student body has shown with future events." The society also has a long-term goal of establishing a summer program in medical ethics at YU, which in the words of Bardos, will be "modeled after Machon Shlesinger at Sha'arei Tzedek hospital in Jerusalem. This program will be open to pre-med and medical students who are interested in an in-depth, intensive program to study various areas of medical ethics. Students will have an opportunity to learn with the experts and gain a solid foundation in the field. Additionally, we are very excited about a future event at Stern."

The Medical Ethics Society is also establishing a monthly series of in-depth *shiurim*. They will focus on analyzing primary sources relevant to medical ethics. The first of a series of *shiurim* sponsored by the society will be on the topic, "When Can I Call Hatzalah on Shabbos." This *shiur* will be given by Rabbi Blass, *sgan mashgiach* at YU, during Club Hour on February 23. Additionally, the Medical Ethics Society will be hosting its next event at Stern.

The lecture was sponsored by the CJF Dinner and Learn and CJF Special Projects, as well as the Yeshiva College Student Association. The Medical Ethics Society is a newly formed society focused on discussing important ethical issues involved in modern medicine from a Torah-oriented perspective.

BY JESSICA FEIG

Ask anyone from any country to name a popular American soft drink and chances are that more times than not, Coca-Cola will be his or her response. No matter where he or she grew up, everyone has tasted Coca-Cola at least once during his or her lifetime. While taking a walk in midtown Manhattan, I discovered that I could purchase a bottle of Coca-Cola on every block that I traversed. I began to wonder when and how this popular beverage was developed.

It all started in Atlanta, Georgia in May of 1886. John "Doc" Pemberton, a pharmacist, developed the formula in a three-legged brass kettle in his backyard. He claimed that this sweet brown syrup could cure indigestion and headaches. But what should he name this medicinal concoction? His bookkeeper, Frank Robinson, suggested the name Coca-Cola



since two of the main ingredients were cocaine from the coca plant of South America and caffeine from the kola nut of Africa. Being a bookkeeper, Robinson also had excellent penmanship. He wrote the words Coca-Cola in script and Pemberton liked what he saw. It became the famous script logo which is seen all around the world in advertising today.

and eventually, nine glasses a day were being sold. No one could argue that Pemberton wasn't a great inventor.

However, John Pemberton wasn't a great businessman. In 1887, Asa Candler, another Atlanta pharmacist, bought his formula for \$2,300. Since cocaine was found to be an addictive and dangerous drug at the time, Candler removed it from the original formula. Candler was a sharp businessman and by the late 1890s, sales of Coca-Cola increased dramatically due to his aggressive marketing of the product. Interestingly, between 1890 and 1900, sales had increased by over 4,000%! By the turn of the century, Coca-Cola was being sold across the United States and Canada, and the company began selling the syrup to independent bottling companies that were licensed to sell the drink.

On May 8, 1886, the syrup was mixed with carbonated water, and this soft drink, first marketed as a tonic, was sold to the public at a soda fountain in Jacob's Pharmacy in Atlanta. The beverage grew in popularity

and eventually, nine glasses a day were being sold. No one could argue that Pemberton wasn't a great inventor.

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FEIG'S FAST FACTS: Better Than Poland Spring... Coke, the Real Thing

The Moral of the Story? Don't Fake It

BY ESTHER FISCHER

South Korean veterinarian Hwang Woo-suk at least initially seemed apologetic: "I sincerely apologize to the people for creating a shock and disappointment," he told reporters while leaving his office at Seoul National University. But at that time, he still maintained that he had in fact produced patient-specific stem cells. Today, it is known to have been a hoax, and the scandal is considered the greatest fraud in science in the 21st century.

In May of 2005 Hwang published a paper in the journal "Science" stating that he had created 11 colonies of human embryonic stem cells genetically matched to specific patients. All of them turned out to be fraudu-

lent. An investigative panel at the university explained that he simply split cells from one patient into two test tubes for the analysis.

The idea was almost genius in its simplicity. But in the field of science, people are naturally suspicious. Hwang's moral standards were first questioned in November, when he resigned as head of the World Stem Cell Hub, after he admitted that he had used eggs donated by lab workers (a practice which goes against ethical guidelines) and that he had bought some cells, after having initially claimed that all the cells had been donated. Seven months after Hwang had published his breakthrough paper, his co-workers had sniffed out the stem cell scandal and he was forced to

leave his post at the Seoul National University.

The scandal has come as a backlash for the entire scientific community, and was a huge disappointment to people who had viewed his alleged findings to give hope for the treatment of diseases, such as spinal cord injuries, diabetes and Parkinson's disease. The journals "Science" and "Nature," which had published key papers by Hwang, are now under question about their peer review and editorial processes, and other papers published by him are now being investigated, such as his claim in "Nature" in August of 2005 to have created the world's first cloned dog. The South Korean government, which had strongly supported Hwang's

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The Science of Sarcasm

BY GRACE CHARLES

Sarcasm is a surprisingly complex idea. To understand it, you need to interpret the literal meaning of the words, understand the speaker's attitudes and emotions, and judge whether or not the speaker is being literal. Simone Shamay-Tsoory worked with others at the Rambam Medical Center in Haifa and the University of Haifa to find out where these processes take place in the brain.

The research group used a classic technique of neuropsychology, looking at people with damage to specific brain

areas. The group confirmed previous findings in its study, concluding that different areas of the brain support the various abilities used to interpret sarcasm. They also were able to use their results to isolate the location of the critical region of interpretation to a specific corner of the brain.

In their study, they tested 25 people with damage to the prefrontal lobe, the site of many higher brain functions, 16 people with damage to the posterior cortex, and 17 healthy controls. Each participant listened to two different versions of a short story:

1. Joe came to work, and instead of beginning to work, he

sat down to rest. His boss noticed his behavior and said, "Joe, don't work too hard." Meaning: "You're a real slacker!"

2. Joe came to work and immediately began to work. His boss noticed his behavior and said, "Joe, don't work too hard!" Meaning: "You're a hard worker!"

The participants then answered if they thought the manager believed Joe was really working hard. In the first one, he did not; he was being sarcastic. In the second, he did believe Joe was working hard and he was

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Science:
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The Moral of the Story? Don't Fake It

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research, is now being viewed suspiciously, as the \$39.9 million spent on him is now impossible to recover. The main opposition, Grand National Party, has called for investigation of the government for failing to find errors in Hwang's research sooner.

The scandal has caused varying opinions: Despite the major setbacks for stem cell research, some people are actually happy about it. Stem cell research oppo-

nents, including Catholic and Evangelical Christian groups have been reveling in the scandal, saying that Hwang's deceit shows that everybody involved in stem cell research wallows in sin. Yet some people actually still have faith in Hwang: Jung Jin-owan, secretary general of the Korea Spinal Cord Injury Association, who is paralyzed from the waist down since a car accident, still believes Hwang's claim that he created patient-specific stem

cells, since he did not admit that all cell lines were faked. So what of the future? There are many speculations now about the future of stem cell research, but generally, people remain optimistic. Despite the scandal, South Korea's government said it would support similar research, and the scientific community has not been taken aback. Instead, the quest goes on with more strength and determination than ever.

The Science of Sarcasm

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serious in his remark.

Prefrontal cortex damage caused subjects to have the most troubling detecting sarcasm; however, it was not equally true of both sides. The researchers found that the failure to detect sarcasm was linked to damage to the right ventromedial area of the prefrontal cortex. This was the first experiment to locate sarcasm in the right side of the prefrontal cortex.

Here are some sarcastic

quotes to give the right ventromedial area of your prefrontal cortex some exercise:

In California, they don't throw their garbage away—they make it into TV shows.
-Woody Allen

A modest little person, with much to be modest about.
-Winston Churchill

Reader, suppose you were an idiot; and suppose you were a member of Congress; but I repeat myself.

-Mark Twain

She got her good looks from her father. He's a plastic surgeon.
-Groucho Marx

When you go to the mind reader, do you get half price?
-David Letterman

This is not a book that should be tossed lightly aside. It should be hurled with great force.
-Dorothy Parker

Remembering Betty Friedan

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nificant matters of injustice.

But this short biography hardly encompasses the life and impact of this influential woman, which is why I found it necessary to attend her funeral. I had read "The Feminist Mystique" a few years ago. Although it was a bit tedious and lengthy at times, the ideas found within it were revealing and thought-provoking. Her basic claim was that you could give a woman the vote, you could give her a decent and basic education, you could give her a good stable house with a good stable spouse and good stable children, but if you do not afford her the opportunity to think, to progress and develop, and to strive for goals, to be a full partner in developing society, then you have truly given her nothing, for her mind is enslaved. I attended Betty's funeral to learn more about this woman who changed the face of injustices in America, but also to pay tribute and show *hakarat hatov* (gratitude), because had it not been for her drive and vision, I probably would not have had the opportunities for growth and involvement in society which I now have today. As Muriel Fox, a board member of Legal Momentum and a speaker at the funeral, said "Betty was the most influential woman of the second millennium."

Elizabeth Holtzman, a former congresswoman, emphasized

that "the gift of freedom is the most important we can have," and that this is what Friedan did for people; "Betty liberated our minds," she said. Marlene Sanders, who was the only female correspondent for ABC News in the 1960s, spoke of the incredible courage Friedan exuded, saying "she gave us the courage to deal with our managements." She spoke about how Friedan led the effort of desegregating business, medical, and law schools, and how she became the spokeswoman for change.

All of the speakers spoke about the challenges and obstacles Friedan faced, and how in the face of opposition and adversity, Friedan only became more resolute in her quest to attain equality and freedom for all women. But the speakers also mentioned the more human side of Friedan, that she was at times afraid of the rejection she sometimes received, and that she was fearful of the task which she must fulfill. But her grandson described it best when he articulated his grandmother's resolution to fight against injustice. "That is what courage is," he said, "it's about doing what you are scared to do. Why tiptoe through life just to arrive safely at death?"

Friedan's son started speaking by showing how Moshe's birth and death were tied together, that Friedan also died on her birthday, and also led a people

out of slavery. Her daughter spoke of her mother's willingness to "blaze new paths" and to be a force which pushed the women's rights movement. The rabbi concluded the ceremony by pointing out attributes that Betty Friedan shared with other women in Tanach. *Kel maleh rachamim* was said, the place of *shiva* was announced, and the ceremony ended with Betty's grandchildren carrying the coffin out of the chapel.

It was a truly instructive experience. We take for granted the opportunities and positions we hold in society today. Medical and law school are obvious graduate school choices. Good education and satisfying careers are assumed options. But these successes are only recent; there is still much to be done. Women still only make 72 cents to a man's dollar. For some reason, equal work does not earn equal pay. This is not the only injustice still facing women. My friends and I left the funeral knowing a great deal more about this extraordinary woman who led the fight for our freedom. But more importantly, we left with an appreciation of the task of the eliminating injustice, and that we are not exempt from undertaking it. The rabbi's last few words really encapsulated Betty's mission: "When we ask who am I, and what do I want out of my life, we honor Betty's memory."

Coke, the Real Thing

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In 1919, Asa Candler sold the business for \$25 million to a group of investors headed by Ernest Woodruff. Woodruff's son, Robert, helped to make the soft drink popular all over the world, and as a result, the name Coca-Cola quickly became an international household word. In 1923, Robert Woodruff assumed the presidency of the company, and he began to concentrate on creating a Coca-Cola image. His first step was to inform the public that Coca-Cola's great taste was due to its "secret formula" which couldn't be duplicated, and the American public believed Woodruff's dramatic ploy.

Another idea that Woodruff used to create a Coca-Cola image was to produce hundreds of products with the Coca-Cola logo inscribed on them. Glasses, trays, calendars, and napkins appeared in thousands of homes across the United States with the red and white script logo. However, it was the role of Coca-Cola in World War II (1939-1945) that established the soft drink globally.

In 1941, when the United States entered W. W. II, Woodruff supplied cokes to American servicemen, no matter how far away they were stationed, at the U.S. price of five cents a bottle. Even though this policy cost the company money, it was money well spent since Coca-Cola became a patriotic symbol of home to homesick soldiers. In addition, the journalists who wrote about the war gave the drink priceless advertising in their stories. In 1943, General Dwight D. Eisenhower set up ten Coca-Cola bottling plants in Northern Africa to supply American troops there. By the time W.W. II ended, the Coca-Cola Company had 63 bottling plants set up in Europe, Africa, and Asia.

Even after Robert Woodruff's death, the Coca-Cola Company continued its aggressive marketing campaign. Coca-Cola's advertising slogans were becoming as popular as the soft drink itself. Coca-Cola has been called "the real thing," "the pause that refreshes," and "it." In 1971, the Coca-Cola Company developed an ad campaign to identify Coca-Cola with world peace by gathering dozens of singers on an Italian hillside to sing an original song written especially for them with the words, "I'd like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony. I'd like to buy the world a Coke and keep it company." Although this song was written 35 years ago, it is as popular today as it was then. Many peo-

ple, young and old, are familiar with the melody and the words.

While Coke has been on the market since 1886, it has only been certified as kosher since 1935. Because he lived in Atlanta where the Coca-Cola Company was headquartered, Rabbi Tobias Geffen received letters from several Orthodox rabbinic colleagues around the nation asking whether it was permissible to consume Coca-Cola. Uncertain of the answer, Geffen contacted the company to ask for a list of Coke's ingredients.

Once Rabbi Geffen inquired, the Coca-Cola Company made a corporate decision to allow him access to the list of ingredients in Coke's secret formula, provided he swore to keep them in utter secrecy. Geffen agreed to the terms.

When Geffen was given the list of ingredients, he discovered that one of them was glycerin made from non-kosher beef tallow. Even though a laboratory chemist told Geffen that the glycerin was present in only one part per thousand (one part in 60 is dilute enough to earn kosher certification), Geffen informed the Coca-Cola Company that, since this glycerin was a planned rather than accidentally added ingredient, observant Jews could not knowingly tolerate its inclusion. Since Coke failed to meet Geffen's standards, back at the company's laboratories, research scientists went to work finding a substitute for tallow-based glycerin and discovered that Proctor and Gamble produced a glycerin from cottonseed and coconut oil. When they agreed to use to this new ingredient, Geffen gave his seal of approval for Coke to be marketed as kosher.

It is also interesting to note that some pharmacies today still have Coca-Cola syrup on their shelves as a remedy for indigestion. The Coca-Cola Company, now a giant corporation, all started with John "Doc" Pemberton's formula. Today, Pemberton's "fizzy, brown, sugary soft drink" that some people have called "Georgia champagne" continues to convince generations of Americans that "things go better with Coca-Cola." America's favorite soft drink is now served over one billion times a day and is enjoyed in over 200 countries across the globe.

This article used information from the following websites:
<http://www.bookrags.com/history/popculture/coca-cola-bbbb-01/>
<http://www.ajhs.org/publications/chapters/chapter.cfm?documentID=270>



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