



The Yeshiva University OBSERVER

Volume 51 Number 8

March 2006 / Adar 5766

New Society for Social Justice Seeks to Mobilize Students

BY SARA LEFKOVITZ

On January 15 2006, sixteen students from YU traveled to the village of Las Bendiciones in Honduras, Central America. Teaming up with the American Jewish World Services, the participants engaged in an intensive weeklong school-building project aimed at assisting and building relationships with the members of the indigent population. Through the exchanges, the students on the Honduras mission became aware of the myriad of challenges that confront a community unable to keep pace with the globalizing world.

Now, more than a month later, the participants are offering the entire YU student body an opportunity to share in what many of them have called "a life-altering experience." The Society for Social Justice, founded by the

mission's original members upon their return to the United States, will enable like-minded students to become active in a wide array of humanitarian causes.

According to Rebecca Stone, the presidential fellow responsible for initiating and coordinating the mission to Honduras, the trip was intentionally designed to inspire this kind of follow-up involvement. "In YU, students are so busy with their work that a lot of extra-curricular activities just fall by the wayside," remarked Stone. "YU needs to be at the forefront of social action and to be a role model for students on other campuses. The Society for Social Justice has the potential to take this lead."

"After our trip to Honduras, we discovered that there were so many social action programs we

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Christine Whitman Addresses SCW: Politics in a Man's World

BY JAZMON ADATTO

On March 7, former New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman came to speak at Stern College. The event was held in the Levy Lobby as a part of the Marcia Robbins Wilf-Scholar-in-Residence lecture series. The audience in attendance was mostly Stern students but consisted also of a several guests and professors. Ms. Whitman was introduced by both Dean Bacon and Professor Luders.

Whitman opened with some anecdotes about her start in the political world. She told of how after obtaining her first job as a staffer for the Republican National Committee, an article was published in her hometown paper that described her as "Daddy's little bundle of politics." She expanded on the difficulties she had with being taken

seriously on the job and those didn't ease up. Whitman, however, stood strong and continued to push forward.

While in office as the governor of New Jersey, Whitman tried to include as many highly qualified women on her staff as possible. She had a female Chief of Staff, Attorney General and Chief

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Photo by V. Jane Windsor

HEBREW LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT REVEALS COMPREHENSIVE CHANGES Requirement Adjustments and Expanded Course Options Expected

BY ILANA LEVIN

The SCW Hebrew Language Department, in a significant overhaul of the current department structure, affirmed plans to extensively change course requirements and create new course curricula. Effective beginning the upcoming fall semester, the redesigned program will affect both incoming students as well as current students.

The department is aiming to produce "a system that will stress competence," promised Dr. Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel, chairman of the Rebecca Ivry Department of Jewish Studies at SCW. "It will be more comprehensible, it will make more sense, and it will be symmetrical."

Currently, students placed in the beginning level, 1101 through 1104, are required to take six Hebrew language courses. While

students in 1101, 1102 and 1103 will not be affected, those who place into 1104 will now be required to take five courses instead. The requirements of the intermediate track, 1203 and 1204, will remain the same, entailing students to take four courses as before. Within the currently named advanced track, 1205 through 1207, where students have been required to take three courses, those who place in 1206 will now be required to take two courses, and those in 1207 will be required to take only one course. Students in 1205 will still be required to take three courses. 1207 will become the new "advanced track," and the department's goal is for a majority of students to reach this level. Another procedural change that will affect students who are required to take three or more courses will be the option to P/N

the last of these courses, assuming it is taken after CORE.

Explaining a key motivation for these changes, Dr. Kanarfogel said, "We recognize that students with stronger background in Hebrew want to spend more time taking Limudei Kodesh classes, while we also want all students to achieve something in Hebrew." The resulting program is the department's attempt to balance these concerns.

"The Hebrew Language curriculum, developed under the leadership of Professor Zafi Cohen, has the flexibility both to respond to the varying levels of our incoming students and to create realistic goals of proficiency based on those entry levels," stated SCW Dean Karen Bacon. "For students who enter with strong Hebrew language skills, we are now setting the bar at one addi-

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Purim Chagiga Draws Large, Costumed Crowd

BY LAURA SHUMAN

"Girls just wanna have fun," a catchphrase thought to have gone out of style with shoulder pads, side ponytails, and blue eye shadow, were all part of the 80s theme of this year's annual Purim Chagigah, sponsored by TAC.

The unanimous decision for an 80s theme was a step forward for this year's TAC board, headed by SCW senior Hillary Lewin, who explained that while last year's Mexican theme drew in some costumes, this year's theme "was an incentive to dress," adding that "you can't go wrong with the 80s." If costumes

were the goal, then it was definitely realized: an overwhelming majority of the attendants came in costume. Somehow, planners of the chagigah, such as senior

where they got their costume simply answered, "I pulled it out of my closet at home...."

Above the importance of simply dressing up for Purim, Braverman explained that it was important that people come as a way to foster school unity, adding "You don't have to go anywhere else looking for fun; we have it right here." Noting the women who came from colleges such as Barnard, Queens, and NYU, on this night of Purim, Braverman said, "Tonight, for once, Stern is the place to be."

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Raheli Braverman, who foresaw the 80s theme as an "easy incentive to dress up," reflected most attendants, who when asked

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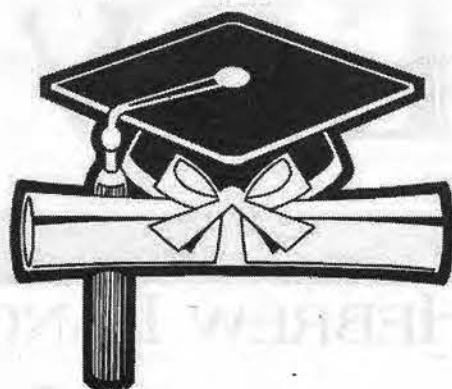
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Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors,

I am writing in response to an e-mail I received about a women's megillah reading. When I first received the email I was surprised that the reading was being held off campus; after further investigation I discovered that the reason for this was that Rabbi Lamm had specifically said that it could not be an official Stern College event. While I must admit that I do not know the actual events that transpired between the students and Rabbi Lamm, I wanted to write this letter to share how saddened I was when I heard this news.

At first I tried to reconcile this by telling myself that YU has a specific hashkafa to uphold, and therefore could not allow the reading, but in actuality, there are so many different opinions and hashkafot within YU. In truth, YU just seems to be flying the banner of Orthodoxy, and learning all secular and Judaic studies within that context. So long as the action is halachically acceptable, as women's megillah reading is, there is no reason why it should not be allowed.

RESPONSE BY RABBI DR. NORMAN LAMM

I appreciate Ms. Bernstein's distress at the decision not to permit the special Megillah service led by women at Stern College. But she has it all wrong. There is nothing in my decision that has to do with "Right" or "Left." Those terms are fundamentally political and are not germane to halachic decision making. As Rosh Hayeshiva, it is my duty to do what is best for the students in their Jewish education at YU, and to make sure that all is proper according to Halakha. I have nothing but unmitigated respect for the young women who are devoting time and energy to their studies in the Bet Midrash. I know many of them, and consider them upright Jewesses, wonderful students, and devoted heart and soul to the Halakha. They are a source of pride to me – and to all of us. I recognize full well that there are a number of different *piskei halakha* concerning the

Yet YU has also been flying another banner, that of "bringing wisdom to life." What better example of that message than when young women take the knowledge that they have learned, wisdom that they have gleaned from halachic texts and sources, and implement it into their daily lives. Regardless of my own personal beliefs on the matter, I can only respect the young lady that takes her halachic knowledge and aspires to incorporate it into all aspects of her being. It is a shame that an endeavour such as women's megillah reading is seen as "feminist," or too "left" for YU; in actuality, I believe their efforts should be celebrated.

Furthermore, not only do I applaud their work in making a megillah reading happen, but I admire them for their strength and courage to do so. Kol Hakavod!

Sincerely,
Cindy Bernstein
'06

permission for a woman to read the Megillah on behalf of other women who thereby fulfill their religious obligations on Purim. There are a number of reasons for my decision that such a service *not* be held at Yeshiva, although I would not object if they were held elsewhere. The crucial issue in my decision is not Megillah *per se* but *kevod harav*, the reverence all of us have and ought to have for the late Rabbi Soloveitchik, of blessed memory – my Rav and the *rav* of all our teachers who were either his students or the students of his students. It was he who preferred that such an all-women's service not be held at Yeshiva. Whatever his reasons – it is not something we need go into here – his decision prevails, especially here where his spirit and eminence still govern as our ultimate halachic authority, and there is nothing that has happened since he made his decision that would cause me to reconsider.

position, an article by Aryeh and Dov Frimer published in *Tradition* in Spring 1998, explained that the Rav's opposition stemmed from a problem that arises in the specific case of Purim *meshulash*, when Shushan Purim falls out on Shabbos and the inhabitants of walled cities read the *megillah* on Friday, the 14th of Adar, before its proper time. Since the *megillah* is read *she'lo bizmana*, some different standards apply, including, according to many, the requirement of the presence of a *minyan* for the reading. With this background it is unclear why the Rav would be opposed to a women's *megillah* reading *bo bayom*, on

In the February issue of The Observer the following information was misprinted:

In the article entitled "Business Director Makes Her Mark on SOY Seforim Sale," the headline should have read "Director Makes Her Mark on SOY Seforim Sale."

In the article entitled "Expanded Wireless Coverage and Sunday Caf Hours Arrive at SCW," the article states that the Kushner Dining Hall closes at 2:30 p.m.; however, it closes at 2 p.m.

In the article entitled "Between the French Final Exams Schedule and the Yeshiva Community," Rina Cohen was misquoted. The article quoted Cohen stating that "Obviously the government is slanted against Jews." Cohen never made the statement and we regret the error.

Corrections

Hebrew Language Department Changes

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tional course at the advanced level. This change in requirements will allow our women with Hebrew language proficiency a greater choice of courses from among the offerings in the various sub-disciplines of Jewish Studies."

Alongside the changes in requirements are improvements in course curricula. The department hopes to add to current courses in Hebrew grammar and literature what Dr. Kanarfogel calls "specialty electives," for example, a course on reading Hebrew academic articles, or on teaching Ivrit b'Ivrit.

Additionally, courses beyond the 1207 level will be considered by the department as possible classes.

Dr. Kanarfogel also expects that, as a result of expanded course options, as well as the hiring of additional instructors, class sizes will decrease, enabling teachers to give more individualized attention to students, so that "all levels have a positive experience."

A final component of the department's plans involves revamping the current placement test, which determines the level of each student. "We are putting in a lot of effort to continue to shorten, fine-tune and make the

test as effective as possible," Dr. Kanarfogel said. The department is aiming to make it "user-friendly, effective, and useful." Additionally, students will be now expected to prepare for the test.

The department's proposed changes promise to significantly impact the Jewish Studies Department as a whole, and the commitment of the administration is unmistakable. "I see this as a positive step in encouraging our students to be even more thoughtful about their education," said Dean Bacon.

Christine Whitman

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Justice. Her colleagues often referred to Whitman's office as the "Estrogen Palace."

From these anecdotes, Whitman then segued into discussing her book, titled "It's My Party Too: The Battle for the Heart of The GOP and the Future of America." The book states her views on the problems within the political parties with regard to "moderate politicians." Whitman claims that the majority of Americans do not consider themselves completely "red" or "blue" when it comes to their political views and that because of the lack of moderate politicians, the majority of Americans

are under-represented in our government.

Whitman closed with a question and answer session where

that she truly believes that America is ready for a woman president, and pointed out that most democracies already have had female leadership, mentioning Golda Emir and Margaret Thatcher as examples. Her last comment was a call to action for all of the young women in attendance to fight the stereotype that have been laid against women in the workplace. To overcome a challenge one must not push it down or ignore it; it must be faced head on and defeated.



she discussed the difficulties of being a politician and a wife and mother. She said that she had to find a balance that worked for her, and though it was difficult, it was worth her while. She said

the appropriate day, specifically on Stern's campus.

Second, perhaps the Rav's decision regarding SCW took into account where women were at some thirty odd years ago. It is unfair to assume that the Rav would hold the same view taking into account all the changes in women's learning, observances and strong desire from fuller participation in religious life, *l'shem shamayim*. Perhaps the Rav's opinion would be different regarding the SCW of 5756.

We are not presuming to know what the Rav would say today, but we do wish to point out that Rav Lichtenstein sup-

ports women's megillah reading in Migdal Oz, and that is a strong indication.

Our tradition, if it is to thrive, must be dynamic, constantly examining the past, evaluating the present and considering the future. If Rabbi Lamm, as Rosh Yeshiva, sanctions an all-women's *megillah* reading for today's student body, why not have this on the Beren Campus?

Shoshana Fruchter and

Ariella Nadler SCW '07

Dear Editors,

Though Purim has passed and the women's *megillah* reading took place successfully—in a private apartment in Washington Heights—questions remain regarding the reasons behind Rabbi Lamm's decision to disallow the reading on the YU campus. As Yeshiva students, we are grateful for the opportunity we have had to engage in respectful dialogue with Rabbi Lamm. Continuing this, we humbly pose two issues which we would like to address.

First, after researching Rav Soloveitchik's decision on the matter, the most detailed account we found of the Rav's

OPINIONS

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The Observer is published monthly during the academic year by the Stern College for Women Student Council. The staff of The Observer retains the right to choose newspaper content and to determine the priority of stories. While unsigned editorials represent the views of The Observer's editorial board, all opinions expressed in signed editorials, columns, letters and cartoons are the opinions of the writers or artists and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Observer, Stern College for Women, its student body, faculty or administration.



Tit for Tat: Livingstone's Comments and Consequences Reconsidered

BY RACHEL-ALI ELBAZ

In late February, the mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, was suspended by the Adjudication Panel for England. This was in response to anti-Semitic comments Livingstone made to a Jewish reporter of the right-wing paper "The Evening Standard." The journalist, Oliver Finegold, asked Mr. Livingstone to comment about a party held in honor of the gay and lesbian community at City Hall. Livingstone replied, "What did you do before? Were you a German war criminal?" Not only was this question out of context, the reporter was offended and replied, "No, I'm Jewish, I wasn't a German war criminal." Later, Livingstone replied, "Actually you are just like a concentration camp guard. You're just doing it because you're paid to, aren't you?" After this incident many organizations lodged complaints, and it is believed that the Board of Deputies of British Jews made the official complaint that led to the panel's decision to suspend Mr. Livingstone.

The Adjudication Panel for England suspended Livingstone on the grounds that he had broken the ethical code of conduct. One might ask, "Whose ethics?" I am certain Livingstone has asked this question as he has filed an appeal to the High Court. His suspension from office is now staid until the High Court re-examines the case. Refusing to apologize for the slur to Finegold, the mayor blamed the British Jewish group (Board of Deputies of British Jews) for the legal trouble. He accused them of filing the complaints

because of his stance with Israel and politics in the Middle East. Livingstone is known for his left-wing affiliation and for even publicly stating he hates "The Evening Standard." Livingstone denies he is anti-Semitic, and emphatically states that he is against racism and discrimination.

Sir Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, stated that this complaint is not only an overreaction, but an affront to the democratic traditions of Britain. Muslims have complained that while the offensive Mohammad cartoon was not properly dealt with, the anti-Semitic remarks have been met with quick action.

Comparison of these two events is not acceptable, as they are totally different and occurred under completely different circumstances. However, it must be noted that racism is still racism. In this regard, the Muslim community has the right to condemn and be upset by the printing of the offensive cartoon.

Further consideration of this comparison reveals many differences. While both occurrences are racist, it must be noted that it was a privately-owned newspaper that printed the offensive Muslim cartoons, while it was a public official who made the offensive comments to an individual. The mayor of London has official responsibilities as a representative of the people and for the people. This is where the difference lies. While the Muslim groups are quick to point out that individual governments handle things differently, they do not

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Attention Stern College: Wake Up!

BY AVIVA HOROWITZ

Dear Students of Stern College, Confession of the day: I was suckered into writing this piece. Don't get me wrong, I love to write and am more than delighted to share my opinions with anyone unlucky enough to be standing nearby, but really I'm getting tired of this. I can't think of any other university where students have to be convinced, cajoled, or begged to write for the university's paper. This is ridiculous.

I can't begin to tell you how often I've heard students complain that they're missing out on "the real college experience" here at Stern. While perhaps Stern cannot offer you the Brandeis campus or the Columbia library, the real college experience does exist here. Many of you are just too content to spend your two to four years here with your heads in your books, looking enviously elsewhere rather than recognize the many opportunities and experiences offered here at Stern College.

College, I'm told, is a time to meet new people: people from new and exotic places and different backgrounds, something different from the run-of-the-mill Jews we went to high school, seminary, and camps with over the years. Apparently, Stern does not give students this opportunity. I'm left to wonder, what does it take to define a student body as diverse? In my two years on campus I've met people from all across the United States, everywhere from California to Florida, from Texas to Wisconsin. In my classes alone I've come across students from France, Argentina,

Russia, Mexico, Israel and Canada! There is real diversity on campus; it's all a matter of whether you've bothered to engage it. The real question is whether you've chosen to talk with those same girls you've gone to high school, seminary and camp with, rather than turn to the girl sitting next to you in that psychology class or walk over to someone in your history course and introduce yourself. Surprisingly, if you make a move to expand your tight social circles, you may find those different backgrounds of which you were so envious.

I've also heard the complaint that Stern doesn't offer the social experience you find elsewhere. How often do our students run off to Hillel parties over at NYU or head out to University of Maryland for Shabbat? Stern, many people feel, is just a school: I come to my classes, I take my tests, maybe I'll go to a *shiur* or two, but to have fun I need to look elsewhere, to those other campuses. Again, I'm left dumbstruck. There are so many opportunities to hang out and have fun at Stern, but you've chosen to disregard them. While we may not have a Hillel, Student Council has been active and certainly creative on campus, organizing everything from the Sock Hop to a school-wide game of Survivor. Great trips are offered that allow you to meet people with similar interests, whether it be the YU Mission to Israel, the AIPAC Policy Conference in DC or the General Assembly in Toronto.

There is also this surprising stigma attached to Shabbos here

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The Matisyahu Phenomenon: Good Or Bad?

BY PEREL SKIER

It's a moment I never thought would come. On my way to the library, I pass by a Best Buy that advertises its musical selection with three draping banners of today's hottest stars: a half-naked Latin woman, a make-up caked goth...

And a black-hatter with a rabbinical beard.

The last face is hard to escape these days. Open up a newspaper, a magazine, a web browser, or just take a walk down the commercial streets of Manhattan: Matisyahu is everywhere. He's on TRL, singing about Hashem and Mashiach and *rachamim min shamayim*. His name is on the cover of this month's "Spin." Wisconsin hicks who thought Jews were some kind of horned fairies last month are explaining the term "yeshiv-

ish" to their parents, as defined by Rolling Stone.

And for those of you too frum for Rolling Stone, never fear: you can still hear his music at Eichler's.

I have a confession to make.

I am confused.

Part of me wants to feel proud. Growing up in a relatively small Jewish community, it never occurred to me that

Jewish music could compete in the same arena as radio fodder. Let's face it, what are we, two percent of the population? It's weird, it's *alien*. to be a Jew out-

side of New York; we couldn't keep a pizza shop open, let alone put a music star on MTV! Television, radio, papers—they weren't aimed at an audience like

me. I wasn't who they were talking to, I was eavesdropping on American culture, and so I never expected to see a reflection of anything familiar on a Best Buy poster. That's why you sort of want to root for him, don't you? It's like having a Jewish athlete at the Olympics: you're cheering because he's one of yours, in a



competition where no one else is like you.

Yet as sweet and coddling as that idea might be, I'm not sure that we are the team Matisyahu is batting for.

There are a few questions that I think need consideration when you talk about pop culture fame for an Orthodox Jew, or rather, pop culture fame for *being* an Orthodox Jew. Plenty of religious Jews have done noteworthy things: written books, produced movies, almost anything you can imagine. However, the focus of their fame is not their religion, but their art. Matisyahu, on the other hand, seems to draw as much attention to his affiliation as to his music. His instantly recognizable Chabad style—suit, beard, tzizis, hat—functions as a gimmick, and if he doesn't consciously intend for it to do so, his

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DEENA HASSAN

On my latest trip to Washington D.C., I had the honor to attend this year's AIPAC policy conference, representing Yeshiva University as Student Council president, along with my YC counterpart Shmulik Rosenberg. We joined a delegation of 18 students from Yeshiva University with the help of the CJF. It was quite an honor to represent the university in a political arena. Shmulik and I were part of a separate student government delegation that included 120 student government presidents from schools all over America. Having the opportunity to interact with student leaders from campuses all across the country was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Many of the university representatives had never heard of AIPAC, nor did they know what it stood for. One student actually had the AIPAC website decoded in order to verify the certification of this organization they had never heard of who was offering them an all-expenses paid trip to Washington D.C. for three days.

On the second night of the conference, all the presidents were asked to sit together in a reserved area. I sat at a table sur-

rounded by different student body presidents, not one of them being Jewish. Not one of them was previously affiliated with AIPAC. It was incredible to witness these students hearing for the first time, understanding for the first time, what Israel and its policies were all about.

One student that was honored for her dedication to Israel and AIPAC was a talented student named Amanda from a university in Florida. Listening to her story as to how she became involved in an organization and a people she had nothing to do with before her college years was incredibly inspiring. Amanda had approached her professor for a topic to research. Her professor suggested she study Israel and its politics. At first she was skeptical; however, she decided to pursue the study of Israeli politics. The passion and dedication she has for the state of Israel is something I rarely see in a fellow Jew, especially in a fellow student. It was uplifting and invigorating to see the possibilities we have, and the potential we as Jews have to succeed.

After listening to a number of speakers and attending multiple sessions, our delegation returned to our hotel only to begin the debate as to how the 18 YU students planned to reach out to the rest of our student body. How is it that students with absolutely no previous connection to Israel and no affiliation to the religious roots of the country can foster this strong passion to make a difference? Why is it that we, the products of a Jewish education

and Jewish upbringings, just sit back and wait for the next person to pick up the slack? For hours the students from the YU delegation sat around yelling at each other in order to find the most convenient way for yeshiva students to take part in affecting change. My question is why do we have to find the most convenient way to affect change? Why is it in a student body of 2,200 students where roughly 70% of students take one year out of their lives to spend in Israel engrossed in the culture and society and people then return to America and stop putting in the effort? I believe that if Israel is important to you as a Jewish person to spend a year of your life there you should be able to take that hour and make the phone calls. Or take off a night and attend a lecture. Alternatively, spend the money on a stamp and write that letter; it is time for you to get involved. Between YUPAC, Israel Club, and the political science clubs, I believe we have created the foundation for the building of our future. Its time we pick up the slack.



HILLARY LEWIN

One of my growing frustrations this year has been the palpable tension and rigidity of the male/female interaction amongst YU students. After reading the last issue of The Commentator's "Campus Beat" section, my thoughts were further legitimized. Random YC students were asked, "Is it appropriate to attend the Seforim Sale with no interest in the *seforim*?" One student remarked, "There are *seforim* at this year's girls sale?" I do have a sense of humor, but to me, this statement has more innuendos than what the student probably intended. Another student answered, "I think that the problem is not with socializing at the sale; the problem is that there aren't enough mixed events that people feel comfortable enough to attend."

Events like the Seforim Sale shouldn't have such absurd socially-conscious stigmas attached to them. In fact we should not be breeding, raising or educating students to have these overt social stigmas attached to the opposite sex. Rather, there should be venues where students feel comfortable; in this case, purchasing books, and seeing their peers, in a friendly and

relaxed environment instead of feeling that they are being scrutinized by the opposite gender and feeling self-conscious of how "frum" they may or may not appear if they choose to talk to a male or female. I have concluded this issue is two-fold: students feel uncomfortable socializing with the opposite gender to begin with, and this problem is being fed by a lack of "kosher" co-ed student activities that these very students would feel secure attending.

I experienced another similar "socially-conscious" episode recently via email correspondence. This year, the publishers of a Wilf Campus publication asked me if I would distribute their edition on the Beren Campus. As an attempt to seemingly bridge the gap between our campuses, I agreed to publish the publication on the Beren Campus. Then it dawned on me: we should have women also write for this publication! This initiative would be such a great way to have the men and women of YU working cohesively to publish a student-run, co-ed publication. After proposing this idea to someone affiliated with the publication, he responded with the following statement: "The main concern is that girl writers for the publication would just look co-ed, even though it may not actually be." I don't think that issuing a co-ed publication would be such a terrible idea. In fact, it is barely "co-ed" since the men and women don't even have to work together in person while compil-

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POINT-COUNTERPOINT

Dress for Success?

BY SHOSHANA FRUCHTER AND ESTHER GENUTH

The current dress code that requires Stern College women to wear skirts in the academic buildings is a rule that should be reassessed and amended. The policy, according to a 2002 letter from the Dean's Office, "was instituted as a school regulation, not as a formulation of halakha. Its purpose is to ensure an atmosphere or milieu that is most conducive to who and what we are—a women's college that provides Torah education and Jewish studies in addition to a program of general studies." There are several reasons, however, why this SCW "all-skirts" policy needs to be changed.

The extent to which a university can govern the private life of their students is debatable as a matter of social policy. At what point is an individual's right to make personal decisions treaded upon by a larger goal of maintaining a certain "atmosphere?" Furthermore, once SCW requires women to wear skirts, should they likewise require all married

women to cover their hair? "Pants are personal preference, to my knowledge," stated one student. "It would be like the school saying you have to wait six hours after meat, instead of three."

The ban against pants not only undermines the independence of SCW students but suggests the claim that skirts somehow foster a Torah atmosphere. This is especially necessary due to the fact that the issue does not have a clear-cut position across the Modern Orthodox spectrum. The variety of students within Stern College is a factor that should be taken into account so as not to isolate a large contingency of SCW students who do wear pants.

While the sensitivities of Judaic Studies professors should be taken into account, an overall reexamination of a policy that often ignored would be a fair step to ensuring that the diversity of SCW students is appreciated and respected.

SCW has a dress code to foster a certain caliber of professionalism and a specific religious atmosphere. The rules set out that "students must wear dresses or skirts of appropriate length and blouses with sleeves at all times in the college buildings," and are straightforward enough to clearly disallow pants and sleeveless tops while general enough to still allow women much expression in their dress, leaving the "appropriateness" of length up to the dresser.

As an Orthodox women's educational institution, it is fitting for SCW to require a standard of dress which is consistent with the community's general practice. Most women in the Orthodox community do not wear pants and are sure to wear shirts with sleeves. Though arguably not halakhic issues, these standards hold a measure of weight socially and culturally.

Aligning with the rest of the Orthodox community by having a dress code (if only as a matter of policy) is important for YU. Creating the synthesis of Torah U'Madda, spreading the ideals of that philosophy across the country and providing one thousand women with a secular edu-

cation is not traditional in the Orthodox community. SCW is unique in its fine balance of the traditional and the progressive. Ensuring its positive reputation and others' regard for the institution as an appropriate place of Orthodox Jewish women is important. Though the professors, students and courses at SCW would not necessarily change if the college was to revoke the dress code, the Orthodox community's understanding and acceptance of SCW would be challenged.

There is a dress code at SCW, but that's not to say that Stern's policy bans women from wearing their clothing of choice at all times. The dress code states explicitly that the above rules apply "to academic college buildings, not the residence hall," and obviously not to students' personal lives. This policy is not hypocritical. The rules were instituted to enhance the religious academic atmosphere while at classes in Stern, not to "stifle" the student body and "force religious beliefs on the students," as some might argue. SCW, the college for Orthodox Jewish women, should maintain the dress code to assure the continuation of a traditional atmosphere.

Achdus at Stern

BY LESLIE SPINDEL

Belonging to such a small community as Stern, I find it disappointing and frustrating that there exist so few feelings of unity between students.

A friend recently told me a story of a YU-sponsored trip she attended a few weeks ago. Not knowing anyone else going, she expected that the trip would be a bonding experience, and that she would be able to connect with other women who shared similar interests, hopefully forging new friendships. The women, she informed me, were cold. So cold that every time she tried to make simple and polite conversation, she was ignored, mocked and rejected. She later told me that she spent almost the entire trip in isolation from the group.

We need achdus at Stern. Coming in as a "real freshman," I should have found it easy to befriend the people in my class. We were all coming from such different backgrounds and different places that the only common thread needed was Judaism. Not so. Women come in with clusters of friends, even as freshmen, and have a hard time tearing down the walls of these cliques. My second year I figured would be much better. The women coming back from Israel would be my own age. I hadn't realized that little cliques would form in Israel. Women in my classes would sit in groups of girls with whom they went to seminary, while I would sit in another area with a small group of other people.

I stayed in last year for a large seminary's Shabbaton. Never having been to seminary, but knowing that some of my

friends had attended or were currently studying there, I was excited to spend Shabbos with these women. I was horrified when I sat down at a table with one friend, amongst a group of women who I didn't know, and was totally ignored. Their conversation went over us as per the fact that we were sitting somewhere in the middle of a large group. Except for the times we asked to pass things, we were non-existent. It was pretty clear that they didn't want us sitting at their table, but were probably too ashamed to ask us to leave. They made no attempts to introduce themselves. I find it common decency to at least try to make small talk in a situation where you don't know the people around you. I can't describe the type of *chillul Hashem* that was made during this Shabbos situation. Even though I was one of them religiously, their gestures and lack of speech illustrated they didn't want me as part of their community.

We are a small school. We are lucky to be in an environment that nurtures and encourages us to be Jewish and live a Jewish lifestyle. Because of our size, each member of the student body is integral to the workings of the school. What I cannot provide, another member can. When we ignore each other and create an unwelcoming atmosphere, we are unable to achieve the goals that a community such as ours strives to achieve. The only way to achieve real unity is for each woman to step out of her box, out of her comfort zone, and reach out into someone else's. You never know, you might make a friend.

A Message from Academic Advisement

A Student's View of Academic Advisement

As a high school student, I maintained an "A" average. I wasn't in every honors course, yet I was hard-working and produced satisfactory results; so you could imagine how I felt getting a D on my first exam at Stern College. I couldn't even remember the last time I had gotten a D on an exam. I was more shocked than upset and merely excused the poor mark as a glitch that wouldn't happen again. However, it wasn't a glitch. My grades were continuing to flop and I couldn't seem to pinpoint the reason why I was getting these grades. That is when my shock turned into pure frustration. The poor grades distracted me from my work, feeding into this nightmarish cycle of not living up to my own standards. I felt like I was constantly tripping and falling down stairs. I couldn't figure out a way to study effectively and look beyond the dark tunnel of mediocre grades, evil teachers, and an ever-growing number of assignments.

That is when I decided to visit the complimentary academic advisement. I met with an advisor who was willing to meet with me once a week to help me develop a system that would improve my study habits, and find the core of the problem. I was taught how to make good use of my time, organize, and even how to fix an "iffy" relationship with a teacher. The advisor was sympathetic and welcomed my complaints about my courses. I brought in various assignments and was given advice on how to tackle each subject. The advisor was willing to advocate on my behalf, even contacting the professors themselves to understand what exactly they wanted from their students. As a result, my performance in the classroom improved.

I now have found a method to the madness and a system that works. I have learned from this experience that although work can be difficult, laborious, and not to mention annoying, learning should be viewed as a privilege, and not entirely as a burden. I learned that once an effective system is found, the lessons can be tolerable, even enjoyable. My experience with the Stern Academic Advisement Center has been helpful to me; rather than tripping down the stairs I now feel that I can ascend them.

Why Not An Israel Branch of Yeshiva University?

BY JACKIE FAST

Disclaimer: The author of this article does not claim to know everything about the system of educational degrees in Israel. She has spoken with a few more knowledgeable people, but all the same.

One of Yeshiva University's top values is the support of Israel and the promotion of Israel's centrality in the life of every Jew. With the Israel Club as one of the most active clubs on campus and *aliyah* assistance available in commendable amounts, it seems somewhat unusual that YU has not taken its support of Israel to the next step. Yeshiva University's offerings for higher education in Israel itself are huge, with the S. Daniel Abraham Israel program enrolling over 600 freshmen and sophomores yearly in affiliate yeshiva and seminary programs. That said, why isn't there a branch of the university itself in Israel?

Many students on campus are interested in making *aliyah*. However, to date, only about 2,000 alumni have become Israeli citizens. Why has YU failed to assist so many people in realizing this goal? Why is it so difficult? For many, the challenge resides in the fact that it isn't always easy to get an Israeli job with an American degree. After graduating from college in the States, it is

much easier to settle into the working world in America than to try to start again in Israel. Once a person's career is settled down in one country, the difficulties in picking up and emigrating become even more severe. This being the case, it seems obvious that the most plausible way to get YU graduates to fulfill their dream of making *aliyah* is to open a branch of the university in Israel itself.

Although there are colleges in Israel that support a Torah worldview, none of them meets the academic and social needs of potential American *olim* well enough to bring them to Israel. For example, Bar-Ilan University is a bona fide college with religious auspices, but for many Americans, it isn't the correct fit. For one thing, many overseas students who study there find that their classmates are as much as three years older than them because they have completed army service or *sherut leumi*. Also, they find that the academic standards of the college do not meet the level that they would receive from studies in America. If YU were to establish a branch of its colleges in Israel, the problems that other Israeli colleges present would be ameliorated. Classes could be taught at an American standard of academic excellence, and students would feel comfortable in their classes.

At the same time, this college

could not be a cut-and-pasted version of Yeshiva or Stern Colleges. For people immigrating into a new society, it only makes sense to attend a school that provides some avenues for *integrating* into that new society as well. Some classes would have to be taught in Hebrew and the curricula would have to suit the training that is intrinsically necessary to suit an Israeli job. Since it would make sense to offer only Israeli degrees, the undergraduate program would last for three years instead of four, which certainly would require students to narrow their breadth of general requirement courses. There would undoubtedly need to be a high level of compromise between the dual visions of counting itself as both a branch of Yeshiva University and an Israeli institution.

However, these questions of identity are irrelevant in light of just how valuable such a school would be. To the hordes of current YC and SCW undergrads who wish that they could continue getting the fine flavor of education that YU offers while furthering their dream to move to Israel, a "YU Aliyah Program" would be a dream come true. It would also bring YU one step closer to seeing one of its dreams come true: the dream to move more American Jews to their homeland.

A Question with No Answer

BY ILANA SNYDER

It was one o'clock on that fateful Tuesday morning when I got the news. I ran into my roommate Phili's room, screaming and jumping on her bed. As she arose from her sleepy stupor, she was curious to discover what all the commotion was about. I eagerly informed her that I just got "the email." She understood completely: I had just been given the opportunity to travel to Germany for winter vacation.

I must be honest; I must explain that while I was overridden with excitement, I was also overwhelmed by fear. This fear was not only about not knowing another single soul going on the trip. This was the larger fear of the unknown—not knowing what to expect and not knowing how to feel. Perhaps my largest question was how to enter this situation without a bias, without feeling hostile towards the country and people that are responsible for killing so many of my nation. I can pinpoint one exact experience that helped to answer this troubling question.

It was our last day in Munich, and after a tiring morning of packing, eating, and sight-seeing, we were off to visit the Education Ministry in Munich. In fact, the Education Ministry that we visited represented a small region known as Bolivia—I mean Bavaria. Though most of our

group, including our leader, was extremely exhausted, somehow we gathered the energy to ask some of the most intellectual and thought-provoking questions.

As we sat around the long oval table with the Bavarian Education Minister and three scholars, the questions began to flow. Some were about Holocaust education in Bavaria, while other questions discussed the young German students of today. There was a constant flow not only of these questions, but of informative answers as well. The sheer volume prevents me from actually recalling the exact query that yielded the answer to my deepest question. However, the "answer" is something that will resound in my mind forever.

The session was nearing its end when I saw the Bavarian Education Minister slightly bow her head and say, "We do feel sorry for what happened, but we do not have individual personal guilt." She was trying to articulate the regret, shame and sympathy the German country and people, on a whole, feel for the Holocaust. However, it was not they themselves who had executed the Holocaust, but their grandparents (clearly she was not referring to any elder person who was alive during the Holocaust). Therefore, it is individually impossible to feel these emotions at all times.

From this quote I now under-

stood her logic that her country on a whole takes responsibility for what they have done. I understood her logic that the individuals in Germany now are not responsible for the Holocaust. I then began to question: is it an unreasonable demand that the German people spend their days taking personal responsibility for something that they themselves did not partake in? Do we as young Americans feel personally responsible for enslaving the African Americans or stealing the Native Americans' land?

Furthermore, her "answer" led me to a larger and ever-present question: How does a country take responsibility for something that each individual person does not himself take responsibility for? All of these questions opened my eyes to the fact that there never was, is, or will be an answer to my initial uncertainty of how to approach the situation without hostility.

When I returned from Germany about two months ago I locked this event in the vault of my mind. This is the first time I've released this momentous experience. The waves of fear and excitement have long dissipated, and all I am left with now is the incomplete answer of the Bavarian Education Minister. I have come to discover that this answer is no answer at all: just a glimpse into the German psyche.

How Educational is Co-ed Education?

BY ESTHER MALKA STROMER

A few weeks ago, I stayed in Stern for Shabbos, and the program included hosting male college students on campus for Shabbos. The program also encouraged open discussion amongst all of the students in attendance, not differentiating between the genders. After one of the more structured parts of the program, I had a discussion with one of the female students on the topic of her comfort level of talking to male peers.

We both came to the conclusion that a person's schooling experiences greatly influence a person's comfort level of dealing

with the opposite sex. Here at Stern College for Women, there are as many varied educational backgrounds as there are students. Some students attended public high schools, thus making Stern their first debut into an all-female learning environment. There are others with a mix of public school and co-educational day school, and there are many from same-gender yeshiva high schools.

The most interesting difference is that some Stern students came here because they can continue their education in a somewhat sheltered environment—a single-sex classroom—whereas some students came to Stern only to discover that learning in a sin-

gle-sex classroom was the biggest adjustment of all.

Regardless of one's background, learning to relate to our own peers of the opposite sex is always a challenge, and a *real* learning experience. Let's face it, men and women are just different! More often in the world around us there are disparities between men and women: health-related issues, salary issues, be it power-struggle and respect issues... no matter what you talk about, there is almost always going to be some difference between men and women. If you consult experts from a broad range of fields, you'll find that

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The Bullet-Proof Boundary

ANONYMOUS

It seems that someone has come into Stern with a scathing red crayon and had fun writing all over the social hierarchy. Somehow, this invisible red line has led a group of women to create societal divisions that should not exist. In this quintessential institution of Modern Orthodoxy, many different types of Orthodox Jews live under that broad title. They get along well with each other—that is, unless they intermingle. In a world where the modern Jew's observance is up against so many deterrents on a daily basis, it seems unnecessary and even ridiculous to create more self-induced challenges. There is an invisible boundary which divides some of the women in Stern and it is time that its idiocy is exposed. That is, the division between the Right Wing Modern Orthodox (RWMO) and the "Charedi" women in Stern.

You might ask yourself, "What defines Right Wing Modern Orthodox and what does it mean to be 'Charedi'?" Good question! That is exactly why I am writing this: to define these terms and then prove how miniscule and unimportant these two labels are for practical living; to demonstrate how the issues some women in Stern place focus on are irrational once real thought is applied to them.

The term "Charedi" has been placed in quotations, because the colloquial usage of this word, especially around the Brookdale hallways, is not synonymous with its real definition. The common usage of "Charedi," for example—"Look at her pleated skirt! She is sooo charedi!"—is not meant to refer to the Charedi sect you see on your way to Manny's on Friday in Meah Shearim. Those Charedim do not live in the modern world; they have no contact with secular society, place no value on secular education and do not have husbands who ever plan to enter the workforce. The ignorant colloquialism used around the local hallways refers to the Charedi *tendencies* displayed by Stern women, many of whom attended the same schools and camps as the RWMO women.

So what is it that separates the two—equally frum—types of women? The most glaring answer is the difference in dress. The RWMO woman tries her best to dress according to the laws of *tzniut* (modesty) and does so. But her view is that modesty can be achieved with many varieties of clothing, including a diverse range of color and jean. The "Charedi" woman feels that in order to be *tzanua*, one must wear bullet-proof black tights (although, it must be noted that many of the RWMO women have begun wearing nude stockings), pleated skirts, sweaters with colored shirts underneath, and *never* jean. In other words, they are always prepared for Shabbat. (A wonderful fulfillment of "*zachor et yom hashabbat l'kodsho*," no doubt.) But the fact remains that each woman wants to dress and behave in a *tzanua* manner, to follow *halacha* in the most suitable way possible. So why is it that they cannot coexist? Why does a nylon *chumra* (stringency) make such a statement? Manner of dress cannot be the dividing factor—it would be a shame to admit that the Jewish people have become such a superficial nation.

Perhaps the division stems from the degree to which the women integrate outside and secular influences. The RWMO woman does not value television or English music. Appropriate novels and the rare movie might be allowed, but some may wish to cut these out of their lives as well. They do value secular education, and not merely as a *b'dieved* step, or as a means to an end that will enable them to support their husbands learning in kollel. They follow a Rav Soloveitchik approach to the secular world. The "Charedi" woman would never think of letting any media in the household and may be receiving a secular education only as a means to an end. But realize this: both women have chosen to attend Stern (after all, if the "Charedi" women were really Charedi, they would not be here) and both share a value of education and are sitting in the same classrooms, listening to the same professors teach. Once again, a seeming difference has been nul-

lified.

Let us analyze the way each woman spends her time. Let us assume that the RWMO women are establishing set times to learn during the course of their week, as their seminaries have taught them to do. What they learn ranges from Mishna Berurah and Gemara to more *machshava*-based *sefarim* like Siftei Chaiim and Hegyonei Halacha. The more "Charedi" girl, however, learns more English-based *sefarim*, the occasional Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh—definitely not gemara—and places less emphasis on the *chavruta* style of learning. But what difference does that make? One woman is not smarter than the next! Both wish to continue enhancing their connection to Hashem and improve their *middot*, so the question still remains, why are they so different? Both women place a value on learning Chumash—why not set up a weekly *chavruta* on the *parsha*?

What is it that makes having a *hashkafic* (Torah outlook) discussion between the RWMO and "Charedi" women so unappealing and rare? Perhaps a higher level of confidence in each chosen life path needs to be maintained to eliminate these defensive feelings, a fear of being the "less frum." Hopefully, after having dispelled some of the assumed external difference, one can come to a conclusion that the two ideologies may not be so far removed from one another, that the invisible red line which divides them ought to be erased. It was once said, "We could learn a lot from crayons: some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some have weird names, and all are different colors, but they all learn to live in the same box." May the halls of Stern College for Women come to possess the peace intrinsic in a diverse box of crayons.

People are Just as Much Fun as iPods

BY Yael WOLYNETZ

iPods. The mere mentioning of the five-letter technology evokes a range of feelings. While some may argue that iPods are just recent innovations to replace the Discman, I have noticed that they have changed culture in a more pervasive way. Perhaps this is due to convenience. Whether it is original, mini, nano or, most recently, iPod video and shas-pod, they have become a "must-have" item for most people. With their lightweight, shrinking dimensions, they have left our culture with the notion that any-

time you are left to accomplish a task on your own, you must bring your iPod to keep you company.

What are the drawbacks societies face with the increasing user-friendliness of iPod technology? Has the accessibility of such a technology sent society into a downward slope? Such concerns were definitely not the case with the more bulky and less technologically-advanced Walkmans and Discmans. Instead of just the 13-17 songs that could be found on a tape or CD, iPods, depending on the amount of gigabytes

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Materialism on 34th Street

BY SOPHIE MARMOR

Every evening coming back to Brookdale from a long day of classes, I pass a homeless man outside of the local Duane Reade requesting money from the pedestrians on 34th Street. Virtually every evening it's the exact same scenario—the Styrofoam coffee cup that he uses to collect his handouts is empty and my guilty conscience causes me to make a donation.

Less than a minute later I find myself in the lobby of Brookdale. Many of the students look like they could pass for "O.C." characters. Coach bags, Ugg Boots, and of course if a student wants to be really "cool," she must have a Motorola Razr cell phone. A fact's a fact, let's not deny it: Stern College for Women is a place where any future monarch would feel very comfortable.

Next, I get into the elevator and hear a student talking into her not-as-cool Nokia cell phone to her mother about how she has to have her custom-made dress tailored absolutely perfectly for her brother's wedding, which will take place in two months at the most expensive facility in downstate New York and will be packed with all of the "celebrities" of the Modern Orthodox Jewish community. (That is assuming that a Modern Orthodox Jewish community really exists, anyway.) Next, the girl will start telling her mother that the food at the affair must be under the strictest kosher supervision that there is in America, because her rebbeim from seminary would never approve of her eating anything that is OU. Poor girl, what will the celebs think of a Nokia cell phone? Hopefully, her custom-made dress will be so stunning that no one will notice her out-of-date cell phone. And I really, really hope that none of the super-fantastic, ultra-kosher food will get on her brand-new \$500 shoes that she bought for the event last week.

After the cramped elevator ride, I go to my room and start to wonder about the man begging on 34th Street.

Why is his cup so empty if he's looking for handouts right next to the dormitory of a religious university? Shouldn't that be a "prime begging spot"? Even more puzzling, shouldn't a man seeking help near the dormitory of a religious university, whose students certainly aren't lacking when it comes to material goods, be well taken care of? Isn't it the duty of the "haves" (let alone the "haves" who are supposedly being taught morals and ethics by the leading religious Jewish clerics) to support the "have nots"?

There is nothing wrong with having nice things. I myself have a pair of Ugg boots and an obsession with Lacoste items. And I also very much want a Razr phone, but that's for another time. The point is that we have an obligation as religious Jews to think of others just as much as we think of ourselves. Indulgence in materialism is only justified when a person gives back. Perhaps it would be a nice idea if each student bought a non-perishable item from one of the cafeterias at least once a week and gave it to one of the people looking for a little bit of help on the street. When people who are physically so close to us suffer, we should be sensitive enough to be mindful of their predicament to try to do something about it.

Stern is a wonderful place, with a lot to offer. All we need to do is start "loving our neighbors like ourselves" as stringently as we keep the rest of the Torah. What makes Judaism such a unique faith is that it places deed and creed on the same plane, while most other religions do not. We are commanded to be a holy nation that is a separate people, and therefore every time we don't place deed and creed on the same level, we are failing that objective. So in theory, each time a religious person sees a social injustice and does nothing about it, he or she is committing two crimes: not caring for someone else, and not viewing deed and deed as equal. It's time for us religious Jews to start *acting* like religious Jews and upholding the ideals that are the jewels in the crown of our faith.

Attention Stern College: Wake Up!

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at Stern. When I first entered Stern last year, I hardly envisioned myself ever staying in. Rumors of its "sketchy" nature were enough to scare me away and send me home or to visit friends elsewhere for Shabbos. The fact is that the same features that make Shabbos on other campuses fun and uplifting are truly here at Stern if you ever venture to stay in and try it. The work that club leaders and the Stern administration put into planning each Shabbos is extraordinary. Planners are always looking for new and innovative ways to give Stern a community feel or make it a more social environment. Each Shabbos I've spent here this year, I've noticed a new, small adjustment, attempting to make Shabbos at Stern a special experience. The missing component that keeps Shabbos at Stern from matching Shabbatot elsewhere is only you.

Listen, I'm finished performing a song and dance trying to get you to become involved in school. I understand that you're not necessarily a political science major, or particularly interesting in debating, but I assure you,

regardless of your interest, there are outlets here at Stern that can serve your needs. Walking down the busy staircase at Stern, you are simply bombarded with posters featuring every type of event, from flamenco dancing to chessed opportunities. Nearly every major in Stern has a complimentary club or two that you can join. And my dear fellow Stern students, if you're simply tired of hearing me complain, there's this great school paper I know of that is looking for some new writers...

No, Stern is not like every other college, but really, isn't that a large part of why you came here in the first place? And no, Stern is certainly not perfect, and I myself have my fair share of complaints that would take a whole other article to discuss. Sometimes, though, you need to look around and appreciate what you have. It's about time that we stop looking at ourselves as martyrs who gave up the college experience to come to a yeshiva university, and open up to the great and *real* college experience Stern has to offer.

Signed,
Aviva Horowitz

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When Terrorism Is Democracy

By ARIELLA HOLLANDER

When Hamas won overwhelmingly on January 25 in Palestinian democratic elections, it shocked the Western world. Almost immediately, the white-washing of Hamas began, while President Bush and the Israeli government were condemned for even considering trying to "isolate" a democratically-elected government.

President Bush and the Israeli government were accused of hypocrisy in preaching democracy and at the same time ignoring the Palestinian elections. London's "Guardian" exclaimed, "Bush cannot call for a democracy in the Middle East and then ignore the results."

On the contrary: Israel and the U.S. are not ignoring the results of the Palestinians' democratic choice—they are dealing with it. Israel has already cut off over \$50 million dollars in tax revenue to Hamas and the United States and European Union are threatening to cut off complete aid. As a result, Hamas is looking for other means of financial support and are turning to countries such as Iran for help.

There are some, like former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who urge the U.S. and Israeli governments to give Hamas a chance to prove itself. "During this time of fluidity in the formation of the new government, it is important that Israel and the United States play positive roles," Carter said. "Any tacit or

formal collusion between the two powers to disrupt the process by punishing the Palestinian people could be counterproductive and have devastating consequences." Others think that the election of Hamas was a good thing in itself. In the online Salon magazine, reporter Helena Cobban wrote, "Some have proposed—and I am among them—that the advent of Hamas need not necessarily be viewed as a threat, but that the organization's long reputation for internal discipline and its solid nationalist credentials could potentially be viewed as an asset in the crafting of a stable peace in the region."

Let us not forget, however, who Hamas is and what it preaches—namely, a terrorist organization responsible for the murders of hundreds of Israeli men, women, and children that preaches destruction of Jews and Israel. The Hamas charter explicitly states:

"The time will not come until Muslims will fight the Jews (and kill them); until the Jews hide behind rocks and trees, which will cry: O Muslim! there is a Jew hiding behind me, come on and kill him!" (article seven)

"Allah is its goal, the Prophet its model, the Quran its Constitution, Jihad its path and death for the case of Allah its most sublime belief." (article eight)

"I swear by that who holds in His Hands the Soul of Muhammed! I indeed wish to go to war for the sake of Allah! I will

assault and kill, assault and kill, assault and kill (told by Bukhari and Muslim)" (article fifteen)

"The Arab states surrounding Israel are required to open their borders to the Jihad fighters, the sons of the Arab and Islamic peoples, to enable them to play their role and to join their efforts to those of their brothers among the Muslim Brothers in Palestine" (article twenty-eight)

Why, then, are there still journalists and politicians who believe the U.S. and Israel should cooperate with a terrorist organization that thirsts for Judean ruin and the utter destruction of the Western World? They continue to impose their own Western sensibilities and wishful thinking upon a people who have already made their choice. Yes, Hamas was democratically elected by the Palestinian people, and they are pledging to carry on with Jihad—as they see fit. They must therefore accept the consequences. Certainly the U.S., Israel, and any other country have the same democratic right to deal with them as they deem appropriate, including isolating them and cutting off aid. The U.S. and Israel are doing the right thing in withholding funds from a terrorist "democracy" and should continue to do so until they renounce violence and accept the legitimacy of the Jewish State.

The Matisyahu Phenomenon

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advertisers certainly do. This is because unlike any other album of Jewish music to date, the main purchasers of Matisyahu's CD—and I think, to a smaller extent, the people who attend his concerts—are not Jewish.

That changes quite a bit. Suddenly, it's not ourselves we're singing to; it's the rest of the world. These people can't tell the subtle difference between one type of Orthodox and another, they don't even understand Matisyahu's lyrics, and as his fame grows, chances are that when someone mentions "Orthodox" to them, or even just "Jew," Matisyahu is going to be the first image more and more people conjure up. Like it or not, Matisyahu's our representative to the world. How should we feel about that? Is he an accurate reflection of who we are?

It's not a simple question. I'm not sure Matisyahu even accurately reflects Chabad, let alone most of the Orthodox world. You may argue that it isn't fair to burden Matisyahu with the

impossible task of representing the Orthodox, but by making religion his gimmick, he has signed himself up for the job.

Furthermore, both Matisyahu and his music are so ubiquitous these days that they draw a considerable amount of attention to the Orthodox community. That prompts another question: do we want this attention? Is it good or bad?

I am torn. I've heard people say that the attention is good, because it will reach and inspire more secular Jews in a way that no Chevra album ever stands a chance of accomplishing. Some think that Matisyahu can pique the interest of Jews who have no other connection to their religion and bring them closer to Judaism. I think that probably could happen; if it's "cool" to like Matisyahu, and by correlation, "cool" to be Jewish, some good may definitely be accomplished. But despite the hype, I seriously doubt Jewish reggae is going to be the next rock n' roll. What happens when Matisyahu becomes suddenly and terribly out of vogue? Do the new kippah

and tzizis go with it?

Let's consider that for a moment. What does happen when Matisyahu gets old? What happens when tabloids start digging for dirt? That, too, reflects on us. The superstar treatment—or even just the fad of the moment—includes microscopic scrutiny of every action and word. If Matisyahu slips up, if he cracks under pressure or is caught in any compromising situation, suddenly it's a commentary on the Orthodox community. These are issues that were debated way back in 2000 when Joe Lieberman made it to the ballot. I remember being angry then that many Jews spoke about deliberately *not* voting for Gore to prevent such a situation from taking place, but while I still support Lieberman, I'm not so sure that I need an Orthodox reggae singer on TRL to worry about.

It is my last question, however, which disturbs me the most.

I put all the questions I mentioned here to an Orthodox musician, wondering if he had any insight into the Matisyahu phenomenon. For the most part, his

answers echoed my questions, as well as opinions I'd heard from other people who discussed this. The last question, though, prompted a different response. I told him about my perception of the two worlds—the sphere of Jewish music and the people MTV was talking to—as being separate, a perception apparently held by many Orthodox artists up to this point. My question was: were we wrong all along? Is it in fact possible for these two worlds to mix—for a religious Jew to have a music video on TRL?

At this point the musician corrected me, framing the question in a different light: "Is it possible for a religious Jew to put himself in the many questionable situations it takes to get TRL to play his video?"

There is, he said, no inherent problem with *having* a video on MTV, just as there is no inherent problem with having a non-Jew buy your album or come to your concert. But *getting* the video there takes work, and you've got to deal with some problematic elements. Perhaps the reason why no Orthodox Jew has ever "bro-

ken out" before is not because none have ever been as musically adventurous as Matisyahu—which is not difficult—but because they chose *not* to deal with these things. They preferred to stick to the cleaner waters and play for the people they were singing to in the first place.

It is very nice to cheer on Jewish athletes at the Olympics, but all pride and team spirit aside, I think perhaps the last way is the better way to go. To mangle a popular saying, non-Jews need Jewish music like a fish needs a bicycle. It's the same as Madonna's Kabbalah. Don't get me wrong: if the music is good enough, maybe non-Jews will like it, and good for them. But to specifically target non-Jewish audiences does not sit well with me. Forget about all the complicating risks—I think it just misses the point.

Still, I am unsure. And the question lingers: how should we feel about Matisyahu?

NEWS

Medical Ethics Society Holds Opening Event on Beren Campus

BY ARIELLA COHEN

On Wednesday, March 8, 150 SCW students attended a medical ethics lecture given by Rabbi Neuberger in the Levy Lobby of the Beren Campus. Rabbi Neuberger, rosh yeshiva of Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary at Yeshiva University, spoke eloquently about the sensitive topic of contraception in halakha. His speech, entitled "Misconceptions and Contraception," attempted to dispel the confusion associated with the halakhic permissibility of the use of contraceptives.



The medical ethics society arranged to have an expert in the fields of contraception and fertility speak in honor of the first event. In addition to his position as a rosh yeshiva of RIETS, Rabbi Neuberger is also the rav of Congregation Beth Abraham in Bergenfield, NJ. Rabbi Neuberger also held a position as the rav of Yeshiva University's Albert Einstein College of Medicine and the Jack D. Weiler Hospital from 1986-1990.

Zahava Sinensky (SCW '07), president of the Stern Medical Ethics Society, opened the evening with a discussion about the importance of medical ethics. She encouraged Stern students to become more involved in this new club and attend the upcoming event on genetic screening, planned for later this month. Sinensky feels passionate about

this club because it serves a great need in the SCW community. "As the world of medicine advances, as Jews, we are forced to contend with the Torah's views on these complex and challenging ethical issues," explained Sinensky. She believes that the society serves an important role in educating the college students, who will become tomorrow's Jewish world.

Levy Lobby was filled beyond its maximum capacity and the Chinese food containers were quickly emptied. However, this did not prevent Stern College women from attending the first Medical Ethics Society event on Stern Campus. As Shoshie Wolf (SCW '07) aptly remarked, "I think the fact that there were so many people at this event attests to the fact that this is an extremely important issue." Many others share Wolf's sentiments.

At the beginning of his lecture Rabbi Neuberger explained that he was not "easy going" about the halakhot of contraception and that *shailos* on this subject are his least favorite to answer because contraception is such a complicated area of halakha.

Rabbi Neuberger discussed the two major halakhic issues that come into play when answering a question of this nature. One issue that a rav must consider is Chazal's statement, "*Zreizim*

makdimim l'mitzvos," one must be excited to perform a mitzvah at the earliest opportunity. The second issue is "*Al tazriah zerah*," the prohibition against wasting male seed.

However, as Rabbi Neuberger explained, there are other considerations and extenuating circumstances that must be taken into account. For example, a couple suffering from severe stress or psychological issues is usually given a *heter* to use birth control. However, Rabbi Neuberger made clear that financial concerns are not a legitimate reason for preventing pregnancy unless those financial difficulties are a source of stress. He concluded with the message that one should try his best to perform the mitzvah of *peru urevu* in the correct way and not look for *heterim*. Nevertheless, Rabbi Neuberger emphasized that each couple's situation is different and therefore each case must be evaluated on an individual basis. He stressed that it is exceedingly important to consult with a competent rabbinic authority when halakhic questions about the use of contraceptives arise.



The lecture was sponsored by the Center for Jewish Future's Special Projects, as well as TAC and SCWSC, and made possible with the time and help of Rabbi Kenneth Brander, dean of the CJF, Rabbi Josh Joseph and Ruthie Isreali of CJF's Special Projects, and Yonah Bardos, president of the Medical Ethics Society.

YU To Offer Summer Courses in Israel

BY YAFFI SPODEK

This summer, Yeshiva University in Israel (YUI) is arranging a program, comprised of college-credit courses and Torah study, for undergraduate students from July 5th through August 2nd. The program, in conjunction with Yavneh Olami's Summer Internship Program, offers students an opportunity to take one four-week, three-credit course in either archaeology or filmmaking.

Yavneh Olami is an international religious Zionist student organization that uses educational resources to encourage Jewish students around the world to strengthen their connection to Israel and Judaism. Each summer they hold an internship program which hosts hundreds of students from abroad, giving them the opportunity to live and work in Israel for six weeks. Students in Yeshiva University's (YU) summer program will share housing with and join the interns in the Yavneh Olami program for a variety of activities and *shuirim*.

The YU courses will be led by top scholars, both from YU and Israel, and will take a hands-on approach to learning. Students will be studying in a Jewish environment and will be required to attend the *shuirim* as the religious component of the program.

The course on archaeology, entitled "Biblical Archaeology in Tel es-Safi/Gath," will be taught by Dr. Jill Katz of YU's Sociology Department, Dr. Aren Maeir of Bar Ilan University, and Dr. Jonathan Price of Tel Aviv

University. Through the course students will gain academic and practical experience in the recovery and analysis of the material remains of an ancient culture.

During the day, the group will participate in the excavation at Tell es-Safi, near Kiryat Gaht, identified as the Biblical Philistine city of Gath. Students will be exposed to all aspects of the excavation, from digging and surveying at the site, to washing and reading pottery at the base camp. Evening lectures will be given on topics related to the site, the archaeology of Israel, and archaeological methodology. The course will conclude with an intensive seminar on Semitic inscriptions in ancient sites.

The filmmaking course, "Communicating the Jewish Experience through Film," will introduce students to the art and science of filmmaking in the context of Jewish and Israeli cinema. It will be taught by Dr. Eric Goldman, also of YU's Sociology Department, in conjunction with The Ma'ale School of Television, Film, and the Arts in Jerusalem. The first part of the course will consist of classroom lectures on the theory of filmmaking. By examining Jewish cinema experiences during the 20th century, the course will provide an unusual perspective on both the self-perception of the Jews, as well as insight on how others in the world perceived them. The second part of the course will teach students about video production and how to make their own films. Participants will gain first-hand

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Peace in the Middle East: Is it Still Possible?

BY ALANA RUBENSTEIN

Ambassador Dennis B. Ross spent 12 years (from 1988-2000) working under Presidents George H. W. Bush and William J. Clinton as the United States point man on the Middle East peace process, a position that enabled him to be directly involved in all related negotiations. He was crucial to the 1995 Interim Agreement between the Palestinians and Israelis, facilitated the treaty between Israel and Jordan, and worked to unite Syria and Israel.

Ross' affinity for politics began in his youth, as he grew up observing the Civil Rights Movement and Vietnam War unfolding around him. After interning in the government, he decided he preferred policy-making to politics, a field where he would have the opportunity to act on his ideals and make a difference. And although his career

began with broader responsibilities related to many different areas of the world, he quickly became known for his involvement and expertise in the Middle East region.

Currently, Ambassador Ross is a counselor and Zeigler Distinguished Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He recently authored the book "The Missing Peace - The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace" (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004), which discusses the various efforts that have been made to establish peace in the Middle East, and analyzes the lessons today's policymakers must take from those endeavors. He also writes for a myriad of publications and gives lectures on a fairly regular basis.

Despite all this, Ross made time in his demanding schedule, between doing interviews at Fox News, where he is a Foreign

Affairs Analyst, and speaking at Yeshiva University's Israel Club Shabbaton, to sit down and discuss Israel's troubled past, the recent Hamas victory in the Palestinian elections and the future prospect of Middle East peace.

At this point in time, Ambassador Ross' attitude towards Israeli-Palestinian relations is not too hopeful. "With Hamas winning the election," he declared, "it's hard to see how we can begin a negotiating process." The outcome of the recent vote was a result many people were not expecting, an incident Ross attributes to numerous factors.

"First," he said, "they, more than others, were very well organized and had a history. They identified for a longer period of time with an anti-corruption platform, but they also delivered services." Hamas offered Palestinians after-school pro-

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Seforim Sale is Once Again a Success

BY RACHEL-ALI ELBAZ

The Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY) Seforim Sale is a source of both pride and revenue for the entire YU community. This event is the culmination of months of dedication and hard work. As the largest Jewish book sale in North America, this sale provides discounted prices on the widest selection of rabbinic and academic literature, cookbooks, children's books, CDs, and educational software.

The sale grossed \$1.08 million over two-and-a-half weeks (12 days of actual sales), as more than 14,000 customers walked through the doors of Belfer Hall on the Wilf Campus. One of the greatest successes of this year's sale was the ordering process. It proved to be extremely efficient, guaranteeing that the books arrived on time and in the correct amounts. The intention is to use the same blueprint next year to

assure that customers get the most sought out and valuable book at the best prices possible.

Although the sale has been around for many years, this year marked the first year that advertising space was sold on the cashier's wall. Yoni Goldenberg, a SSSB accounting major and the CEO of this year's sale, proposed this initiative. Although it wasn't



a major success this time around, it does have has long-term income potential. When businesses all over New York realize that the sale serves as many customers as it does, Goldenberg is sure they will be clamoring to get their names on the wall, some-

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The Downtown Connection

BY SARA CHAMAMA

Well, the new City Council is in session, and with it comes a whole lot of new City Council members as well as a new City Council Speaker. The previous speaker of City Council was Gifford Miller who, due to council term limits, was unable to run for reelection. Instead, he ran for mayor of New York City. He lost, for those of you who are unaware, to Mayor Michael Bloomberg. The new Speaker is Christine C. Quinn, a Democrat (a majority of the politicians in this city are) from Chelsea. Quinn is a veritable trailblazer as Speaker; she is the first woman to hold that position, as well as the first openly gay, and the first Irish.

One of the first things that Quinn did as Speaker was fire 61 staff members of City Council, and hire some of her own people in their place. While firing 61 individuals sounds like a large number, and it is, if you think about that, 61 people out of their jobs, the City Council has a whopping 853 individuals working for it (directly or indirectly, i.e. hired by individual council

members), according to the New York Post. Much pressure is on Quinn to fill those vacancies that she created with minorities—blacks, Latinos, Asians, and women. She also enforces a strict dress code, disallowing jeans, hats, team jerseys, sweatpants, t-shirts, and sneakers, even on Casual Fridays.

In the beginning of her term in office, things were going great between Quinn and the Mayor. They were getting along well, cooperating on many issues on hand. They fought side by side in a fight to get the New York State Legislature in Albany to allot more money for New York City schools. They announced a phone-a-thon, whereby they called on NYC citizens to bombard state government officials with phone calls calling for more money to improve the city's educational system.

They likewise stood together in announcing adding \$2 million to the \$10 million budget for the Translation and Interpretation Services in the Department of Education. The Translation and Interpretation Services Project translates school documents for non-English speaking parents of

children in New York City public schools, allowing them to participate in and influence their children's education. "I am very proud to stand today with Mayor Bloomberg... to announce an agreement that will allow all families with students in New York City schools to get the resources they need to succeed," said Speaker Quinn.

"We'll find out if it lasts when the two have to agree on the budget," said Councilmember Charles Barron, speaking about the so-called honeymoon period between Quinn and Bloomberg. "Remember, he is a lame-duck mayor... He's looking back at what his legacy is going to be." And, unfortunately, Barron was right. On March 1, Quinn shattered the peace between the two, and took an action that could be seen as attacking Bloomberg.

The mayor had previously vetoed the Health Care Security Act, a Council bill that would require large non-union grocery stores, such as Wal-Mart, to provide health benefits for its employees. Bloomberg claims that this bill violates state and federal law. With a vote of 48 for, 2 against, Quinn and the City



Council overrode Bloomberg's veto. Quinn, however, denied claims that this would ruin their "honeymoon." "The mayor and I have had, and will continue to have, a very good relationship," said Quinn. "But we don't agree on everything."

Also likely to be a stumbling block in their relationship is the upcoming budget decision for Fiscal Year 2007, which is a joint job between the Mayor and The City Council, and must be done by July 1. This year, the New York City government has a record \$4.3 billion surplus. The Mayor's proposed budget is for \$52.2 billion. Despite the surplus, Bloomberg and Quinn are likely to clash strongly on a majority of the details regarding the budget. Bloomberg has already stated that he wants to use the surplus to pay for some of the city's long-term

debts and to create a trust fund to pay for retiree health care. "Making a down payment is the fiscally responsible thing to do," Bloomberg said. "If we don't act now to meet and control these future costs, they will soon overwhelm city government's ability to pay for police and fire protection, schools, parks and other essential services." City Council, on the other hand, which is made up of council members who are clamoring to please their constituents, are likely to want to spend the surplus on various initiatives, some necessary, some not.

Either way, Quinn and Bloomberg are destined to quarrel at one point or another. When it does happen (and if Quinn owns up to it!) it should be a lot of fun to watch. I'll keep you posted.

Society for Social Justice

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could get involved in," said Cindy Bernstein (SCW '06), one of the club's founding members who co-organized the mission to Honduras with Stone. "As students, we can get so much done. We looked around at other universities and saw what they were doing and we were wondering, well, why aren't we doing this also?"

A major motivation behind the formation of the new society was the desire to mobilize a constituency that has, until now, been relatively silent on social justice. Aside from an overall student apathy that has long been decried, the society's founders claim that the larger Orthodox community has also been hesitant to take a stand on issues affecting the greater world community.

At the society's information session last month, Bernstein expounded on the Jewish principle of *tzedeck* (justice) and recalled the well-known axiom, "If I am only for myself, what am I?" "As Jews we have a huge obligation and mitzvah to help others, to step outside of our own *daled amos* (parameters)," she said. "It's also a *chillul Hashem* (disgrace of God's name) when people associate us with inaction. We have to counter the perception that only the Reform and Conservative movements care about these issues."

Among these issues is the sale of fair-trade coffee, a measure intended to offset the rampant exploitation of coffee farmers in third world countries. In Latin America, middlemen purchase coffee from the original planters and then sell it to corporations like Starbucks at approximately a

5,000% markup. Fair-trade coffee, which is slightly more costly, allows farmers to earn a more equitable share of the profits by eliminating the middlemen in these transactions.

The village of Las Bendiciones is comprised mainly of coffee farmers. Because of the YU students' proximity and resulting exposure to their cause, in addition to the simply ubiquitous nature of coffee vending, the fair-trade issue was placed at the top of the society's agenda. The more farmer-friendly coffee has already been made available at many university cafeterias, including Yale and New York University. After much discussion and debate, the initially hesitant Department of Food Services at YU eventually gave its approval, awarding the society with its first victory. It is expected that fair-trade coffee will be sold on both campuses by the end of the semester.

The Society for Social Justice has also been focusing on raising awareness about the ongoing genocide in Darfur, Sudan. Many of the club's members were responsible for getting the current crisis exposure by organizing a widely publicized and well-attended rally last May in Central Park. The next step is to cause concrete changes in the Bush administration's stance towards the region's horrific ethnic cleansing operation. To achieve this, the students are distributing informative leaflets, collecting signatures on petition-like postcards, holding classroom teach-ins, and encouraging students to attend the upcoming rally in Washington, D.C. A training program involving yeshiva

high schools is also in the making, which will hopefully mobilize not only YU students, but the greater Orthodox community as well.

Ariel Fischer (SSSB '07), a leading member of the Society for Social Justice, has taken charge of student campaigning on behalf of Darfur. "The trip was really a set-in to reality," he said, explaining how the mission influenced his role in the society. "It showed me how much of a bubble I'm in and how there are a lot more things going on outside of America that we're not even aware of." He has set up information tables across the Wilf Campus and will be arranging for a variety of lecturers to come to YU with the intent of further educating the student body on the current situation.

Aside from the fair-trade and genocide campaigns, the society's initiatives have differed with regard to the student populations they represent. At Stern College for Women, Rachel Grunau (SCW '09) is arranging for volunteers to tutor at the neighboring local public high school. Since Yeshiva College already has a similar program in place, Donny Ladell (YC '06) is organizing groups to package food for local soup kitchens. In the future, they plan to address the AIDS epidemic in Africa and other pertinent issues.

Although its tenure at YU has been relatively short thus far, the Society for Social Justice promises to add yet another dimension to the university's long-standing commitment to bettering the Jewish and world communities at large.

Purim Chagigah

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Pulling in by yellow school buses at about 9 p.m. to Belfer Hall on the uptown Wilf Campus, an estimated 500 women, mainly made up of Stern students, but also including women from area colleges and high

schools, slowly began trickling in to the annual bash. Women, dressed in everything from renaissance fairies to modern day iPods, were greeted by a slew of silver stars, pink streamers, and balloon arches.

No chagigah would be complete without its very own band. Providing the entertainment for continuous dance sets, Barock, a band categorized as "Jewish music with an edge," provided just that. Ari Green, lead singer in the band and former YU alum, made clear that "this (chagigah) is the ideal energy for any job." Having played for eight past Purim chagigot, he pointed out that while a dance set usually lasts

at the most for 45 minutes, "this dance set was 2 hours long, which is very unusual." He added that "when there is that energy, you don't even feel like you are working."

It would not be too hard for attendants to remember this year's chagigah, as they took

home souvenirs. The first, a white headband sporting the logo "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun Purim 2006," added to the themed collection of this year's TAC gifts, which included a YU gym bag and a YU water bottle.

The second, more personalized, souvenir taken home by guests were pictures from the TAC photo booth. With proceeds going to families from Gush Katif, a one dollar donation bought six old-fashioned snapshot photos at the TAC sponsored photo booth.

In addition to live music and energetic dancing, a *dvar Torah* was given by Ariella Belson, who spoke about uniting each person's physical and spiritual realities.

By the second dance set, the band opened with the theme song of the night, "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun." By then, as the clock struck 11:30 p.m., the chagigah truly felt its peak. With costumes slightly crinkled from the dancing, faces aglow, the room had filled up to a comfortable capacity.



AJWS Director Addresses YU on "Jews as Global Citizens"

BY DEBORAH ANSTANDIG

On March 2, 2006, Ruth Messinger, executive director and president of the American Jewish World Service (AJWS), addressed Yeshiva University students at Stern College's Hillel Rogoff Annual Memorial Lecture. Her lecture, entitled "Jews as Global Citizens: Our Responsibility in the World," focused on world issues and encouraged YU students to consider themselves as part of a global society. She also spoke about the mission of the AJWS, an organization dedicated to alleviating poverty, hunger, and disease in the developing world.

Messinger began by expounding upon a few of the 200 development programs and emergency relief programs the AJWS runs. These programs range from agri-forestry in Peru (planting trees to help replenish the soil for improved crop production) to microfinance programs in Africa where people can take out interest-free loans for as little as \$30 to start up small businesses. She recalled one woman who took out such a loan with the purpose of making sandwiches to sell to manual laborers for lunch. Messinger stressed that these lemonade-stand like projects, though they seem inconsequential, have the potential to make a significant impact on many people's lives.

Yet despite the importance of partaking in such efforts, Messinger recognizes that many people in the Orthodox community feel their obligation to help should apply first and foremost to Jews. However, she cited many commandments that she believes require Jews to look beyond the Jewish community alone. These include the commandment of the pursuit of justice, remembering that we were once strangers in a foreign land and the significance of helping one get out of a state of poverty. All these orders inform Jews of their obligation to serve those less fortunate than them, regardless of their race, religion and beliefs.

Although the mainstream Orthodox population has developed a reputation for its hesitance to engage in world issues, Messinger had nothing but accolades for the observant community. She praised Orthodox Jews for consistently providing aid to

those in need in a variety of ways, such as visiting the sick and feeding the hungry, because of their commitment to performing *mitzvot*. Similarly, she applauded the YU students for their activities on behalf of Darfur and their willingness to participate in the protest that will be taking place in Washington D.C. on April 30.

Furthermore, Messinger expressed gratitude to the modern Orthodox world for continuously inviting her to speak and allowing her to develop more informed understandings of religious texts. She specifically acknowledged

Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb, the executive vice president of the Orthodox Union, for being the most passionate speaker she has ever heard on the significance of the Jewish community's involvement in global events.

Messinger received warm support from the students who attended

her lecture, particularly from those who participated in YU's Alternative Winter Break trip to Honduras. "I am happy she was so proud of the entire spectrum of Judaism," said Azi Grysman (YC '07), one of the students who went on the trip. "The notion that this kind of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) is grounded in text was just so obvious to her."

Aside from her general address, Messinger spoke earlier in the evening to the S. Daniel Abraham Stern Honors Program about how she became the accomplished woman that she is. She was named one of Forward Magazine's top five most influential Jews five times in a row for her work in the AJWS and for her previous work as New York City Council President.

Yet Messinger refused to take all the credit for her work. She emphasized that she grew up in a home with a strong sense of Judaism where a passion for communal causes was ever present. Noting that she had no brothers, Messinger believes that being in a household of only women pushed her to thrive and eventually become the effective leader she is today.



CJF Sponsors Rebbetzins' Yarchei Kallah

BY CHANIE DINERMAN

In an effort to further support and strengthen the Jewish communities across America, the Center for the Jewish Future (CJF) held the first ever "Rebbetzins' Yarchei Kallah." This three-day conference, held in Teaneck, NJ at the synagogue Keter Torah, was designed to cater to the needs and concerns of rabbis' wives today. The program took place from February 28 to March 2. More than 30 women from across America participated in the event. Mrs. Shana Yocheved Schacter, a licensed psychoanalyst in private practice and wife of Rabbi JJ Schacter, and Mrs. Ruchie Brander, mother of five, wife of CJF Dean Rabbi Kenneth Brander, licensed pediatric occupational therapist and Torah teacher at a Boca Raton, FL day school, both participated.

Some of the sessions that were offered included "Community, Confidant, Teacher and Hostess: Defining and Managing the Role of the Rabbi's Wife," and "Our Husbands, Ourselves: Advisor, Supporter and Partner," given by Schacter, as well as "My Journey: Where Am I and How Did I Get Here?" which was taught by Brander. A variety of Torah study sessions were also offered throughout the conference.

The event stemmed from a Yarchei Kallah program for pulpit rabbis across America that was established by Rabbi Jacob J. Schacter, former head of the Soloveichik Institute and current senior scholar in the CJF, in 2002.

The goal of this endeavor was to create a network between the participating community rabbis, providing them with source materials, ideas and support. "By helping these rabbis balance their personal and professional lives and deal with difficult congregants," commented Rabbi Schacter, "Yarchei Kallah's goal is to create rabbis who proficiently project Orthodox Judaism. In general, we create strategies to maximize these rabbis' happiness and fulfillment with the rabbinate."

As director of the Professional Enhancement Division of the CJF, Rabbi Schacter decided to extend this goal to include rabbis wives as well. "Modern rebbetzins have more opportunities to be community leaders than their predecessors and in some congregations are encouraged to take more public roles," he said.

The contemporary rebbetzin is faced with unique challenges when shaping and carrying out her role in the community. The position of the community rebbetzin includes many traditional roles such as supporting her husband, raising her family in a strong Torah tradition, and being a role model, teacher, hostess and a positive influence on her entire community. Her job is "constantly changing," explained Rebbetzin Gila Miodownik, rebbetzin of Congregation Ahavas Torah in Highland Park, NJ and a physical therapist currently on maternity leave after the birth of her third child. "It depends on the need."

Today, rabbis' wives are ful-

filling these traditional roles while simultaneously managing their own personal jobs and careers. They are developing their own sense of self while trying to perform the traditional role of "rebbetzin" in the community. "We must ensure that they have the tools and guidance necessary to lead these lives creatively and intellectually, now and in the future," Schacter said. Therefore, the program was designed to provide these women with a support network of individuals in a position similar to theirs.

So far, the response to the program has been overwhelmingly positive. "[I] appreciated seeing that YU was doing something for us," expressed Rachel Lopatin, rebbetzin of Congregation Anshei Shalom Bnei Israel in Chicago, mother of three, and holder of masters' degrees in both Judaic Studies and social work. "They were so invested." She particularly enjoyed meeting and interacting with the other women whose "insights and comments were very helpful," she said.

This initiative of the CJF is an important start in advancing the goals of the Jewish community at large. Being especially attentive to the fabric of the community and the unique challenges that currently face communal leaders and their families demonstrates an ongoing commitment to helping modern Jewish communities grow and flourish.

Creating Co-ed Settings

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ing the issue. Most, if not all, of the leg-work would be done on the computer! It is precisely attitudes like this that prevent students from our institution to socially advance through healthy and appropriate channels. While I do understand that we must be socially sensitive to those who chose not to interact with the opposite gender, those on the flipside who wish to be respectably social in a co-ed environment should not have to feel or indeed made to feel as if this interaction is improper.

I have in fact seen some solutions to this "social-dissonance" that pervades YU's social dynamics. Two remedial programs that stand out in my mind are the annual TAC/SOY Yachad shabbaton and CJF's QUEST (Quality Education Skills Training) fellowship. This year's Yachad Shabbaton was one of the first times I saw YC and Stern students socializing naturally in a comfortable and non-judgmental setting. I think that students attend the Yachad Shabbaton because on the one hand, they want to be involved in a good cause, helping disabled individu-

als for the weekend, and consciously, or subconsciously, to be able to meet and mingle with members of the opposite gender in a safe and appropriate setting. There is no other Shabbaton, aside from the Israel Club Shabbaton, on campus that brings YC and Stern students together to healthily socialize. The energy, informality and cohesiveness that are created from Shabbatons like this, I think, make YU so much more socially appealing. It's ironic that one of Yachad's main goals is that the Yachad members should feel "socially mainstreamed," but in the process, the Yachad members are actually socially mainstreaming us!

CJF's QUEST fellowship, of which I am a member, has been one of the most wonderful assets to the extracurricular educational programs YU provides. It is a program that teaches YU students how to be better leaders and informal educators. Through our practice sessions, participants are asked to lead informal discussions in a co-ed group about topics such as substance abuse, relationships, anger management and listening skills. As a result of our practice sessions, we then go out

into high schools and youth groups and talk with students about these very same issues. The social dynamics that QUEST fellows have been exposed to are so critical in creating a healthy social structure in YU. A safe haven has been created where male and female students from YU can informally discuss contemporary issues together in a safe environment and also make new friendships through our time spent together. Furthermore, these very real issues are ones that we will face as we develop romantic relationships and families. The very real life skills learned in QUEST would benefit the entire student body as well as community. I feel privileged to be one of 25 fellows able to partake in such a valuable and life-changing experience.

I hope that healthy social experiences such as the Yachad Shabbaton and the QUEST fellowship, and hopefully Seforim Sale will be more available and accessible to students so that we can develop more healthy relationships as well as a thriving, cohesive student body.

FEATURES

Dunkin Donuts Kashrut Update: the hechsher is different, but some things haven't changed

By JACKIE FAST

One year ago, the Observer featured an article that explored the kashrut status of the Dunkin Donuts-Baskin Robbins at 51 E. 34th Street, across the street from Brookdale Residence Hall. The store's kashrut had been a matter of controversy, since bacon had been served on premises and many—including the Stern administration—had cautioned against the “Ner Tamid K” hechsher (certification), which some students affectionately termed the “Sketchy-K.”

During finals in January, rumors began to circulate throughout Stern that the doughnut store was switching to the OU certification. Employees attested that the store had removed all meat menu items, and that the new kashrut certificate was on its way later that week. As the week progressed, the new certificate did not arrive. Then, on February 8, the Ner Tamid K stationery was torn off the window and a new certificate took its place. Rabbi Harry Cohen signed the letter from the

Orthodox Kashruth Supervision Services (OKS) that read, “All items on their premises are kosher.”

It should have been the most jubilant day Brookdale Hall had ever seen. And yet, confusion lin-



gered. “Some of my friends had been really excited when they heard that [Dunkin Donuts] was getting a new *hashgacha* (supervision),” said SCW sophomore Becky Abramowitz. “Some of them started eating there along with the switch. But most of them were still confused; they had heard that maybe the new certification wasn't good, but nobody really had a clue.”

The OKS is operated out of the Upper West Side as a one-man agency. In addition to this Dunkin Donuts store, there are a few others that are under its

supervision, including Chennai Garden on 27th Street. Rabbi Cohen's OKS has no website. According to Stern's *mashgiach ruchani* Rabbi Hochberg, “I have checked out the standards of Rabbi Cohen, and the current supervision of Dunkin Donuts is no more reliable than the old supervision. It is not recommended. Although they have removed all of the completely non-kosher products from the premises, they are not a reliable agency. Nobody is ever in the store watching that the employees have a clue what is going on.”

All of the mixes at Dunkin Donuts are under the supervision of the Chof-K, and for a viable kashrut agency to supervise a premises is relatively easy. In addition to having kosher mixes, the frying oil and all other unpackaged foods must be kosher, and the employees must be supervised to ensure that no mistakes are made. Local kashrut agencies have succeeded in supervising some locations without any difficulty; for example, the Vaad of the Five Towns

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Central High Schoolers Organize Mission to Israel

By NEHAMA COHEN

After attending the YU leadership training conference for high school students known as Ematai in March 2005 in Houston, Texas, Yael Ausubel and Joyce Tessel, two juniors at YU's Central High School, were inspired to act. They took the initiative to develop and plan a project that their fellow students could take part in and benefit from. “Joyce and I had the privilege to visit Israel in the past, but we know that not everyone in our grade was as lucky,” Ausubel noted, explaining the beginning of their involvement. With this in mind, Ausubel and Tessel decided to run a program whose ultimate goal would be to build lasting relationships between the students in their grade and students in Israel, in the form of an eight-day trip to Israel.

The two students sent letters to different organizations for help in this endeavor, and received an enthusiastic response from Emunah, the American women's organization for Israel, complete with the number of a high school that the girls could contact:

Emunah Torah and Arts High School located in Jerusalem. This program started out as a simple pen pal project, with students writing letters and sending pictures to each other. “At one point,” Ausubel reminisces, “Joyce and I mentioned planning a mission to Israel, to go visit our new friends, but we just laughed because we knew it would never be possible.”

Principal Rochelle Brand, however, did not laugh when the girls mentioned this idea at an activities meeting at Central. On the contrary, “Mrs. Brand was extremely supportive and interested in our idea,” said Ausubel. This interest prompted a letter-writing campaign to various organizations and private donors asking for help in subsidizing a possible trip. The trip, which would be open to all students, would involve a visit to the school that the students had been working with in Jerusalem. YU's Women's Organization, the Center for the Jewish Future, as well as several private donors, were indispensable to the funding

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“Shabbat Couples” Add to Life on Campus

By ABBY ATLAS

If you have had the experience of spending Shabbat in Stern College, you may have noticed the married couple that oversees the Shabbatonim, taking care to make sure that everything runs smoothly. Maybe you have wondered who these people are, what they do during the week, or where they live. Maybe you have been audacious enough to ask. For those who have not yet had the pleasure of meeting Rabbi Moshe and Chana Mayefsky and Rabbi Jay and Sharon Weinstein, perhaps after reading a bit about who they are, you will be motivated to spend Shabbat in school and get to know them.

The Mayefskys and Weinstains spend alternate Shabbatot as the rabbi and rebbetzin in Stern. The various responsibilities of the rabbis and their wives include giving *shivurim*, making sure that there are students to *lain* if there is a *minyan* on campus, and making *kiddush* and *havdalah*. However, Rabbi Weinstein likes to think of himself and his wife not as the “rabbi and rebbetzin” but rather as “the couple invited” to spend Shabbat in Stern. It's more, he says, than “to just make *kiddush* and run *davening*.” He and his wife come “to help students feel more welcome and develop infor-

mal relationships with students.” Moshe Mayefsky says that he and his wife have really gotten to know “the regulars” over the three years they have spent as the “Shabbat couple.” They have had some of these students for Shabbat at their home in Brooklyn. Chana Mayefsky even made a *shidduch* between two students at a Shabbaton.

These couples enjoy spending Shabbat in Stern. Rabbi Weinstein says that when spending Shabbat in Stern, he sees “another side of YU that you don't usually see...” While during the week, Stern is a place of rigorous academic pursuit and development, on Shabbat, Stern is transformed. Rabbi Weinstein describes the beautiful *davening*, singing, and engaging discussions that are part of the experience of Shabbat in Stern. Despite this, he says “we're battling a stigma” that people think it is unpleasant to spend Shabbat in Stern.

The Weinstains and Mayefskys have lives beyond being the “Shabbat couples.” Moshe Mayefsky is an actuary who works right near Stern, on 34th St. His wife Chana is a freelance writer who writes book reviews for “Publisher's Weekly.” She studied Jewish History in the Bernard Revel Graduate School and majored in

English Literature in Stern College while she was an undergraduate. Many women in Stern probably recognize her as a member of the faculty; as a physical education instructor, she teaches two basketball classes each semester. The Mayefsky have a new addition to their family, their ten-month-old daughter Leba.

Chana Mayefsky says that Shabbat in Stern is “more complicated now than it was before Leba.” The fact that there is no *eruv* in the midtown area of Manhattan makes transporting Leba difficult. Chana notes that the security guards are always helpful, going back and forth to the Bedford Hotel on 40th St. and Lexington Avenue, where the “Shabbat couples” stay, wheeling Leba in her carriage.

When asked how they landed the job as Shabbat rabbi and rebbetzin, Moshe Mayefsky responded that it was “luck.” His wife Chana describes that three-and-a-half years ago when she was a student in Revel, she passed the office of Mrs. Braun, associate dean of students, who knew Chana from around school. Mrs. Braun asked a few questions about Moshe's communal leadership experience and then offered them the job.

Chana describes that Moshe was really excited by this offer. He was involved in his shul

growing up. He and his brothers were the only children in the shul and, Moshe describes, he and his brothers “ran the shul before [reaching the age of] bar mitzvah.” Chana says that Moshe felt that this was the job “he was raised to do.”

The Weinstains, who are in the middle of their first year of serving as “Shabbat couple,” also found out about the job from Dean Braun. Sharon knew Braun from around Stern and Jay was friends with Braun's son Nachum.

Rabbi Jay and Sharon Weinstein live in Washington Heights. Jay Weinstein is studying in RIETS and learns in the kollel in the afternoon. He is also studying special education at Columbia University's Teachers College. When asked what he intends to do professionally after graduating, Weinstein said that he is “interested in the pulpit tracks.” He says that his position as Shabbat rabbi in Stern allows him to practice speaking in front of large audiences. Jay Weinstein is also becoming familiar with other issues confronted by shul rabbis. “I'm getting my feet wet, getting to know the types of things that come up,” he explains. Sharon attended Stern as an undergraduate and is now finishing up her graduate work in Revel. She also is a participant in

the Stern Talmud program and teaches Judaic Studies in the Stella K. Abraham High School for Girls on Long Island.

Sharon notes that when she was an undergraduate in Stern she spent a total of two Shabbatot in school. Now that she spends so many Shabbatot in Stern, she comments that she is impressed by how smoothly it runs. She comments that the Shabbat experience in Stern is a “hidden secret.”

The rabbis and rebbetzins all individually expressed how enjoyable it is to spend Shabbat in Stern. Chana Mayefsky notes that Shabbat in Stern is “a fun opportunity.” In addition, says Sharon Weinstein, it “gives students a way to meet.” While according to Jay Weinstein there are typically 50-70 men and 200-300 women for Shabbat, Moshe Mayefsky comments that it “enhances Shabbat when more people are there.” Rabbi Weinstein encourages students to capitalize on the incredible Shabbat programming that is available and to stay in as often as possible. When you do stay, make sure to go introduce yourself!

Lindenbaum to Establish Educators Fellowship

BY ALIZA PEYSER

Midreshet Lindenbaum, the well-known midrasha for post-high school study, has formally announced a new post-college learning program for young aspiring educators which will open for the first time this coming fall. The program offers serious Torah learning from top Israeli educators, as well as the opportunity to earn M.A. credits in education from Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

The goal, as described by Rav Tuvia Kaplan, the *mashgiach ruchani* at Lindenbaum is "to educate and train talented, enthusiastic young women to teach and inspire American yeshiva high school students."

Participants will learn at Midreshet Lindenbaum, located in Talpiot, Jerusalem, five mornings and two afternoons a week. In addition to Jewish Studies courses, a number of required courses will deal with issues in Jewish education. The program will also include a practicum in Jewish education. "The practicum will provide hands-on educational experiences that include visits to Israeli schools to observe and analyze educational methodologies," according to the website, "as well as opportunities to student-teach in Midreshet Lindenbaum classes." Rav Kaplan explains, "A group of

advanced students will certainly add to the atmosphere in the *beis medrash*."

Rabbi Stanley Peerless, the former principal of the Hebrew Academy of Montreal, will be in charge of the new program. "[Rabbi Peerless] will be coordinating the program with the Hebrew University Masters program and will be responsible for the education component of the Lindenbaum program," Rav Kaplan says.

Rav Menachem Leibtag, Mrs. Shani Taragin, Rabbi Peerless and Dr. Alex Pomson will be teaching during the student's time at Lindenbaum. There will also be courses given by Rabbi Dr. Pinchas Haymann, Mrs. Deena Zimmerman, Rav Sabato, Chanan Gafni and others.

Two afternoons a week the participants take one-semester courses from four areas of concentration at Hebrew University: philosophy of education, pedagogy, educational psychology, and contemporary Judaism. In addition, participants must choose from one of the following year-long concentrations: "Teaching Hebrew as a Second Language" or "Teaching Jewish Studies in the Diaspora." At the conclusion of the year, participants will receive certification for teaching at schools in *chutz la'aretz* and must commit to teach in *chutz la'aretz* the follow-

ing year.

Elana Stein, a second-year student in Stern's Graduate Program in Advanced Talmudic Studies, says, "As a Stern Talmud Program student, I appreciate the value of pursuing a Masters during one's year(s) of learning. It is at once both practical and idealistic. I'm curious to see how the program will develop: curious about the proposed curriculum [and] whether it will eventually become a full Masters program like in Stern."

Stein noted that the "Teaching Hebrew as a Second Language" track is a great asset to the program since it will be of great advantage to the educators and students in the day schools across America, many of which are currently struggling in that area. "Most of all," Stein concluded, she wonders "whether it will train budding teachers to teach Hebrew language effectively to their students. While there are some high schools that pride themselves on a strong Hebrew language curriculum, many schools are less successful. The average yeshiva high school graduate simply does not feel comfortable speaking Hebrew.

This new program aims to benefit the Jewish community of the Diaspora immeasurably. Those who complete the Lindenbaum Educators

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The Dependable Store Right Next Door: Local Duane Reade in Our Own Neighborhood

BY SURI GREENWALD

Located on almost every corner you turn, Duane Reade has become the biggest drugstore chain around. Its distinguishing big DR letters stand out, luring the average onlooker into the store for anything from toothpaste, to cosmetics, to a snack on the go.

But why has it become so popular? According to Ian Mount, in his New York Magazine article entitled "The Mystery of Duane Reade," there is no reason for such an unorganized overpriced store to be in such demand. It all boils down to real estate, he says:

Duane Reade picks good locations for cheap prices. The corporation will gladly invest in a dump and turn it into a bustling store. More significantly, Duane Reade is willing to invest in many dumps, creating branches all over this tiny island. Take, for example, the Beren Campus: there is a Duane Reade on the corner of 34th street and Park Avenue, just seconds away from Brookdale, and another on 34th Street and 3rd Avenue, just moments away from the school buildings. This way, Duane Reade is the drugstore you'd probably end up in, since it is invariably close by.

Although one might think the drugstore got its name from a man named Duane, it was actually named for the two streets it was originally sandwiched between in Lower Manhattan on Broadway. It was originally started by Abraham, Eli, and Jack Cohen in the 1960s. The store peaked in 1996 when Roman-born Anthony Cuti was brought in as CEO. Because of Cuti, Duane Reade was able to expand to over 200 chains from a mere 59. It is Cuti's flare for business that has led to Duane Reade's remarkable success. He understands that location is crucial, and that placing a store next to a train station is a sure way to catch the

eye of commuters running on their way, yet it is also important to take what you can get, like a two-floored building which many pharmacies avoid. Admitting that some branches of Duane Reade are disorganized inside, Cuti says the business takes advantage of the fact that New Yorkers do not care too much about aesthetics when they're rushing to buy the product in need.

Although there seems to be randomness to the organization of the aisles, there is a general system that seems to work. For instance, the first section is reserved for cosmetics since the average customer is female and can easily be lured into purchas-

ing a bit of makeup. Also, the pharmaceutical section is always located in the back of the store since most people don't peruse the medicine section for fun; if someone does need medicine, they know exactly where to go.

Duane Reade is concerned about its rushed customers, a group which includes most of its New Yorker clientele, and therefore the company tries to be generous in staffing cashiers. They want the lines to move. "When I'm catching somebody out of Penn Station moving 100 miles per hour, they want service and they want it quick," Cuti remarked.

Although Cuti has a strong hold on his chain-stores, he still fears competition from the other local drugstores, like CVS. He is therefore exploring the possibilities of expanding Duane Reade's offers to include possible beauty stands providing free make-up trials. Whether or not such an innovation will succeed is yet to be seen, but with Cuti's past successes, Duane Reade is in good hands.



Ilan Halimi Murdered in France

BY CLAUDIA AMZALLAG

February 13, 2006 definitely marked history. Ilan Halimi, a 23-year-old Parisian Jew, was found by a passerby stumbling in a field near the railroad tracks in the Essonne region, south of Paris. Handcuffed, naked, with 4/5 of his body covered with burns, bruises, and stab wounds, Halimi died in the ambulance on the way to the hospital.

The barbaric acts shocked the world, as it seemed to be a second "Dreyfus affair." The story came out after Halimi's body was found. He had been working in a cell phone store on Boulevard Voltaire in the mixed 11th arrondissement (neighborhood) of Paris, and was seduced by a young Iranian-French woman who pretended to fall in love with him. They exchanged numbers, and at the end of their date, she told him she would call a friend to drive them home, since the trains were not running at that hour. However, her friends were the so-called "Gang of the Barbarians," whose ringleader, Youssouf Fofana, age 26, refers to himself as the "Brain of the Barbarians."

Indeed, the name they gave themselves was appropriate, given the circumstances. Halimi was held prisoner and was abused in an apartment. The room was

lent to them by the concierge of the building. After Halimi was found, the pieces started falling into place quite quickly. The police put out a sketch of a blonde woman who had tried to bait other young men in similar circumstances, and soon after, Audrey Lorleach turned herself in. She led the police to a housing project in Bagneux, a suburb in Hauts-de-Seine. Fifteen suspects were found, most of them delin-



quents, including Fofana, who had previously been jailed for armed robbery. Surprisingly, there were some members who held respectable jobs, like the one working for a French TV station.

The news has shocked the world, but more importantly, what struck the world is: "Why? And why a Jew?" At first the motive seemed to be financial. Halimi's father, Didier, speaks about how they attempted to negotiate, first via phone and later via e-mail. A picture of Halimi handcuffed and holding that day's newspaper was sent to Didier and a ransom for 450,000

Euros declared. Didier says, "When I told him I did not have the money, they answered that I should ask money from the community."

Turning to the police for advice, the family was told not to answer phone calls, so that the gang would be forced to text message them, which seemed to be an easier way to track them down. The Halimis did as the police recommended, and five days later the body was found. Obviously, his parents are angry with the police, and the police now fear that if any situation like this were to occur again, people would not want to involve the police anymore.

It seems as though many more of these cases of men being targeted in kidnappings are cases of Jewish men. Most members of the gang who it seems carried out the crime are Muslims whose families come from Maghreb or Sub-Saharan Africa.

It seemed at first that money was the primary object. An anonymous police detective quoted in the February 27 edition of "Liberation" said, "It's simply that, for those criminals, Jew equals money." Rumors spread that the gang actually made a mistake when they took in Halimi, and they were aiming for

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THE ISRAEL SECTION

Israel Club, CJF Sends 18 Students to AIPAC Policy Conference

BY SARAH MATARASSO

In an effort to make YC and SCW students more politically aware of Israel-America relations and in an attempt to motivate more students to involve themselves in Israel advocacy and activism, the CJF and the YU Israel Club sponsored 18 YU students to attend the annual three-day AIPAC policy conference. The conference, held from March 5 through March 7, drew more than 5,000 pro-Israel activists from around the country to Washington D.C.; more than 1,000 of those who attended were students.

For those who have never heard of AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee is a special interest group that lobbies the American government. Considered one of the strongest and most powerful lobbying groups, The New York Times has stated that "the organization has gained power to influence a presidential candidate's choice of staff, to block practically any arms sale to an Arab country and to serve as a catalyst for intimate military relations between The Pentagon and the Israeli army. Its leading officials are consulted by State Department and White House policy makers, by senators and generals." However, the group is not without its critics who believe that AIPAC receives its tremendous support from Congress through a combination of propaganda and significant contributions to congressional campaigns on the part of individual AIPAC members (AIPAC does not donate directly to political campaigns).

Founded by I.L. "Si" Kenen in 1953, it was originally called the American Zionist Committee

for Public Affairs. The organization now boasts 100,000 members from all 50 states. According to its official website, "AIPAC activists help pass more than 100 pro-Israel legislative initiatives a year" through numerous meetings with congressmen each year. The current items on AIPAC's agenda include stopping Iran from obtaining more nuclear weapons, educating congress about the Israeli-U.S. relationship, and training and preparing students across America's college campuses—although they do not have "chapters or affiliated groups on college campuses."

Keynote speakers at the policy conference included Vice President Dick Cheney and Ambassador John R. Bolton, United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Those from Israel who were unable to make it to Washington participated in the conference via satellite hookups to Israel. The audience had the chance to hear from Benjamin Netanyahu, Chairman of the Likud Party; Amir Peretz, Chairman of the Labor Party; and acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, chairman of the Kadima Party.

YU Israel Club President Yael Schiller commented on one speaker in particular. In Schiller's opinion, "among the dozens of phenomenal lectures I found Howard Kohr, Executive Director of AIPAC, to be the [most] poignant and articulate." Making references to the Nazi Germany of the 1930s, Kohr addressed the two main points on the conference agenda which happen to correspond with two major threats currently facing Israel and the entire global community: Iran's continued development of nuclear weapons and

the Hamas terrorist organization. Kohr explained that "What makes Iran so dangerous is not simply the words their leaders speak or threats the regime makes... [but] the fact that [Iran is] closer than ever to having the military capabilities to match its evil intentions." Urging all those at the conference to be aware of the power they have through their ability to speak with and influence their congressmen, Kohr emphasized that "our actions still matter."

As stated on the AIPAC website, the group is "proud of its role in educating America's leaders about Israel, and is working to give America's students the tools they need to become effective advocates for a strong, abiding and unshakeable U.S.-Israel relationship." This past weekend, the Israel Club, YUPAC and The Political Science Society ran a successful lobbying mission to D.C. which focused on, among other things, educating students about the political process and training them to run effective lobbying programs. According to Schiller, "attending the AIPAC policy conference enabled student leaders to do the same thing and empowered us to continue our lobbying." On the last day of the policy conference, the students had the chance to meet with their congressmen. Schiller believes that the opportunity to end the trip with the chance to make a "tangible" difference was the perfect transition into the YU lobbying mission. She hopes that this heightened attention placed on Israel advocacy and the important role students can play will be felt on campus and will encourage a larger segment of the student body to increase their political activism.

Helping a Community in Need

BY TALIA KAPLAN

In a city that represents the essence of Israel, there is a community without its place of *davening*, celebrating and learning. The city is Modiin, where the *Chashmonaim* of past might are buried, located between Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv. It, too, is a mix of our Jewish heritage and hope for the future. The city itself is largely secular; however, there are enclaves of religious communities within this bustling city. One of those communities is located off of Emek HaChulah. Its *beit kneset*, Tzirei Modiin, was completely burned, save its foundations. This *beit kneset* functioned as a place for the community to gather, and was the only large shul in the area. The *beit kneset* was in the process of building another structure to accommodate its growing population when the main structure was destroyed. Many shuls are in dire need of help, so one may wonder what makes this shul unique. This shul prides itself on the fact that it is associated with an organization called Ezer Modiin. This organization provides furniture, supplies, food and toys to the needy of Modiin—regardless of one's religious affiliation. The shul itself identifies with the *Dati Leumi* ideologies but is accepting of Jews from any background to come and partake in the shul's numerous functions, including

daily *minyanim* and *shiurim*. It also happens to be a prime location for celebrating bar and bat mitzvahs and other such events.

Tzirei Modiin is now looking to rebuild but the process is not an easy one. They have been having trouble with the insurance and the government has not been much more of a help. It is not only the shul that needs help, but the entire community, including Ezer Modiin, since they are not receiving their usual assistance from the shul, is losing out. The regular worshippers in the shul have needed to use makeshift accommodations until the building is able to be used again. *Minyanim* have been set up in different schools in the area, including rented rooms from public schools in the area.

Netanel Munk (YC '05) was approached by his uncle, a member of the community, to help find funds for this important project. Munk, currently a *madrish* for boys at Netiv Aryeh, thought back to the generous community that he experienced. He therefore decided that it would be a worthwhile idea to contact the student leaders of both the Wilf and Beren Campuses to get YU students involved.

For more information about making donations or seeing how you can help, please e-mail Nava Streit at gotnav@gmail.com.

Write for Israel:

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Israel Club Shabbaton: Sparking Conversation

BY DEBORAH ANSTANDIG

Yeshiva's annual Israel Club Shabbaton once again proved to be a success, this year taking place on the Shabbat of March 3-4. Drawing approximately 300 Yeshiva students from both campuses, the Shabbaton featured speakers addressing Israel-related topics, and held a screening of "Operation Thunderbolt" following Shabbat. Israel Club Presidents Yael Schiller and Avi Narrow-Tilonsky organized the event.

Ambassador Dennis Ross, American diplomat and advisor in the peace processes under both Presidents Clinton and Bush, addressed the crowd about "The Middle East Post-Hamas Victory." Ross explained that he

believes the international community ought to demand that Hamas drop its policy that Israel has no right to exist before engaging in any other political maneuvers with the new leadership wing of the Palestinian Authority. Ross also expressed his concerns about the growing threat of anti-Israel rhetoric in Iran.

Yehezkel Landau gave a talk entitled "A Religious Zionist Peace Perspective: Halakhic and Political Considerations," where he engaged the crowd in his ideas about the ways to approach attaining peace. Landau, an American *oleh*, has been involved in interfaith education and Jewish-Arab peace-making projects for over 25 years including the Open House Center for Jewish-Arab Coexistence in

Ramle, Israel. Landau was met with vociferous, yet respectful debate from the crowd about a myriad of issues ranging from American and Israeli mistakes in Oslo to the challenges of teaching Israelis and Palestinians to learning how to work together and trust each other. Akiva Werber, director of the American section of the Aliyah Department of the Jewish Agency, also addressed the crowd on the topic of "Post Gush-Katif, Pre-Elections and You."

Students had a plethora of responses related to the Shabbaton. Deanna Frazin, SCW '08, expressed the positive experience of attending. "As someone who stays in almost every week, this was one of the first Shabbat where I felt like we were all unit-

ed and a part of one community," she said. Michal Kalinsky, SSSB '07, explained that she was uncomfortable with some of the messages that were being presented, saying that "I was anticipating a Shabbat that was more positive about Israel, less politics, and more *chizuk* and *ruach*." Other students, wishing to remain anonymous, concurred that they anticipated less political conversation, and a more uplifting experience. Hillary Lewin, TAC president and SCW '06, expressed that she found the speakers to be both engaging and valuable. "The nature of university should be one where students can be exposed to different ideas. Although it is frustrating at times to hear views that differ from one's own, it is important to learn

from others who hold educated perspectives. Hearing from other people only helps to strengthen and develop one's own perspective."

Schiller echoed Lewin's remarks. "The students of Yeshiva University are fortunate enough to be in a university where our support for Israel is not only acceptable, but encouraged. The Israel Club Shabbaton provided an opportunity for students to be exposed to an array of fascinating speakers who offer a springboard for stimulating conversations."

And the conversation will continue.

Lindenbaum's Educators Fellowship

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Fellowship program will be equipped spiritually and intellectually to make a "significant contribution," as the website explains, to the greater Jewish community and possess the potential to improve the future of Jewish education, particularly in the area of women's learning.

The program's brochure delineates the technical benefits. "Participants will receive a monthly stipend of \$800, free medical insurance, and two meals a day on school days. All courses at both Midreshet Lindenbaum and the Hebrew University are tuition-free." Students may finish their Masters degree while they teach in *chutz la'aretz*, or may prefer to return to Hebrew University to finish their degree.

"Responses to the program have been encouraging and have gone way beyond the original target audience," Rav Kaplan reports. "We originally thought of our alumnae but have been seeing interest from many different sources."

Jen Rubin, a Columbia College senior, Lindenbaum alumnus '02, has recently been

appointed as the Lindenbaum Alumni coordinator. She is also positive about the response to the program. "Responses have come with a lot of excitement, both from those who are considering participating as well as from those who are simply excited that such an opportunity exists," Rubin says. "About 50% of those who have expressed their interest to me are not interested in pursuing Jewish education fulltime."

"Priority will be given to applicants who want to participate fully in the program, including a year of education in the United States," explains Rav Kaplan. "On a space available basis we may be able to accept students who 'just' want to learn but are not interested in the whole program. As of now this is a funding issue as well. If the funding for the program is to produce inspiring teachers for the Diaspora then the number of people not teaching will be limited."

Can students begin to teach in Israeli high schools immediately after completing the program? "In the future we would like to open that up as a possibility but in the short term the program will require a com-

mitment to at least one year teaching in *chutz la'aretz*," Rav Kaplan says.

Midreshet Lindenbaum alumni are excited about the new program. "The Lindenbaum program is unique," says Aviva Segelman. "It offers participants the opportunity to learn from Americans in Israel, and in that sense gain from the spectrum of Jewish, and particularly Modern Orthodox, education today."

As Rav Kaplan explains, this opportunity provides "another chance to learn and grow in Israel [and] a new chance to teach and inspire in America."

More information about The Lindenbaum Educators Fellowship program can be found at <http://www.lind.org.il/educators.htm> or by e-mail, office@lind.org.il.

People vs iPods

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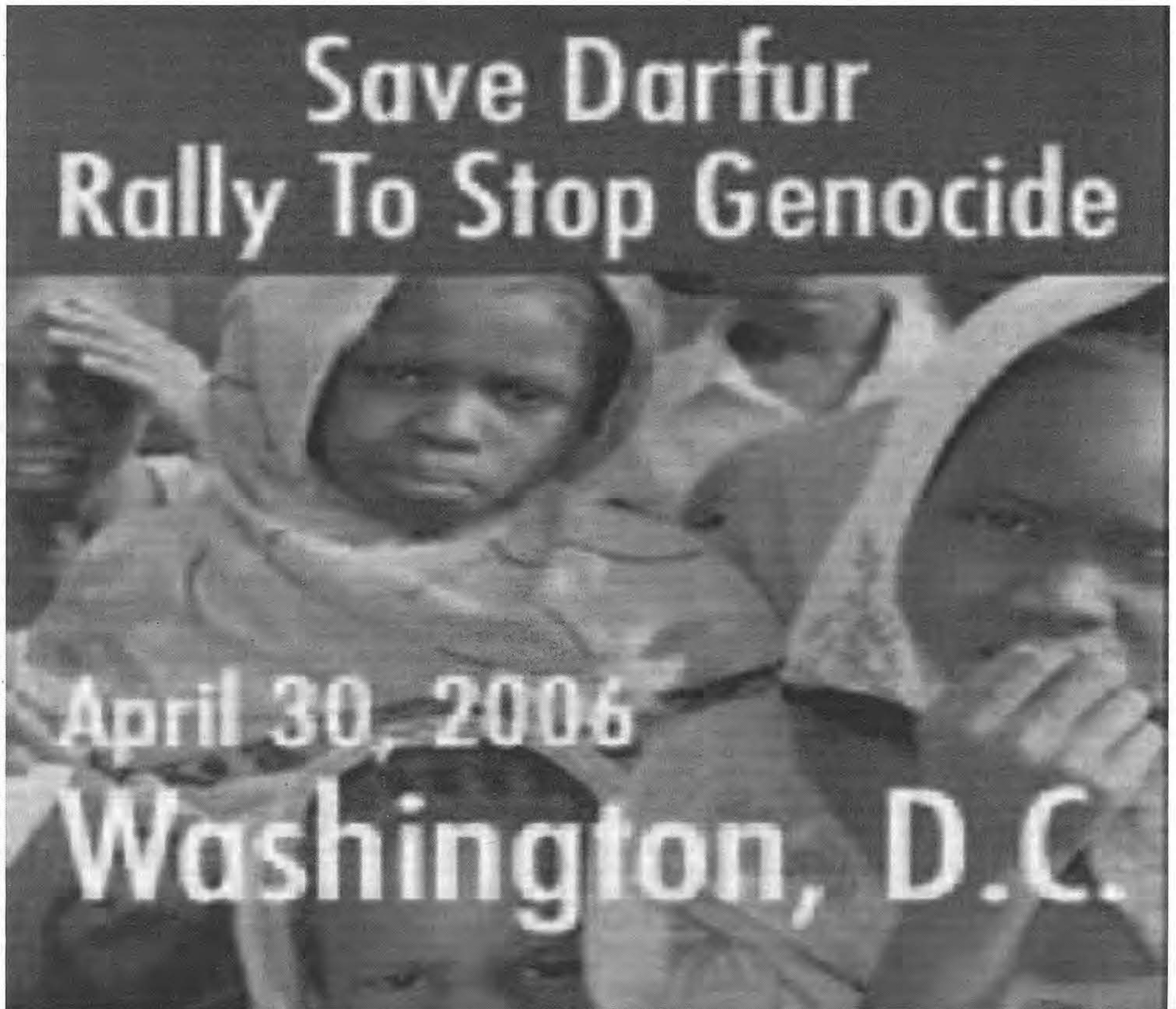
and battery life, potentially allow for hours of musical entertainment and preoccupation. While the terminology "downward slope" may seem rather harsh at first glance, this is exactly the scenario that I wish to portray.

Listening to an iPod seems to eliminate the phenomenon of small talk; instead of engaging a passerby or random stranger in a friendly "good morning or good afternoon," wearing an iPod exempts one from such manners or social etiquette. Walking donned in white, stringy, Apple-branded headphones that emerge from one's ears sends a message to others around, predominantly, "leave me alone," or "don't talk to me—I am otherwise occupied." In a sense, it seems that iPods have become a replacement for human company. While human nature craves "alone time," and there is nothing wrong with that, the accessibility of iPods seems to have increased this yearning by making it so easy to cut off the rest of the world with the flick of an on-button and the click of a wheel.

When are iPods most fre-

quently used? The most common answers from students at Stern: "When I work out," "if I have a long subway ride or walk," "when I want to tune the world out and not speak to anyone," "on my way to class," and "when I'm studying." While certainly some of these answers seem perfectly acceptable, others must be considered with a degree of skepticism. If this is the case, one must really consider when it is appropriate to convey this message. It is perhaps most disconcerting when one is found in the elevator of an institution of higher learning, where it behooves one to consider whether or not it might be beneficial to remove one's headphones for a mere ten seconds to acknowledge the existence of the other living body in the elevator with them.

But I wish to argue that the reverse is true as well. I ask the readers to consider this. Just because one is wearing her iPod, don't assume that she'd rather be drowning herself in the lyrics of an embittered artist than talking to you. Please don't let the iPod phenomenon become a replacement for the much-desired pleasure of human company.



Arts and Culture

Knowledge is Power, But Also a lot of Fun

BY SARA CHAMAMA

Thanks to the James Frey (the author of Oprah book club book "A Million Little Pieces") debacle, memoirs now have a rather rotten reputation in literary circles. If you are one of the many who are subsequently disgusted with any work subtitled "A Memoir," I have the perfect remedy for you: a memoir that can restore your joy in the genre as well as seriously tickle your funny bone. The book? A.J. Jacobs's fantastic "The Know-It-All: One Man's Humble Quest to Become the Smartest Person in the World."

Jacobs, a journalist formally of celeb rag Entertainment Weekly and currently an editor at the men's magazine Esquire (as well as hailing from our fair city, Manhattan), was beginning to feel as if his brain was atrophying with his daily immersion in the minutiae of pop culture. Far

removed from his intellectual college days and bogged down with feelings of inferiority and inadequacy relative to his brilliant lawyer father, an expert in insider trading and author of 24 law books (written for fun) and his genius of his brother-in-law



Eric, Jacobs decided to make a grand gesture—to read the entire Encyclopedia Britannica from A to Z, all 32 volumes, straight through.

This daunting self-imposed task, which Jacobs jokingly refers to as his "quest to become the smartest man in the world," is met with incredulity and incom-

prehension from most people he knows. His wife Julie even imposes a one-dollar fine on him for each irrelevant fact he insists on sharing with her. Nonetheless, Jacobs orders the \$1,400 set and promptly begins reading with gusto. Think of the knowledge to be gained! The glory!

Jacobs records his endeavor in an unusual, but fitting manner: in encyclopedia-style entries. He lists entries that he found interesting, funny or weird and then talks about the subject and its impact on his life or employs it as a jumping ground to discuss his philosophy, his view on the world, or his progress in reading the entire Encyclopedia Britannica. The reader gains some of the more fun facts to be found in the encyclopedia, but thanks to Jacobs, we don't have to go through the tedious process of actually reading the thing.

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"The Rule of Four" Rules!

BY SARA CHAMAMA

It is inevitable that Ian Caldwell and Dustin Thomason's first novel "The Rule of Four" would draw comparisons to the oh-so-popular "Da Vinci Code." Both thrillers share a mystery dating back to the Renaissance—"The Da Vinci Code" has the secret code hidden within the works of Leonardo Da Vinci, while "The Rule of Four" has the secret code hidden within the Hypnerotomachia Polophili, a convoluted encyclopedia. Both novels invite the reader along for the ride as the heroes discover the secret meaning behind famous and genuine historical works.

Our hero, Tom Sullivan, grew up in a house devoted to books—his mother, a librarian; his father, a Renaissance scholar



specializing in the 15th century text, the Hypnerotomachia Polophili, a text so obtuse that, according to Caldwell and Thomason at least, most scholars tended to keep as far away from it as possible. So when Tom arrives at Princeton and meets Paul, a student obsessed with trying to unlock the secrets of the Hypnerotomachia Polophili, it seems like fate has decided that they should be friends. Throw in some back history regarding Tom's now deceased father, the bitter Professor Vincent Taft and the Hypnerotomachia Polophili-obsessed Richard Curry and, voila, the story has begun. Paul, writing his senior thesis on the really big book with

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Munch at the MOMA: A Whirlwind Colleciton

BY CAITLIN SHAPIRO

In the mood to experience the cultural scene of New York City? Want to feel sophisticated and artsy? Just incredibly bored or about to go nuts cramped in the Brookdale dorms? These and more are all good reasons to head out and see the fabulous Edvard Munch art exhibition currently at the Museum of Modern Art, entitled "Edvard Munch: The Modern Life of the Soul."

Featuring the works of Edvard Munch, a Norwegian painter associated with the Symbolist Movement, this exhibit recently opened at the acclaimed MOMA on February 19 and runs until May 8. Munch is known for his famous piece that definitely reflects the way I feel right about now, with midterms around the corner, called "The Scream." This picture can be seen in etching at the MOMA, and with its depiction of an anguished man on a bridge, mid-scream, the piece is not so much a portrayal of objective reality, but more of an emotional portrayal of despair.

Once inside the museum, I hopped off the escalator onto the sixth floor, moved into a high-ceilinged, well-lit gallery, and faced a large photograph of Munch on the wall, alongside a brief history of his life. The chronological display of important factors in Munch's life is worth reading, because, as it often is with most art, understanding some of the artist's life provides the viewer with a greater connection and understanding of the artist's subjects and work. MOMA also provides

a little handheld device that dispenses brief amounts of information throughout the museum, which is very useful, even if it does make you feel somewhat like a tourist to wear it around your neck.

Entering the first gallery, I was immediately submerged into a world that approached reality through forms of poetic versions of life. Munch's art differs both in themes and styles from previous ones, because he wanted to move away from art that he associated with the Bourgeoisie—essentially, paintings of ladies sitting and knitting. So, ala Bohemian spirit, which influenced Munch early on, Munch painted pictures that radiated with feeling.

In the galleries, I faced a whirlwind of color and emotion, two of the highly developed aspects of Munch's art. Most of Munch's art addresses real-life issues of human existence and communicates deep comments on subjects of death, love, and birth as well as male and female elements, often through the intense use of color.

Munch's work is extremely expressive. His pictures employ a certain subtleness at times, but convey eager messages at other times. When discussing the exhibit with a friend, we noted that a lot of his later art is extremely penetrating because he often paints people without faces, or obscures and blurs them. There is a feeling of understanding that resonates within the faceless people that really affected our inner consciousness. Strange, but true.

As I was walking through one of the galleries, I overheard a man comment to his daughter of

approximately eight or nine years, "I bet this artist didn't laugh very much," causing me to laugh. Munch does not come across as a very happy individual, but the fact that so much of his inner emotions express themselves through his art is truly the reason to go see this exhibition at MOMA.

MOMA's collection of Munch's art also successfully portrays the fact that his art took many directions throughout his life. The gathered pieces each contribute to the complexities of Munch as an artist and human being, continuing later into his life as well. He painted self-portraits even at the age of 81, for instance, only two years before he died in 1944, and these works are intriguing to see.

One unpleasant aspect of the visit was the crowd. Walking in to MOMA, I was a little overwhelmed by the throngs of people, but perhaps it was so full because it was a Sunday. The Munch exhibit was also very full but bearable, since people are respectful.

The Munch exhibit is extremely engrossing and definitely worth seeing, so I would suggest putting on a trendy outfit, grabbing a friend and hitting the museum. And don't forget to take a stroll around the rest of the museum, all six floors of it, when you are through checking out Munch, because it contains many other greats of Modern Art in many media besides painting. Just to name a few: Picasso, Warhol, Matisse, Lissitzky, Van Gogh, Gauguin, O'Keeffe, and Walker Evans.

"As A Great River Flows": One Man's Spiritual Journey from Tai-Chi to Judaism

BY ELANA MEYERSDORF

Sporting a white button down shirt, black pants, tzitzit and yarmulke, Nir Malchi looks like your ordinary ultra-orthodox Jew. But as he stands in front of a large audience of teenagers demonstrating the proper techniques of repelling forward and backward attacks, you realize that he is anything but typical. Nir Malchi is a world leading Tai-Chi master.

In the award winning documentary entitled "As A Great River Flows," which played at the recent New York Israel Film Festival, director Yitzhak Haluzi takes the audience on a journey through Malchi's life; from his humble beginnings on a secular kibbutz, to his sojourn in Japan and mastery of Tai-Chi, to his reconnection with Judaism, and finally, to his current battle of fighting a life-threatening cancer.

Touching without being sappy, the documentary is candid, raw, and inspirational as well. While Haluzi portrays Malchi as a man of immense internal strength, he does not attempt to depict him as an angel. We see him as human, complete with foibles and imperfections, and it is remarkably refreshing. It allows us to see Malchi not as someone who lives in a stratosphere beyond our reach, but as someone we can relate to. And it is specifically through making Malchi human that his story inspires.

We first meet Malchi as he is embarking on a trip to Germany to seek specialized medical treatment for a brain tumor in his frontal lobe. Although he finds the idea of seeking help in

Germany repugnant, Malchi is willing to do his part, or his *hish-tadlut*, in order to continue living.

According to Malchi, this type of *hish-tadlut*, Western medical treatment, is only one of three possible avenues that one may explore when searching for a cure for a fatal illness. The others are alternative medicine and prayer.

Interestingly enough, Malchi learned of both alternative medicine and prayer during his six year stint in Japan. Growing up as a secular youth in Israel, Malchi had always been interested in martial arts and had yearned to study in Japan under the masters. It was while studying Tai-Chi, a system of slow, meditative physical exercise, that Malchi was awakened to the spirituality of Judaism. On film, he jokes that most people go to Israel to become religious; leave it to him to travel over five thousand miles away in order to reconnect with his roots. In addition, it was in Japan, ironically, where Malchi met his future wife, Efrat, a fellow Israeli citizen. To hear Efrat tell the story, God was their matchmaker.

Malchi and Efrat were not the only expatriates living in Japan; there was a whole "*chevrei*" of friends, people from all parts of Israel who found their way to Japan to study various types of martial arts. Today, the *chevrei* are back in Israel, with yarmulkes atop their heads. Many in the group attribute their return to religion to Malchi, who, when he became interested in Judaism, brought the gang along for the

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Baseball as it was Never Meant to be Played

BY CHAYA SARAH SOLOVEICHIK

"To the 922,530 brave souls who paid their way into the Polo Grounds in 1962. Never has so much misery loved so much company." With this opening dedication, Jimmy Breslin sets the humorous and droll tone for his portrayal of the 1962 Mets in "Can't Anybody Here Play This Game?" Written originally in 1963 immediately following the Mets' disastrous baseball season and recently reissued a few years back, Breslin captures the humor and infectious entertainment of the time.

The winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Commentary in 1986, Breslin employs straightforward and engaging writing throughout his concise sketch of the Mets, detailing the first season of their existence. The words jump easily off the pages, even when Breslin proceeds somewhat sporadically from subject to subject, and we soon find ourselves rooting for the amiable losers that were the 1962 Mets. Bill Veeck, a well known owner in Major League Baseball who wrote the introduction to the republished edition, commented at the time, "If you couldn't have any fun with the Mets, you couldn't have any fun any place."

Managed by Casey Stengel (the book's title is actually a statement of his), the Mets began their season with a hint of what was to come by losing nine games straight. But it wasn't so much that the Mets eventually lost a whopping 120 games out of 162, but that they lost with style. Al Jackson, for instance, was once pitching solidly for the Mets and compelling the opposing batters to hit into easy outs, but the other Mets continuously messed up on the plays, and pitying the pitcher, Stengel finally decided to replace him. Except he didn't inform Jackson. As Jackson warmed up on the mound at the start of the next inning, the loudspeaker suddenly announced a different pitcher, leaving a puzzled and surprised Jackson.

As first baseman for the Mets, Marvin Throneberry brought in legions of fans all on his own. In one game, he batted a sure triple and easily reached third base, but he never actually touched first base, accidentally running right past it. When Don Landrum of the Chicago Cubs was trapped running between first and second base in another game, Throneberry finally drew near enough to tag him out, but he didn't even have the ball, and

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Jack Johnson: Giving a Voice to a Character that Doesn't Speak

BY MYRIAM CAMHI

Stumbling into music after abandoning a thriving career as a surfing pro doesn't sound like a winning formula for instant success in the field. But apparently, for singer and composer Jack Johnson, this sort of thing works perfectly.

Faced with the difficult task of giving a voice to a character that doesn't speak, Universal Studios turned to Johnson to create songs that could serve as a voice for Curious George, giving him the opportunity to craft an album for children and their parents. The result, "Sing-A-Longs and Lullabies" that saw the light on February 7, would have made even H.A. Rey, Curious George's creator, proud.

Working only with early animations and the story line, Johnson was able to capture Curious George's feelings and emotions as he leaves the jungle to follow the Man in the Yellow Hat through his songs. Those familiar with Johnson will recognize certain elements of his earlier works that fit the movie's theme of perpetual puzzlement flawlessly (not forgetting that we're dealing with an artist that

wrote songs with titles such as "Banana Pancakes").

In addition, there is no need to worry about the childish tone that these songs might have. Songs like "Upside Down," which is the first track of the album, are classic Johnson, and by throwing in collaborations by friends G. Love, Matt Costa and Ben Harper you have a perfect bridge between parents and their children. In addition, his band (Adam Topol, Merlo Podlewski, and Zack Gill) also help him round some of the songs, even making The White Stripes' "We're Going To Be Friends" compatible with the Man in the Yellow Hat.

This album has a universal appeal, and while speaking to a child's (or in this case, a curious monkey's) experience of the world through his music, Johnson actually shares something in common with the character he speaks for: he is still full of a sense of wonder for what is coming next in his life and in his career.



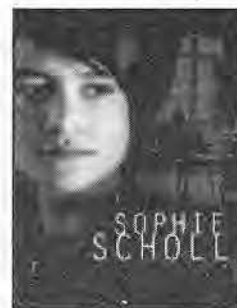
Die Letzten Tage: Unsettling, But Hopeful

BY YARDANNA PLATT

"Sophie Scholl: The Final Days" premiered in New York City on February 24, 2006, and has since then captivated its viewers with a suspenseful turn of events and a touching portrayal of the astounding courage and integrity of a young woman who risks her young and promising life in a dangerous pursuit of moral uprightness. This Academy Award nominee for best foreign film retraces Sophie and Hans Scholl's final days of life in a quasi-documentary form, starting from their incarceration by the Gestapo and ending with their chilling execution in Munich, 1943.

Although this movie is shot in German, much like an opera, the poignant messages and sharply portrayed human emotions seem to transcend the language barrier, irrespective of the provided English subtitles. The acting in this film is so compelling that the audience seems to glimpse the terrifying intentions of a Gestapo interrogator from his cold and calculated glance, just as easily as it can feel the increasing anguish of the heroine as she slowly descends into her self-condemning, but valiant defeat. The viewers are fascinated by the protagonist in her precarious position, because they are moved by her deliberate

demeanor, in addition to her calm, but intense resolve to elude her investigator, Robert Mohr, an enemy who is twice her age, and three times more cunning. One cannot help but marvel at the staunch reserve of such a young woman who doggedly refuses to falter in her ideological battle against a presiding totalitarianism



authority. The performance is in fact so powerful that a viewer may catch himself peering into the protagonist's unyielding countenance in conjunction with her interrogator, in order to find traces of inconsistency or intimations of culpability.

Although Sophie's story is compelling as a historical account in itself, many viewers have emerged from this film drawing parallels to the present situation in the United States in its struggle against terrorism and religious fundamentalism. The protagonist showed no disdain for German culture or society, but rather exhibited disapproval towards the Nazi regime's cur-

ailing of its citizens' rights to tranquility, prosperity, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press through its draconian punishment of dissenters and in its prolonging of the Second World War. Likewise, viewers are left to wonder what may occur if war goes unchecked, and if reinstitution of laws such as the Patriot Act eventually take their toll on the rights of American citizens, and more importantly, on its dissidents.

Notwithstanding these hazily implicit parallels, the film portrays the austere and merciless execution of gifted and passionate young students whose promising lives were terminated all too abruptly by an authority that was threatened by ideals such as integrity and devotion to unwavering morality. Although the film concludes with a chilling portrayal of Sophie's execution, the audience learns of the impact of Sophie's resistance group, the "White Rose," which served as a symbol of opposition against a regime that would ruthlessly stop at nothing to quash the proud and few who would stand up to them in a nonviolent confrontation. This film was a touching testament to all of those who suffered inestimable losses in their struggle against the propagation of fascist tyranny and ideological oppression.

Finding the Comedy in "All's Well That Ends Well"

BY SHIRA MARGULIES

What happens when a woman loves a man, he doesn't love her in return, and the king marries them anyway? Helena of Shakespeare's "All's Well That Ends Well" is about to find out.

An orphan under the care of a kindhearted countess, Helena has fallen hopelessly in love with the countess's son, Bertram. The count, Bertram's father, has just passed away and, unfortunately for Helena, Bertram is preparing to depart for Paris and live as a charge of the king. But luckily, all is not lost. For some time now, the king has been afflicted with a seemingly incurable disease and, coincidentally, Helena's late father was a prominent and talented doctor. He left his daughter a certain remedy that would undoubtedly cure the king, and this gives Helena an open window to Paris... and to Bertram.

Directed by Darko Tresnjak, Broadway's production of "All's Well That Ends Well" does an excellent job with its interpretation of the play. It is always difficult to know exactly how a character is supposed to be portrayed or in what tone of voice a line should be said, especially when it comes to Shakespeare's plays. Unfortunately for producers and directors today, Shakespeare has been dead for the past 380 years, making it essentially impossible for anyone to obtain his opinion on the matter. Therefore, it is up

to the producers to decide how the play should be performed.

In the Duke on Forty-Second Street Theater, the character of Helena (Kate Forbes) is portrayed as being quite a bit older than that of Bertram (Lucas Hall).



Although this is not specified in the play, it is an interesting technique and can possibly enlighten viewers as to why Helena was so set on getting married. As an orphan, she might feel pressured to marry soon rather than burdening her guardian, not to mention finding herself a target for gossip. However, Helena's age also highlights the youthfulness of Bertram. Bertram is a young man and completely unready for the settled down life of marriage; he is heedless, impulsive, and overly energetic. Every time he enters a scene, he bounds in and, in his eagerness, nearly attacks whatever piece of scenery he is supposed to be sitting on or whatever character he is supposed to be conversing with. Every word that leaves his mouth is not merely spoken, but nearly bursts out instead with a mind of its own. Additionally, Bertram never sits still. He is constantly moving

around the stage, fidgeting, and being altogether the picture of a restless young boy who will jump at any opportunity for high adventure. Certainly, he never gives a second thought to marrying anybody.

After Helena cures the king, however, the poor young man is married under royal command. It is only fit, after all, for the king's healer to have the reward of her choice. Unluckily for Bertram, he is the reward. Here the plot thickens as Bertram flees to war, sending Helena a letter in which he vows never to bed her until she wears his ring on her finger and carries his child. Distraught, Helena leaves the country, hoping that at least her absence from his home will bring Bertram back from war.

Though "All's Well That Ends Well" is included in Shakespeare's comedies, it is difficult, when reading the play, to recognize the comedy in it. The storyline seems tragic, especially the way Bertram has been forced into marriage and the way Helena is treated by her unwilling husband. Seeing the play performed, however, brings out a new perspective. It is obvious in the production where the comedy in the play lies, and the play only becomes more and more enjoyable as each character is brought to life. Even if someone has never read the text of the play, seeing it performed is an experience worth having.

Central High School's Mission to Israel

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of the trip. To supplement these efforts, Ausubel and Tessel worked with their fellow classmates from September through December, finding creative ways to fundraise for the trip. The junior grade sold a school cookbook, phone cards and even raw cookie dough (ordered through a special company).

By December, deposits were due to help assess the extent of student interest in this trip. Thirty-seven girls signed up, including 12 girls who had never before been to Israel. The trip, coined "Rayut," the Hebrew word for friendship and camaraderie, was planned.

By this point, with the help and guidance of Emunah, the itinerary for the trip had been finalized. The idea was to plan *chessed* events which would

allow the students to get to know Israel, the culture, the people and the land. Visiting Chazon Yishyahu, a soup kitchen, packaging food for the needy at Yad Eliezer, and working with Ethiopian children while painting equipment at the Ethiopian absorption center in Mevaseret, all accomplished this goal. The trip also included a visit to the Emunah School, where the girls participated in art, music, dance, drama and cinematography activities with the students. "In order to prepare for this event, we had a book drive collecting chapter books to give to the girls of Emunah High School," recounted Ausubel. In order to animate some of the visits the Central students also put together an a cappella choir for the girls to perform at various places, and brought approximately 100 donated teddy bears to cheer up the children

they visited.

Juniors that did not go on the trip had their own *chessed* week which paralleled the trip to Israel. The students held a clothing drive, visited soup kitchens and made cards for the sick.

Accompanied by Assistant Principal Harriet Sklar, teacher Shulamis Biderman, and grade advisor Sharon Weiss, the group was in Israel for the week. The trip also included a few other *chessed*-oriented outings such as a visit with 11th grade girls from Gush Katif, hearing about their experiences in the last year. Another notable activity was a kids-to-kids program where time was spent speaking to and hearing from children involved in terrorist attacks. A visit to Zichron Menachem, a facility for children with cancer, and Shalva, a special education home for children, was

also included in the itinerary.

Of course the trip included touring famous historical sites such as the Jewish and Herodian quarter, Ein Gedi, and Masada, and tourist attractions like the Kotel tunnels, the Dead Sea and the Hertzl Museum. Over Shabbat, the students had the opportunity to go to a *tisch* in Meah Shearim on Friday night and on a tour of Yemin Moshe on Shabbat morning.

Like all trips, this one had to come to an end, but not without future plans. "Every single student came back from the trip extremely moved and inspired to continue working on this amazing project," says Ausubel. This enthusiasm has led Ausubel to continue "working with the Emunah girls, building up relationships between all the students with video/web cameras, and having interactive activities and

shiurim."

The students at Central are very grateful for the help and dedication of many people who helped make the dream of a mission to Israel a reality. "The efforts of Mrs. Brand, principal of Central High school, Judy Goldgrab, head of Eimatai, Ronnie Faber, Carol Finkel and Adele Roffman, all from Emunah, and Reva Tokeyar from Emunah who accompanied the students on the trip, were instrumental to the success of the trip," stated Ausubel.

Donations to help finish the fundraising for the mission and for the future projects related to the mission are most welcome. Any comments and questions can be sent to act4israel@yahoo.com or directed to the Samuel H. Wang Yeshiva University High School for Girls at 718-479-8550.

Peace in the Middle East: Is it Still Possible?

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grams, clinics and other social services that appealed to the masses. "They created a whole social welfare structure," he explained, so that "not only were they not corrupt but they also did something."

The party was also quick to take credit for Israel's departure from Gaza, an assertion that alerted the public of Hamas's ability to produce results. They ran a campaign that was directly opposed to Fatah, making the rival party seem like an elitist group with little social connection and little history of doing anything. Yet anti-corruption and social action is not the whole story. "The people knew who they were," he explained, referring to Hamas and what they actually stand for. "They made a judgment."

That judgment has led to an immediate stalling in any sort of negotiations with the Palestinian government. Ross does not believe Israel and the world can sit down with Hamas, given Hamas's ideology and past actions. "I would not alter our position towards Hamas," he said, referring to the current position of refusing to confer with a party that will not recognize Israel as a legitimate state and will not put an end to the violence they have been inflicting on the area for years.

"If there is going to be any possibility of Hamas changing," Ross continued, "there has to be no recognition or support from the outside unless they adjust... Hamas has to adjust to the world, the world does not have to adjust to Hamas." Just stating such inexplicable things about Israel, even without acting on their views, is enough to prevent any dialogue from taking place between Hamas and the world powers because, "the longer they are allowed to say what they say without any price of isolation,"

elucidated the Ambassador, "the more what they say becomes acceptable."

It is for this reason that Ross is appalled by President Vladimir Putin's decision to invite the leaders of Hamas to Russia for talks. Even if he was only meeting with them on a "low level" like he claimed, just agreeing to talk with them violates the quartet's policy towards the organization. "I think Russia should forfeit its position within the quar-



ter," said Ross. By meeting with Hamas, "the Russians are defecting from something they already agreed to," he added, and therefore, "why should they remain in the quartet if they are going to undercut what the quartet has already adopted?"

The fact that Russian leaders have negotiated with the Iranians in the past, and the fact that on the day Hamas won the elections Putin declared it to be "a major failure for American foreign policy in the Middle East" only makes the ambassador more suspicious of Russia's ability to be an effective world leader.

Nevertheless, Russia is not the only country that hasn't been doing its part to try and facilitate peace between Israel and the Palestinians. "We really haven't had much of a peace-making effort since 2001," said Ross, referring to the United States. "The U.S. has pretty much disengaged from the effort. We are not

in the peacemaking business right now."

In his opinion, the last four years, and particularly the last 16 months, "were lost opportunity." Former PA Chairman Yassar Arafat, who pretty much made real peace impossible, died, and current Chairman Mahmoud Abbas ran for office and won on a platform of non-violence. Around the same time, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announced his intention to pull out of Gaza in an attempt to break the current stalemate. These factors "should have created an opportunity for active diplomacy," he said, something which ultimately did not occur. "The critical period was after Arafat died," expounded Ross. "Not to turn around and turn that into something other than a Hamas victory [is incomprehensible]."

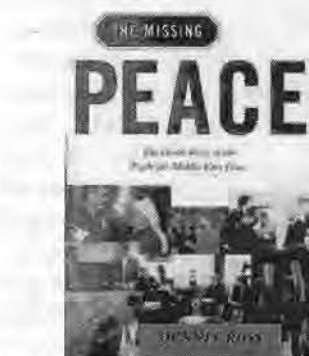
Still, he believes there is value in continuing talks with Abbas since, unlike his predecessor, "he says the same thing in Arabic that he also says in English." The United States and Israel should continue dealing with him since he has declared time and time again that he is committed to peace. Yet "a different issue is whether we should provide material support to him," Ross explicated. This should be done "only if he is going to provide mechanisms for implementing what he says he is going to do."

Since Abbas's election, Israel has been dealing with him and his people but Ross does not believe they have necessarily been trying to establish peace. This past August when Sharon decided to unilaterally withdraw from Gaza, he made a historic decision that displayed a lot of courage, but he did not do it with the intention of creating peace in the region. Rather, it was an act of separation done out of necessity to ensure the survival of Israel as a Jewish democratic state. It was also an undertaking that most Israelis supported since separation from

the Palestinian people is what they want. "[They] want to go through a process of divorce and to get out of Palestinian life," observed Ross. "[They wanted to] get out of Gaza and I think they are willing to get out of most of the West Bank."

Sharon wanted this as well. He left the Likud party because he "didn't just want to occupy a seat," said Ross. "He wanted to shape Israel's future," something that disconnecting Israel from the Palestinians and finally defining Israel's borders would achieve. Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and the Kadima Party are promising to follow in his footsteps and do just that. "I believe Kadima does reflect what Sharon wanted and I think it's keeping in sentiment with what most of the Israeli public wants," Ross said. Therefore, he sees no reason that the Kadima party will not be victorious in the coming election.

Ross also sees no reason to abandon the idea of Israeli-Palestinian peace. Although the current political situation does not allow for the continuation of the peace process, Ross is not



willing to completely give up on the prospect of a brighter future in the region. "You don't want to live with the possibility of no hope," he said. However, he will admit that he is distrustful of the Palestinian people at this time. "They need to prove something," said the ambassador, and until they do, Israel should "take in its own hands the means to shape its future as much as it can and not make it contingent on people who

don't want it." Still, "it's definitely better to live in coexistence with your neighbor," he reiterated.

All the same, the ideal of peaceful coexistence can only be reached if each side takes the lessons of the past to heart and learns from previous failures. First and foremost, "there has to be accountability on both sides," Ross explained. "If you make commitments, you have to be held accountable." In the past, the peace process should have been stopped when the Palestinians failed to comply with its conditions. Instead, they were led to believe that they could get what they wanted without fulfilling their obligations.

Secondly, if Israelis and Palestinians wish to achieve an everlasting peace, a code of conduct that both sides will abide by must be established. "They have to create an environment that supports the development of peace," said the ambassador, "and not one that undercuts it." Previously, this atmosphere did not exist. Israelis were busy building settlements and the Palestinians were engaging in and cultivating violence through terrorist attacks and their educational curriculum.

The third piece that was missing was compromise. "The Arab world has to play a role [in making peace] and they should be exposed for the fact that they're not," said Ross. "[They have] never embraced a principle of compromise." Although the peace process was built on the rhetoric of "land for peace," Israel was mostly returning land for nothing instead. The Palestinians can't just declare that they support peace; they have to do something to prove it.

The result of the internalization of these lessons is not a mystery. The Clinton administration set out the intellectual infrastruc-

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YU Summer Courses in Israel

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experience in researching, writing, directing, producing, editing, camera work, sound, and lighting. The program will also offer a Beit Midrash Program at the YUI campus, led by Rabbi Assaf Bednarsh of the YU RIETS (Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary) Israel Kollel. Separate programs for men and women will be available and will include chevruta-style learning, as well as lectures from various Torah scholars in Israel. The programs will run approximately three times a week and will be open to all students enrolled in both the YU courses

and the Yavneh Olami internship program.

The cost for each three-credit course is \$2,272, plus an additional \$250 for housing. Students will be offered housing on the YUI campus in Bayit Vegan, and a kosher meal plan option. Airfare is not included. The deadline for applications is April 21, 2006.

Applications can be sent to:
Summer in Israel Program
Yeshiva University
500 West 185th Street
Furst Hall, Room 440
New York, NY, 10033

"Can't Anybody Here Play This Game?"

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Landrum merely ran him down. With feats such as these, it's no surprise that many simply referred to Throneberry as Marvelous Marv and proudly wore shirts proclaiming VRAM, the word "Marv" backwards.

Before long, there was much talk about the Mets and their amusing antics. Many individuals supporting the team asserted, "I've been a Mets fan all my life," while Toots Shor, a restaurant and bar owner in New York City, even claimed, "I have a son, and I make him watch the Mets. I want him to know life . . . it's a history lesson. He'll understand

the Depression when they teach it to him at school."

Breslin also introduces readers to William A. Shea, the lawyer who was instrumental in bringing the Mets into existence, and Mrs. Joan Payson, the owner of the team. An active and interesting woman, Mrs. Payson took to the Mets wholeheartedly. Following the first unsuccessful season, she even expressed some optimism about the coming year, "Well, let's hope it's better this year. It has to be. I simply cannot stand 120 losses this year. If we can't get anything, we are going to cut these losses down. At least to 119."

"Can't Anybody Here Play This Game?" is not the most informative book about the Mets' first season, but it doesn't try to be. Instead, Breslin specifically stresses the more outlandish aspects, and writing soon after the season's end, his own enthusiasm is evident and easily pulls readers into the past. But as readers, we also know of the subsequent seasons, and it's interesting reading Breslin's entertaining description, knowing that the Miracle Mets of 1969 were only a few years away.

How Educational is Co-Ed Education?

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this is one point none of them will dispute.

One of the biggest differences between men and women is their mode of communication. Learning to communicate with the opposite sex is really a life-long endeavor.

I remember one summer, at the age of 14, I was a camp counselor for a group of 12 five-year-olds boys and girls. I distinctly recall that one day at "circle time," there was a clear split—the girls sat on one side and the boys sat on the other side. And the most amazing part of it was that they did it completely on their own! Even at such a young age, the boys and girls were already separating themselves. If the children are already doing this by themselves, does it help the situation or harm it when schools have single-sex classrooms? The truth is that this question has no simple answer, and there are many complicated factors that contribute to it. However, I think that there are times in a child's life when it is specifically important to be in a co-ed environment, and there are times when it is really better to be in a single-sex educational environment.

The student that I spoke with the weekend that I stayed in for

Shabbos had a similar education to that of myself. Throughout elementary school and high school we both attended schools that had same-gender classes. We both came to Stern College with very little, if any, in-class co-educational experiences, and very little co-educational extra-curricular experiences. And what was the result? We both came to Stern, ready to take on all that Yeshiva University had to throw our ways, and yet, dealing with our "uptown counterparts" was probably the biggest challenge we each faced.

What I concluded was that we both missed a pretty big part of our childhoods by not interacting with boys on a regular basis.

I currently teach first and second grade at a school with co-educational classes. I also have an opportunity to observe students at the less structured times of the day, recess and lunch in particular. In the classroom, the boys and girls are, in a positive sense, required to interact with each other. Yet, during the less structured times of the day, I've noticed that it is not rare to see the boys and girls interact only with other children of their own sex. I think that the time in the classroom, where the boys and girls are required to interact with each other, is really a huge posi-

tive experience. It helps them see members of the opposite sex as equals, and it teaches them to relate and speak to their own peers—regardless of the peer's sex—on equal levels.

I think that it's really important for children to interact on a daily basis with members of the opposite sex, especially during the childhood years. I think that schools *should* have co-educational classrooms through the eighth grade. It gives the children a foundation on which to rely, and it teaches children that it is actually okay to interact normally with members of the opposite sex; throughout the elementary/middle school years, the children will learn how to do so.

When it comes to high school, however, *that* is a time when hormones are raging, when teenagers are adolescents; it's already a difficult time of life. I think that during the high school years, it is much better for teens to not only be in single-sex classrooms, but also single-sex schools. Since most children, particularly in yeshiva day schools, will spend most of their waking hours at school, schools should be a "safe" place—physically and emotionally. During high school, teens are discovering who they are, what they want out of life, what path they want to

take, and they need school to be a place where they can "let their hair down," and be able to relax a little. I think that during the high school years, taking away the competition and temptation of the opposite sex in the classroom really allows teens to grow into more moral, level-headed people. Don't get me wrong: I still think that learning to interact with members of the opposite sex is important, but I think that during the high school years, that should be done within the framework of extra-curricular activities.

I also think it's harmful for adults to show such distaste and disgust when children interact with members of the opposite sex. If people don't learn these important social skills when they are children, how are they supposed to be comfortable interacting with the opposite sex as adults? What happens when teenagers become adults and suddenly, there is some sense of urgency for them to interact with members of the opposite sex—be it for dating/marriage purposes, or for real-world purposes, like jobs, etc.?

Imagine the following: Girl, who has been through only single-sex schooling her whole life, goes on a date with Guy, who has also been through single-sex schooling his whole life. Not

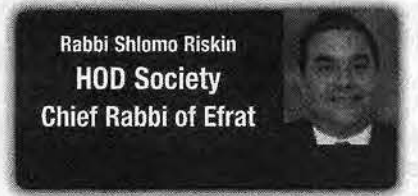
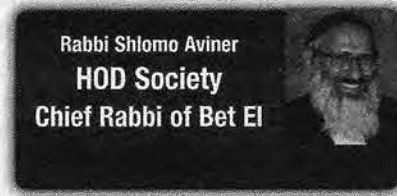
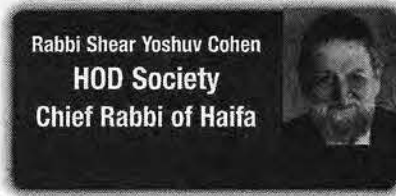
only is there a new person on the other side of the table, but that person is a foreign being on the other side of the table—what a successful date that will be! Imagine the stress levels of the two! They don't know the first thing about talking to one another. And even if they each have siblings of the opposite sex with whom they grew up, siblings are a totally different type of interaction than strangers, and so it doesn't help the situation. Basically, these two better have had some sort of crash-course in dealing with the opposite sex before that date, or that is going to be a few hours of real torture for both of them.

What really would have helped them is something that just can't be implemented at this point. Turning back time doesn't happen in the real world, and the only thing that would have minimized that awkwardness would be some basic training as youngsters on interacting with the opposite sex, which could have come only in the context of interacting with one another in school. Well, there is nothing that we can do about our past. Let's choose wisely, though, when God willing we become mothers and have to choose schools for our own children.

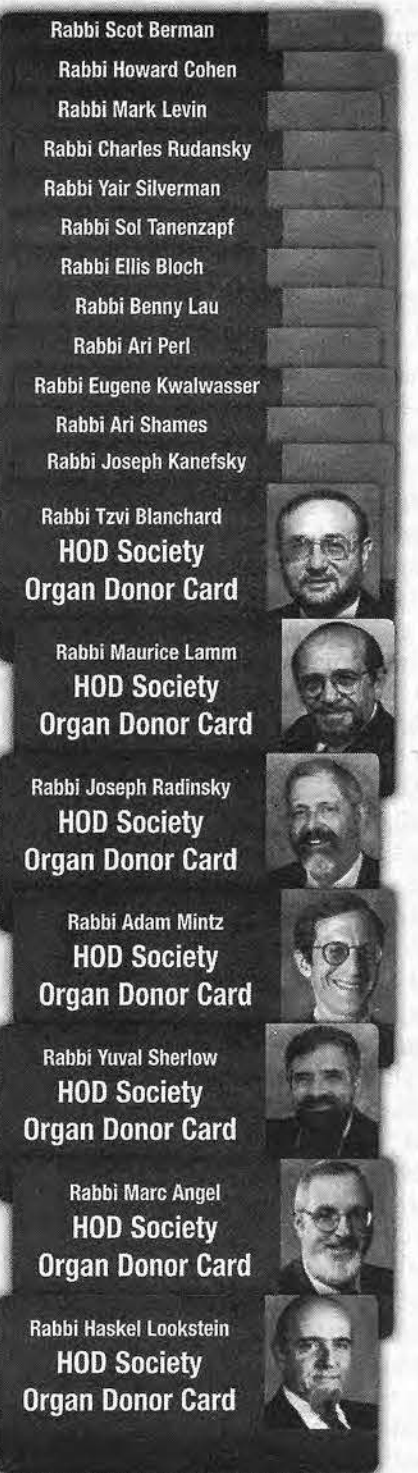
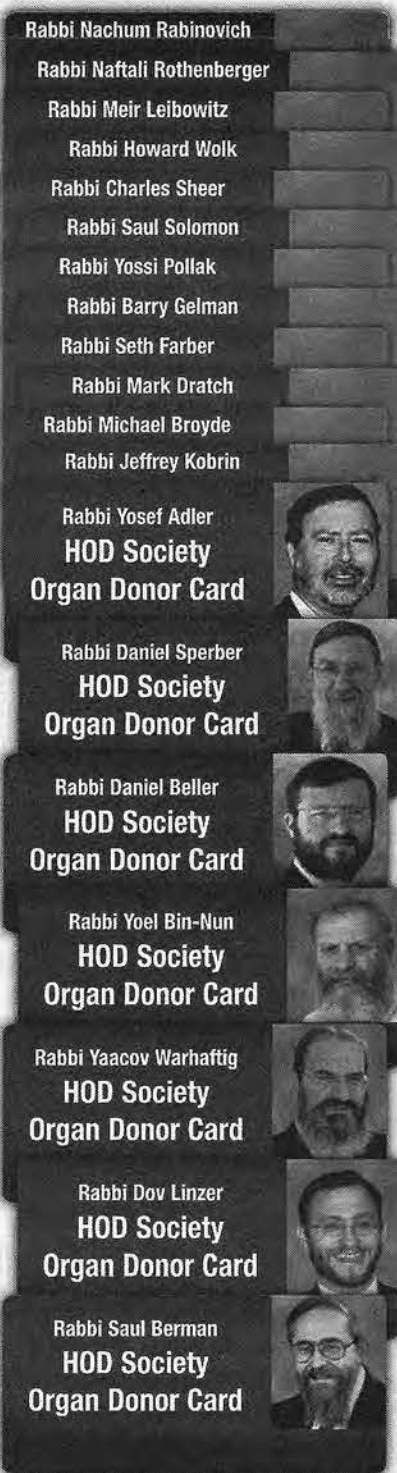
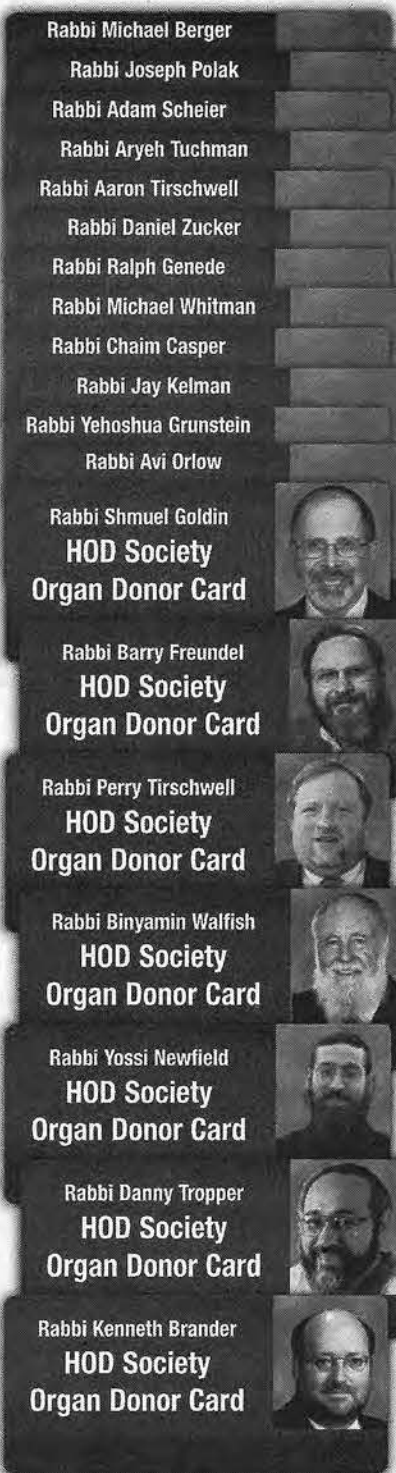
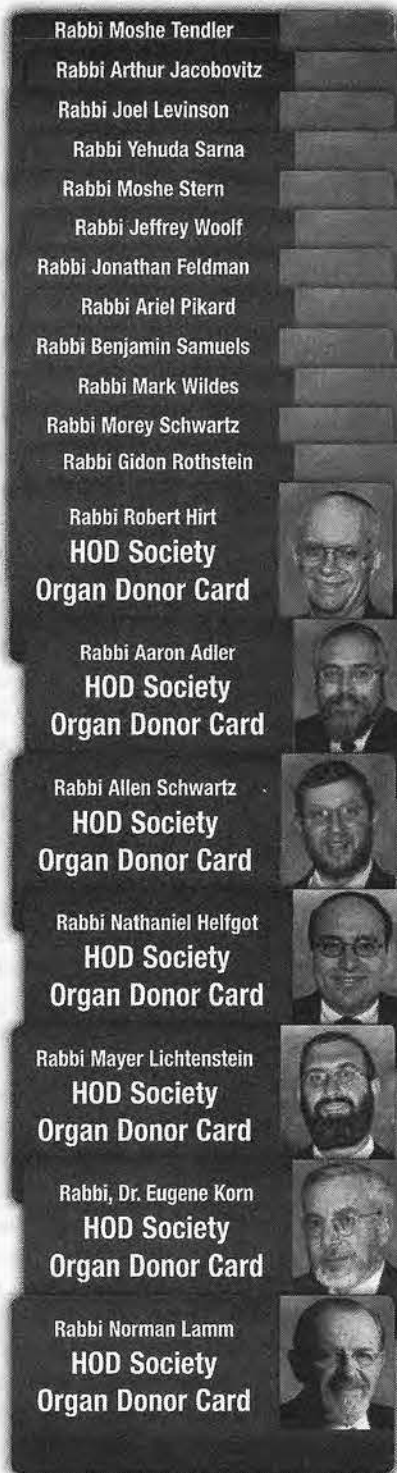
The Observer would like to congratulate the following students for winning
The Dr. William Schwartz Business Plan Competition:

Rivka Kahn
Batya Belecen
Tara Delmoor
Tamar Estrieher
Cheryl Gozdzik
Michal Minkowitz
Nooshene Nili
Lauren Ratzker

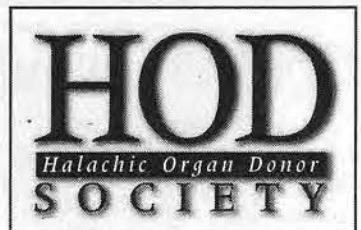
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Knowledge is Power, But Also a lot of Fun

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It's fascinating to discover what Jacobs finds interesting, and it's interesting to enjoy the rather odd facets of history. The reader is informed that Descartes had a hankering for cross-eyed women, that Boggle scoring is via the Fibonacci series, that John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died on the same day (Adams' last words were "Thomas Jefferson still lives," but he was wrong), that Napoleon loved ice-skating, that Nathaniel Hawthorne would compulsively write the number 64 over and over on paper towards the end of his life, and that the first image broadcast on American TV was the dollar sign. We are treated to Jacobs' anger at David Fahrenheit, inventor of the mercury thermometer, who chose the temperature zero degrees for the temperature of an equal ice-salt mixture, 30 for water freezing and 90 for the human body temperature. We are delighted with his discovery of new information, both of the useless and useful kind (according to the encyclopedia, an onion cut under water won't make you cry). Extremely

impressed by the entry on Ecclesiastes, and extremely disturbed by the entry on *halitzah*, Jacobs, a secular Jew, also learned a majority of what he now knows about Judaism from the Encyclopedia Britannica.

Jacobs' quest to enrich his intellect doesn't stop with reading the encyclopedia. He also joins Mensa (his SAT scores were good enough to get him in, even though he flopped the Mensa test he later took) and becomes a contestant on "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" Jacob takes us through these life experiences as well as others, including his attempts at conceiving a child.

Jacobs also informs us of his opinions which were fostered as a result of reading of the encyclopedia. He gains a worldview that over all, hey, the human race ain't so bad. Sure, we're capable of terrible deeds, but also of creating so much. He also begins to recognize patterns in events that keep recurring over and over. The tidbit that I enjoyed the most is when he imparted his opinion on the top ten surefire things that will get an individual listed in the Encyclopedia Britannica: getting beheaded, exploring the Arctic,

writing some poems, becoming a botanist, getting yourself involved in commedia dell'arte, winning the Nobel Prize, designing a font, getting castrated (men only), becoming a mistress to a monarch (women only, and he adds that we better hurry, as there are fewer and fewer monarchs every day), and becoming a liturgical vestment. He also comes to some conclusions about the nature of knowledge and intelligence.

At times whimsical and at times deadly serious, "The Know-It-All: One Man's Humble Quest to Become the Smartest Person in the World" is an all-around entertaining book. I enjoyed it thoroughly, as the many who witnessed me giggling to myself on the subway as I read can attest to. I can honestly say that I can't find a single fault with this book and recommend it highly to anyone who wants to be amused while learning quite a few new facts about the world around them.

Ilan Halimi

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someone richer.

When the ransom came down to 5,000 Euros, however, and when the gang did not show up to the rendezvous, it seemed that there was more motivation, not simply money. After all, Halimi's family is simple and modest. Ruth Halimi, who is divorced from Ilan's father, works as a receptionist. Why else, people are asking, would Ilan be tortured so cruelly for so long, if not for the fact that he was a Jew? No other motive, aside from sheer hatred.

This dichotomy might simply mean it is for both reasons. Minister of Justice Pascal Clement explained that the charge of anti-Semitism was based on the fact that one of the suspects had declared to the judge that the gang chose to attack a Jew because Jews are supposed to be rich. According to some reports in the French press, some of the gang members reported that they tortured Halimi with particular cruelty simply because he was Jewish. At this point it is useless to deny the anti-Semitic motive. The investigation is entering a new phase.

One of the hardest parts of this case, which furthers the impression that the murder was an anti-Semitic attack, is that the gang members' neighbors, when informed of the Jewish hostage, dropped in to participate in the torture.

Ilan Halimi's murder compares with the November 2003 killing of a Jewish DJ, Sebastien

Sellam. His Muslim neighbor, Adel, slit his throat, nearly decapitating him, and gorged out his eyes with a carving fork in his building's garage. Adel came back home, and told his mother, "I killed my Jew, I will go to Paradise." The murderer, who pleaded guilty, was placed in a psychiatric hospital, and may soon be released.

A memorial for Halimi was held in France, where President Jacques Chirac and his wife Bernadette attended. The ceremony was held in the Grand Synagogue on Rue de la Victoire. In New York, a memorial was held at the The Jewish Center, organized by Stephanie Khalifa and the Anti-Defamation League. Speakers ranging from the French Consul General in New York, Francois Delattre, to Cantor Michael Kakon, were in attendance. The speeches were all very moving.

At Stern, many women are affected. Recalling the tragedy, some women report that they were very troubled and could not focus that week, spending hours on the computer, reading articles to know more about the murder. Due to the lack of publicity in the U.S., most SCW students were not aware of the story initially.

However, as women spread the word, they were all very sympathetic and many attended the memorial. Deborah Kammoun, a freshman at Stern College, describes the event as a "wake up call" and says that her friends and family are very worried about the future of their children still in

France.

Some students, like sophomore Jennifer Lebahr, realize the gravity of the situation, yet stay hopeful and insist that the situation in France today is still livable for the Jews. "What happened in France was a cruel act that has no justification and all of us are and should be affected by it," Lebahr asserts, continuing to explain how she was "extremely affected as a Jewish French girl." When asked what she thought about the present security of the Jews in France, Lebahr responded, "I continue to hope that the situation will get better. France is my country and I pray that it will never get to the point where I will be afraid to go home. I am hoping that at least this calamity will help open the eyes of the world and the government." Nonetheless, French news reported that on March 5, a mere few days after Halimi's murder, three Jews were victims of anti-Semitic aggression in Sarcelles, a suburb of Paris.

Unfortunately, it might not be enough to be hopeful. As Ariel Sharon stated some time ago, if French Jews are not treated well in the country of liberty, fraternity, and equality, they should move to Israel. Israel, the U.S., Canada, and Australia would be delighted to welcome the cultured and educated French Jews into their midst. Obviously, the thought of leaving your country by force in the 21st century is quite a horrible concept. Though we hope and pray for the best, only time will tell.

"The Rule of Four"

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the really long name, has asked Tom, who has practically grown up with the book, for help decoding it. Tom gets sucked in and starts spending all his time on the mystery. But as the two get closer, weird things begin to happen: robberies, murder, and plagiarism to name a few. Will the two find the answer before they are hurt?

What makes "The Rule of Four" a superior book to the average thriller is not the brain twisters, but its human elements—the characters and their relationships to one another. This book depicts an achingly real portrait of the friendship of the four friends and roommates, our protagonist Tom, brainy Paul, stalwart Charlie and gregarious Gil. The reader observes the dynamics of the group as the story progresses, as some of the friends grow closer, some more distant and then back again. There are fights, there are apologies made. Also an important relationship that fluctuates is that of Tom and his girlfriend Katie. While Katie seems to be the token woman in this novel full of men, she is by no means unimportant to it or to Tom. Unhappy with the amount of time Tom is spending on the Hypnereromachia Polophili, she feels as if he is cheating on her—with the book. Tom is given an ultimatum: drop the book or the girl. Will he choose wisely?

Also something that I found that resonated with me and probably would with my fellow seniors as well is apprehension about the unknown. "The Rule of Four" accurately portrays the anxiety inherent in being a senior in col-

lege, with one's life up in the air, unsure about what will come in the next few months. Will you find a job? Will you get into graduate school? Will you ever see you friends again? All is unknown.

So while the mystery and thriller aspects of the book are undoubtedly a lot of fun, the real fun to be had is in Caldwell and Thomason's descriptions of college life at Princeton. Don't get me wrong, I truly love it here at Stern College for Women, but "The Rule of Four" made me wish that I had gone to Princeton, a place where there are "dining clubs" that one needs to get accepted to as opposed to caf food, the junior class stages the yearly "Nude Olympics" (disclaimer: not that I would ever join), and paintball tournaments in the underground pipe system. And what really impressed me about the Princeton portrayed here is that Paul's senior thesis is on the Hypnereromachia Polophili, involving hard-core research and something that he spent years focusing on to complete. Caldwell and Thomason have good reason for portraying Princeton so favorably: the two friends, themselves recent graduates of the institution, met there and graduated in 1999.

"The Rule of Four" is an excellent novel for some light reading and thrills, especially for those of us in college. Its mental puzzles are fun and challenging, and its individuals unique and endearing. It is definitely a recommended read, because in short, "The Rule of Four" rules!

Dunkin Donuts Update

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approved a Dunkin Donuts in Lawrence without changing very much in the store itself.

According to an OU rabbi who wished to remain nameless, "Dunkin Donuts are only permitted if they come from a store where not just the mix, but also the baking is supervised. Without supervision, the only real problem is that the employees make mistakes in using the outside ingredients. Of course, a store that also has meat in it is completely unacceptable, but if everything is supposed to be kosher and it just isn't very supervised, the potential problems are very minimal. But in any case, that's certainly no outright recommendation to eat the products from such a facility."

Why did Dunkin Donuts switch from one disreputable kashrut agency to another that is considered only minimally better? It seems that the management perceived that the OKS is more reliable than the Ner Tamid

K. According to store manager Shyam Patel, the Ner Tamid K certification was reaching expiration, and instead of renewing it, the store opted to try a stricter supervision. Since Mr. Patel is a vegetarian, he had been trying to remove the meat products from the store for quite a while, and in the absence of bacon, the store was qualified to apply for a stricter certification. "The new agency required us to completely reconstruct our menu and sell entirely kosher products," Mr. Patel said. "Our main motivation for changing supervision was to meet the standards of the Orthodox women who live on the block. We know that many of them were dissatisfied with the previous certification, and they should be pleased with the new supervisors and the new menu."

It's clear that Dunkin Donuts is trying hard to make the necessary changes to reach its potential Stern clientele. Alas, if only the word "changes" implied "improvements."

F A S H I O N

Heatherette Retro,
Rockin', the Must-See
Show

BY SARA LEVIT

So you want to go to the fashion show of the season. You know the one: high profile enough to feel important for being there, while gawking at all the celebrities you want, yet down-to-earth enough to actually have a good old-"fashioned," knee-banging time. Heatherette combined the perfect ingredients of fun, fashion, and flare to create a flavorful confection of the must-see show.

While many designers longingly search for the holy grail of the shock factor, innovation in fashion is often translated into something bizarre which tends to tread the deep water of creepy-town. Several years ago, Galliano of Dior created an entire tasteless line modeled after the homeless. (Put the word chic after any other word, ie. street chic, boho chic, and bango, presto, it is in vogue. All it'll take is for one designer to call potato sacks chic and all of America will be clamoring to get their hands on the \$2,000 item, costing \$1,999.99 more than it cost to make, only to discover that there is already a long waiting list, and of course they eagerly sign on. That my friend, how-

ever, is an entirely different article).

For his spring 2006 line, Galliano channeled the theme of the French Revolution, sending off models clothed in faux blood-stained garments, sheer red sacs over their heads representing the post guillotine state, and featuring a soundtrack of whips and clanging chains. In Paris, Undercover bound their models' heads in muzzle-like cloth, while Victor and Rolf covered their models' million dollar faces with masks created of their own hair. The atmosphere at Heatherette

was certainly strange, but in the cool, non-human-muzzle kind of way. Just the kind to make you feel proud to be living in New York, where the fashion shows reign supreme over all the lands.

Quite fitting, the theme of the show "Gothamism" brought out the New York patriot in all of us, natives and non-natives alike. The show began with a disembodied voice. "I love New York!" it said. "Electric city streets...big time, big dreams. Cat burglars, social butterflies, gangs of New York. Whimsical party dresses

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All tied up and "undercover"

BY JULIE AST

During the first few months of winter, fall collections for fashion houses such as Chanel, Zac Posen, and Diane Von Furstenberg debut in New York City, Los Angeles, and Europe. An overwhelming array of clothing emerges in a myriad of looks, fabrics and silhouettes, but the discerning style maven is able to recognize the prevailing trends.

"For next fall skinny legs and leggings, military coats, lots of velvet and fur are in style," says Ellin Saltzman, former fashion director of Saks Fifth Ave. "Marc Jacobs was the most innovative designer this year. He gives people fuel for the next year."



Missoni
Fall 2006 Ready-to-Wear

Saltzman's list of trends consists of must-have items from different eras. Leggings were last popular in the 80s but they made a comeback this season. In its Milan show, Missoni paired them

with almost every look. They added a casual-chic feeling to clothing that wasn't reminiscent of the 80s' typically overdone apparel.

The past decade's fashions are now in vogue after a brief hiatus during the first five years of 2000. According to Saltzman, Marc Jacobs is the designer to watch for trends next season. Style.com called his show "paradoxically chic." He sent his models walking down the runway in plaid, oversize knits and leg warmers that somehow looked like high fashion. Jacobs seemed to be taking inspiration from the 90s when warm flannels and baggy pants signified the popular grunge look.

Plaid also appeared on Diane Von Furstenberg's models in more structured silhouettes. One such garment was done in red and black checkers in her signature wrap, proving that a more casual fabric can be ladylike.

Traditional cold weather material such as fur and velvet were prevalent this season, and are always trend-friendly for winter. A cropped fur jacket appeared on the Hermes runway. A similar style in a longer version was done by Nina Ricci. Velvet was a key material in Missoni's jackets and coats. An elegant dress with a short jacket that ties with a ribbon will be perfect for those looking for a stylish but demure dress for a black tie event.

Winter colors that are traditionally more muted and opaque were juxtaposed with soft hues that broke up their monotony. "I noticed big belts and a lot of blue and red and after that it was all very neutral with a lot of blacks,"

says Devorah Rosenzweig, an Upper Junior at Sy Syms. "There were also wide sleeves - very wide sleeves. Those were the



Marc Jacobs
Fall 2006 Read-to-Wear

main things that really stuck out."

Anna Sui put out the most colorful collection with outstanding pieces such as a midnight blue wrap dress and dark blue marching band inspired jackets. Other designers only had a few pieces with color in their shows. Francisco Costa for Calvin Klein featured several red chiffon dresses that stood out amidst his mostly black collection.

What's in vogue this season may be passé the next. There are so many different looks to choose from that style seekers need to keep an eye out for what's "in" next season.

Fashion Week Hits Bryant Park

BY RACHEL SHPAYHER

Twice a year Bryant Park transforms itself into a Mecca for all fashion fanatics across America. Designers present their current lines of ready-to-wear clothing to whoever merits the chance to enter the coveted tents. And once these lucky few flash their credentials and enter, they enjoy every moment of their time at Olympus Fashion Week.

The models start hitting the catwalk on a Friday and continue to "strut their stuff" for the duration of the following week. Everyday there are approximately seven shows that start at nine a.m. and wrap up at nine at night with the venues' last show. It takes anywhere from ten to fifteen minutes for the audience to see the designer's latest creations on the runway, but behind Olympus Fashion Week lies so much more.

Weeks before the transformation of Olympus Fashion Week occurs, participating designers from Badgley Mischka, celebrity-favored Zac Posen, wedding gown designer extraordinaire Monique Lhuillier, to Luca Luca, a designer with an eye for feminine detail, send out invitations in the thousands. The thousands consist of press from magazines, newspapers, and TV shows from all over the world, buyers from Bergdorf Goodman to London's upscale department store Harvey Nichols, friends and family of the designers, priority shoppers, and as many celebrities as possible. As soon as the RSVPs start piling in, the public relations firms working with the designers get a start on seating assignments, gift bags, and backstage guest lists. Meanwhile, the designer and his or her design team finish up their collection to be shown at one of the tent's three venues.

After months of hard work and anticipation, all of the invited guests begin to arrive at the entrance of Bryant Park at Sixth Avenue between 40th and 42nd street, where either their invitation or credential is their ticket to enter the main tent. Once inside the tent, people mill about at one of the various sponsor booths. The booths range from MAC cosmetics to Aquafina water, Judith Ripka jewelry, or one of this season's sponsors, York Peppermint Candy, where free samples are handed out. Additionally, two of the top fashion publications, Women's Wear Daily and The Daily are distributed with reviews from the day's previous shows.

Half an hour before the show is scheduled to begin, the PR firms begin checking people in and handing out seat assignments. After finding your

assigned spot inside the tent it can take anywhere from five to thirty-five minutes for the show to begin, due to late arrivals and the entrances of the fabulous rich and famous who are being photographed by the paparazzi.

After all the photographs have been taken and every last seat has been filled, backstage workers start at the end of the runway and pull away the protective plastic covering the unmarked catwalk and prepare for the show that will be a platform for the upcoming season's new trends that range from colors, to styles, and fabrics.

Moments later the lights dim to an almost pitch black, and music comes blaring out of the speakers for the beautiful and impossibly tall models to sway their hips to their signature runway walks. With the floor pounding from the loud music and the touch of the models' feet on the

catwalk, you know that the show has officially begun.

No matter who the designer is, every fashion show is an experience: an experience to witness the artistic ability and the creative mastery that it takes in putting together a fashion show. Every part of Olympus Fashion Week is enjoyable, whether it be the free samples, celebrity sightings, the exhilarating feeling of being at fashion week, or simply seeing all the models walk down the runway at the finish of the show displaying the season's new looks. All of which is followed by a designer who gives a gratuitous wave, and a smile that stretches from ear to ear.

SPORTS

World Baseball Classic

BY SHOSHIE WOLF

Most people look forward to spring as the start of warm weather, barbecues, and outdoor activities. For baseball fans, spring signifies the return of America's favorite pastime. Before the start of the regular season, all 30 baseball teams gather in their spring homes in Arizona and Florida to gear up for the season. The teams practice the fundamentals of baseball, conduct fielding drills, and compete in spring training games. Although these games mean virtually nothing, fans look forward to them, knowing that meaningful games are not too far away. Spring training is also the time that fans get a glimpse of their team's prospects and the future stars of baseball.

This season, Major League Baseball has introduced the World Baseball Classic, featuring 16 teams participating in a four-round tournament. The games will take place during spring training, ending on March 20 when a champion will be crowned. The World Baseball Classic has been the focus of much controversy in the United States, with many opponents charging that fans here will not get excited about the games. Others are worried that a star player participating in the tournament may get injured and not be

available to his team at the start of the season. This has caused many well-known players, such as Barry Bonds and Manny Ramirez to drop out, thus reducing the intensity level of the games. However, Major League Baseball wants to increase the popularity of baseball worldwide, and they feel they are accomplishing this by initiating the World Baseball Classic.

This spring we will also be keeping an eye on the two New York teams, the Mets and the Yankees. Both teams enter the season with high expectations. The Mets have addressed their two biggest needs, offense and the bullpen, by adding Billy Wagner, Carlos Delgado, and Paul Lo Duca. Constantly playing second fiddle to the Yankees, Mets fans are looking for improvement after an 83-79 record last season. The Yankees also made a big splash this season by stealing free agent centerfielder Johnny Damon from their rivals, the Boston Red Sox.

Both Yankee fans and Met fans are eagerly awaiting Opening Day on April 3, but until then they will have to satiate their appetite for baseball with exhibition games, the World Baseball Classic, and the sounds of spring.

Last Licks

BY BELLA BELSKY

As the 2006 baseball season finally approaches, do the Yankees have what it takes to go all the way? There are many factors to consider such as pitching, defense, offense, and coaching, just to name a few. However, this season many of the players on the 2006 Yankee team may have the strongest incentive of all, last licks. Multiple Bombers are in the last year of their contracts, and other recent arrivals are hungrier than ever for that ring after coming close a few times. The Yankees have had the talent and the bats, but there has been something missing since 2001. Desperation may just be enough to push them over the top and back into the World Series.

Once again the Yankees will start the season with a potent lineup. During the off-season the Yankees signed expert leadoff hitter Johnny Damon, whose addition at the top of the lineup should only improve Derek Jeter's offensive numbers. Although defensively in his role as centerfielder, Damon does not offer much improvement, if any. It will remain to be seen if the fearsome Yankee hitters can find the chemistry needed to play as a team instead of individual All-Stars, generate offense in key situations, and play more abc ball instead of always relying on the big home run.

The Yankee starting rotation is still up for debate and the bullpen has undergone additions and subtractions. There are seven starting pitchers for only five spots. Randy Johnson and Mike Mussina are the top two in the rotation, Carl Pavano will start when he is healthy, and that leaves Sean Chacon, Chien-Ming Wang and Jaret Wright to contend for the final spots. Aaron Small, Chacon, and Wang deserve a spot as they have proven last year when they played a crucial role in leading the Yankees to another

AL East title. However, Wright remains a question mark after the way he fell apart at the end of the season.

For now Small will be in the bullpen where he can provide long relief when the bullpen is overworked, if a starter leaves early, and spot start if someone gets injured. He will be a great weapon with his versatility. Kyle Farnsworth, Ocatvio Dotel, and the others have yet to prove if they can handle the pressure of the New York stage. In addition, to throw in a wild card, fans still hope Roger Clemens decides he wants one last shot with the Yankees.

Players come to the Yankees with the objective of winning a World Series. After the "drought" a World Series championship will be even sweeter, but many players do not have much more time to wait as they are in the last year/s of their contracts. For example, Mike Mussina arrived in 2001, in 2004 Gary Sheffield landed in the Bronx, and Bernie plans to retire after this season. A-Rod spoke to reporters at spring training and stressed that, like the Yankees, he believes winning is everything. "I feel that my career won't be complete without a world championship...I came here for one reason. Winning, that's it."

Gary Sheffield, who does not have any rings on his fingers to boast about commented, "That's the thing that eludes me right now and agitates me. It agitates me a lot, because I feel with the guys in this room, we should have two rings since I've been here and be working on our third. With that in mind, the mission never stops until I get it." Hopefully, this season the Yankees can demonstrate some of the passion and hunger that they displayed in their great comeback last season, but lost when it came to the playoffs with the World Series in sight.

Furthermore, this season it appears that the Yankees cross

town rivals, the Mets, will give them some more competition. It is a matter of pride that the Yankees stay ahead of the Mets so they will have to play harder to make sure they do. The new Met mantra reflects the higher expectations due to the influx of new stars "The team. The time. The Mets."

This season the Mets have a great offensive team. They should definitely surpass last year's record of 83 and 79. Manager Willie Randolph told reporters, "We're here to work hard and get ready for a special season." The Mets have not been to the playoffs since their subway series against the Yankees in 2000, but should make it in this year.

With the World Baseball Classic cutting into spring training, it is hard to get a real preview of what the teams for this season can do, how they interact, chemistry, and character on and off the field because so many key players from both teams are missing. But the WBC has also given fans and coaches more opportunities to see prospects play and the Yankee farm system finally seems to be producing some very promising players who may be able to provide some help later on in the season should the need arise. When the tournament is finally over the teams will regroup into a unit. This season should bring more excitement and suspense for the New York rivalries. Which New York team will be crowned king of the city this season? Fans will have to wait and find out just who will own the bragging rights.

Interested in Sports?

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Heatherette Retro

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meet bike chic. That girl. The girl to know. The girl on the go. A pretty girl is like a melody." The lights go out and the steady rhythm begins to pulsate in a breakout melodic tribute to New York. The lights ignite and so does the excitement, complete with a dance routine of human skyscrapers, puppy-toting models, and very attractive men in zippered Mohawks, and chaps, with bows and arrows in tow.

You feel transformed into an alternate, Pokemon-like world, with hair extensions in tiers of black and white plastered to the sides of models heads in Japanese/80s-styled, high, pony-

tails. Those that attended prom in



Heading for the guillotine at Christian Dior

the spoken decade feel a strong sense of nostalgia at the sight of Heatherette's collection. Bright cartoonish color, shirts worn under dresses, and leggings rule the runway. The clothes are a mix of 80s, punk ballerina, Harajuku, and prison prints. City buildings adorn everything from colorful, cityscape outfits to full-fledged copies of New York skyscrapers decked in silver on the likes of chiffon evening gowns.

The designers, Richie Rich and Traver Rains, seal the memorable event, by gliding the runway in retro roller skates. The crowd is at their feet, the show is over and mobs are already at the backstage entrance eager to meet the design dream team. So what



Poke'mon meets the Big Apple at "Heatherette"

is it pray tell, if not blood-drenched couture, that completes the recipe for a successful design event? A little bit of retro, a dash of glittery glam, easy on the shock factor, and an extra large helping of fun.

SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Sharon's Medical Problems:
What is being done to keep
the Prime Minister alive?

BY ELANA MEYERSDORF

It has now been two months since 77-year-old Ariel Sharon suffered what was to be his first of two crippling strokes, and the media frenzy that had voraciously devoured every aspect of the prime minister's condition has now ebb'd to the point of obscurity. Although the media attention has subsided, the prime minister of Israel has not disappeared; he still remains lying in a hospital bed, unconscious and incapacitated, fighting for his life in Hadassah Hospital Ein Kerem in Jerusalem. So what is Sharon's status?

Sharon recovered quickly from his first stroke on December 18, 2005 and was scheduled to undergo a minor operation to close a hole between the two upper chambers of his heart. His second stroke occurred on January 4, 2006, on the eve of that operation.

As with any ailing public figure, Sharon's medical treatment has been analyzed and dissected by doctors in every area of expertise. After Sharon's first stroke, which was caused by a blood clot, he was treated with an anticoagulant known as low molecular weight heparin in

order to prevent another clot and subsequent stroke. At the time of his hospital stay, doctors also discovered that Sharon possessed a condition called cerebral amyloid angiopathy, C.A.A., a weakening of blood vessels in the brain that is common among the elderly. Critics fault Sharon's doctors for administering the heparin, which can cause cerebral hemorrhaging in patients with C.A.A. Responding to the barrage of criticism leveled at Sharon's team of medical care professionals, Dr. Jose Cohen, one of his neurosurgeons, said that if Sharon had not been given the drug and had then suffered a blood clot, "Then everybody would have asked, 'Why didn't you give him a higher dosage of blood thinner?'"

After Sharon's second stroke, he was hospitalized and placed in a medically-induced coma so that doctors could operate and stop the bleeding in his brain. The operations were successful, and the doctors slowly started reducing the amount of anesthetics in hopes of bringing him out of the coma. Sharon showed minor signs of improvement with the passing days, but did not awake from his comatose state. His condition was further complicated on February 11, when he was forced

to undergo emergency surgery on his large intestine. Doctors had noticed an abnormal swelling of the abdomen, and a subsequent CT scan showed a "serious deterioration" in his digestive tract. During a four-hour operation, surgeons removed approximately 20 inches of Sharon's large intestine. Sharon emerged from the surgery in serious but stable condition.

The relentlessness and severity of Sharon's medical problems have ruled out any possibility of a return to government or politics. But family and doctors "have not reached the point that we have to give up," said Dr. Shlomo Mor-Yosef, director-general of the Hadassah Medical Organization, in a recent interview with the New York Times. Dr. Mor-Yosef also defended accusations against the wrongful administration of heparin, saying, "We believe everything was done correctly."

As of now, Sharon is capable of breathing on his own although still connected to a respirator as a precaution and has responded to pain-stimulus tests with slight movement of his limbs. He has not yet, however, opened his eyes.

BSE has No Borders

BY RACHEL-ALI ELBAZ

BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy) is a neurodegenerative disease found in cattle. Commonly called Mad Cow Disease, it is one of a group of related neurodegenerative diseases that affect both animals and humans. These fatal diseases have been diagnosed in mammals throughout the world. An extremely simplified explanation of spongiform encephalopathy is that proteins fold incorrectly, thus becoming prions. Prions are novel infectious particles that are found mainly in the central nervous system. The immune system does not act against prions (healthy or rogue) because they are present at birth. Prions are not poisonous; rather it is when they interact with one another that threadlike structures are formed. It is these structures that eventually destroy nerve cells.

A common theory is that these prions play a roll in cell adhesion. While the prion itself is not pathogenic, it becomes that way when it folds incorrectly. When one folds incorrectly, it then acts as a template for others. Slowly, benign molecules change their shape and travel along the nerves until they reach the brain. The infected prions are deposited into the brain tissue and then work to dissolve the brain. More

and more brain cells are infected, and as the brain cells die, vacuoles are left. This leaves the brain looking like a sponge. This is a slow, painful death for either beast or man. Difficult to research due to incubation periods of four to seven years, speculations, and blame between nations has been shameful.

Although of great interest to the worldwide scientific community, while BSE was not found in North American cattle it was not a political priority. The first documented case of BSE occurred in England in April 1985. North America remained unconcerned, believing it couldn't happen here. A thorough investigation did not begin until June 1987 and by that time 50,000 cows were infected. It was also apparent that the disease had been transmitted to humans. Fear consumed Britain and the international community banned British beef. A medical and scientific problem had become a political nightmare.

Eventually it was determined that the disease was transmitted through the ingestion of contaminated feed. To satisfy the cattle industry's desire to increase profits through quick and sustained growth of cattle, commercially prepared feed was supplemented with a protein concentrate. This protein concentrate was prepared from carcasses of dead animals.

Cattle that were not permitted into the human food chain due to premature death were rendered into feed. The rendering process did not kill the rogue prions and as cattle consumed the feed, they too were infected. Due to the lengthy incubation period, some cattle were slaughtered and permitted into the human food chain. Unsuspecting individuals were infected and eventually diagnosed with New Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease. The course of this disease lasted from nine months to three years and claimed its victims without mercy.

North America remained BSE-free until 2003 when an infected cow was found in Alberta, Canada. The American border was quickly sealed to the famous Alberta Beef. Within Canada, it was viewed as a western problem and quietly put on the back burner. The Canadian cattle industry was in crisis. While Americans expressed fear and put the blame squarely on lax Canadian regulation, the Canadians claimed the problem did not have borders.

In fact, Americans were right to openly discuss and protect their population from Canadian beef. The public should be afraid of the health risks involved.

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Shluff Gezunt

BY SHANI FRUCHTER

Here we are. We once again find ourselves at that precious time of the semester. Midterms. And as the overwhelmingly, insurmountable pile of work begins to loom before us, it is clear that our coping mechanisms in response will take a toll on more than just our minds; our bodies will be subjected equally to a rigorous regiment. In efforts to study, we will deprive our bodies of sleep, we will overdose on caffeine and we will eat junk food till all hours of the night. What will remain with us afterwards? Perhaps some newfound knowledge but certainly a few extra pounds.

New studies have linked a lack of sleep to weight gain. Appetite is controlled by the hormones ghrelin and leptin. These two hormones work via a checks and balance system. Ghrelin is produced in the gastrointestinal tract and stimulates appetite. Leptin, which is produced in fat cells, sends a message to the brain when you are full. Sleep deprivation has been shown to cause an increase in ghrelin production and a decrease in leptin production thus increasing appetite.

"When you don't get enough sleep, it drives leptin levels down, which means you don't feel as satisfied after you eat," explains Michael Breus, PhD, a faculty member of the Atlanta School of Sleep Medicine and director of The Sleep Disorders Centers of Southeastern Lung Care in Atlanta. "Lack of sleep also causes ghrelin levels to rise, which means your appetite is stimulated, so you want more food." We can now partly attribute our overeating during midterms to our lack of sleep.

Set Your Priorities
Straight: The Benefits of
a Healthy Breakfast

BY MICHAL COHEN

Most people are familiar with the saying "Breakfast is the most important meal of the day," but how many actually make eating breakfast a priority? With the unavoidable morning rush, breakfast is the easiest meal to miss. Many people quickly grab coffee and a danish to eat on the run, or skip breakfast altogether in an attempt to cut back on calories. However, if we were truly aware of the many benefits associated with eating a healthy breakfast, we would make sure to include it in our daily routine.

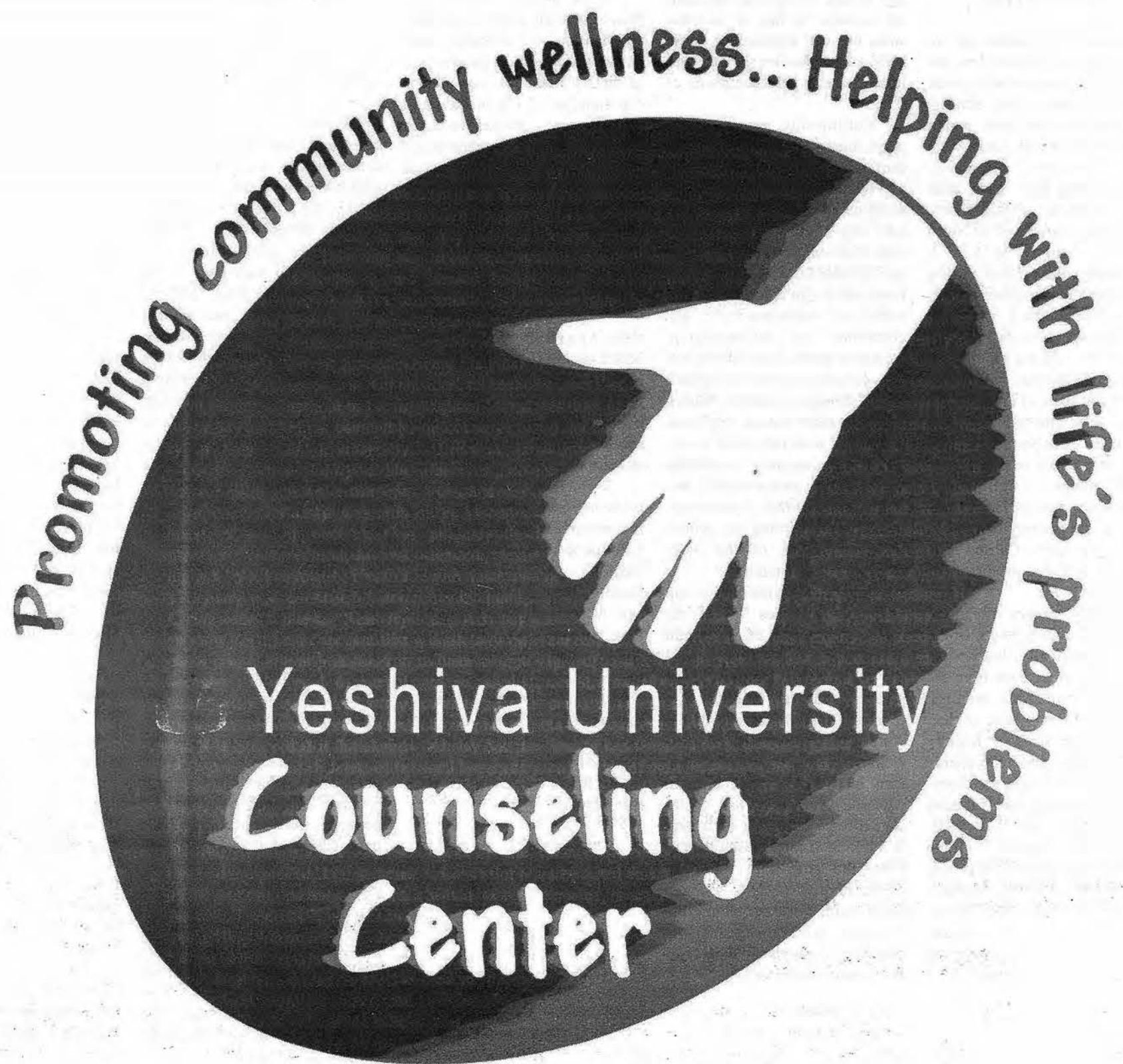
Studies have shown that there are numerous benefits associated with eating a healthy breakfast. Eating a well-balanced breakfast promotes a healthy lifestyle. It improves overall nutrition and helps control

Additionally, two studies have recently been conducted to explore the connection between these hormone levels and overeating. One was done by researchers at the University of Chicago in Illinois, in which twelve healthy men participated. Their leptin and ghrelin levels were measured, as was their appetite. They were then subjected to two days of sleep deprivation followed by two days of extra sleep. Their hormone levels, appetite and activity during this time, were being monitored by doctors. The study found that when these men were sleep deprived, their leptin levels decreased and their ghrelin levels increased. Their appetite went up proportionately; their cravings for foods high in calories and carbohydrates increased by 45%.

Stanford University and the University of Wisconsin conducted a joint study in which they had 1,000 volunteers reporting the number of hours they slept each night. Doctors then measured their levels of ghrelin and leptin, and noted their weight as well. They discovered that those who slept less than eight hours a night not only had lower levels of leptin and higher levels of ghrelin, but they also had a higher level of body fat. Additionally, the level of body fat seemed to correlate with their sleep patterns. Specifically, those who slept the fewest hours per night weighed the most.

While this evidence is not conclusive, researchers suggest that getting an extra few hours of sleep each night will curb your cravings for sugary, calorie-dense foods. So remember, those cravings for extra munchies you have late at night while cramming for midterms can be subsided by with some extra shut-eye.

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FEIG'S FAST FACTS: The Added Health Benefits of Prunes

BY JESSICA FEIG

Thousands of years ago, in an area near the Caspian Sea, the process of drying plums to make prunes originated. Not surprisingly, this was the same region where the European plums were first cultivated. However, although plum trees have been cultivated since ancient times, they weren't introduced to North America until 1856. A Frenchman named Louis Pellier planted grafted plum tree cuttings that he brought back with him from France. Over the next 35 years, Pellier planted plum trees, covering California with more than 90,000 acres of orchards.

It is interesting to note that it takes three pounds of fresh plums to produce one pound of "dried plums." Commercial dehydration has replaced sun-drying as the primary method of producing prunes. California is now the leading producer of prunes worldwide.

Presently, prunes, the dried version of European plums of the plant scientifically known as *Prunus domestica*, have been the subject of numerous research studies due to their high content of phytonutrients, namely neochlorogenic and chlorogenic acid. These substances are classified as phenols and their function as antioxidants has been well-documented. Prunes' unique antioxidant phytonutrients are effective in neutralizing a dangerous oxygen radical called superoxide anion radical. In addition, they have also been shown to help prevent oxygen-based dam-

age to fats. Preventing free radical damage to fats is essential since our cell membranes, brain cells, and molecules such as cholesterol are largely composed of fats.

Nutritionally, prunes are a good source of vitamin A in the form of beta-carotene which acts as a fat-soluble antioxidant. Beta-carotene eliminates the free radicals that cause damage to our cells and cell membranes, damage cellular DNA causing mutations which can result in the formation of cancerous cells, and contribute to inflammation. Research studies have shown that beta-carotene can prevent a variety of diseases, such as atherosclerosis, heart disease, and colon cancer and even reduce the severity of inflammatory conditions like asthma, osteoarthritis, and rheumatoid arthritis. A mere one-quarter cup serving of prunes provides 16.9% of the daily requirement of vitamin A.

Additionally, one-quarter cup of prunes provides 9% of the daily requirement of potassium (316.6 mg), an essential mineral for maintaining normal blood pressure and heart function. In a four-year study involving 40,000 American male health professionals, it was concluded that men whose diets were high in potassium-rich foods had a substantially reduced risk of stroke. In addition to cardiovascular benefits, the potassium found in prunes may also help to promote bone health by counteracting the increased urinary calcium loss caused by the high salt diets typical of most Americans.

It is widely known that prunes have the ability to prevent constipation and promote regularity since they are a good source of dietary fiber; just one-quarter cup supplies 12.1% of the daily requirement. Prunes' soluble fiber also helps to regulate blood sugar levels by slowing the rate at which food leaves the stomach and delaying the absorption of glucose following a meal. Since prunes' soluble fiber slows the rate at which food leaves the stomach, one gets a sense of fullness after a meal which includes them. As a result, prunes have the added benefit to prevent overeating and weight gain. Prunes may play a role in the prevention and treatment of type 2 diabetes since soluble fiber increases insulin sensitivity.

Throughout the years, the prune has been given a bad rap. It has acquired a negative connotation due to its association with a sluggish gastrointestinal tract leading to constipation and old age. Many American companies have decided to rename prunes "dried plums" in order to have more mass appeal for the general consumer. However, evidently, research has shown that this sweet and delicious fruit has numerous health benefits and as a result, it has overcome its negative stigma.

Anthrax's Reappearance

BY ESTHER FISCHER

On February 22, a 44-year-old man from New York collapsed in Pennsylvania, where he was touring with his band at Mansfield University. He was taken to a hospital and tests confirmed that he had been infected with inhalation anthrax. This case is the first one of inhalation anthrax found in the United States since 2001, when there were only six survivors of the eleven people who became infected. In 2001, the anthrax infection spread through the U.S. Postal System, through letters contaminated with anthrax spores. No group has yet taken responsibility for the attack in which 22 people in total were infected, 11 with inhalation anthrax and 11 with cutaneous anthrax. This latest incident, however, is thought to be an isolated case.

New York City's Mayor Michael Bloomberg has explained that there is no cause for concern to the general public, and that there is no evidence of terrorist involvement. The man is thought to have contracted the bacterium on one of his many visits to Africa, where he dealt with unprocessed hides of animals that may have harbored the anthrax spores. His family members and some friends that may have been exposed to the anthrax are now being treated with antibiotics as a preventative measure.

Anthrax is caused by the rod-shaped bacterium, *Bacillus anthracis*, and is believed to date back to ancient Egypt, to the time of Moses. Several countries, including the United States, are lately thought to be developing anthrax as a biological weapon.

The anthrax bacterium resides in spores under the soil, where it can lay dormant for extended periods of time and is capable of surviving very adverse conditions. It usually infects animals and domestic livestock, which contract the disease from eating the spores from the soil. Today, however, as more livestock are being vaccinated and

treated with antibiotics, outbreaks are relatively rare but do sometimes occur in countries such as Central and South America, Africa, Asia and some parts of Eastern Europe.

There are three main types of anthrax infections: cutaneous anthrax, which is the most common form, and also the mildest form of the disease, in which the bacterium infects the skin through a cut or scar. Gastrointestinal anthrax, which is contracted by eating undercooked meat from an infected animal, and is known to cause intestinal ulcers, nausea, loss of appetite and fever. Lastly, inhalation anthrax, which is the most fatal kind and may be hard to diagnose, as it manifests itself in the beginning as a flu-like disorder, but as the disease progresses, symptoms such as high fever, breathing problems and shock may appear. The disease may also spread to the brain, causing meningitis, an inflammation of the membranes covering the brain and spinal cord.

Anthrax is treated by oral or intravenous antibiotics, especially ciprofloxacin, doxycycline, and penicillin. However, complications may arise if the patient is not treated in time, as the bacterium releases toxins over time that may be fatal, and are not treatable with antibiotics. Scientists are now working to develop a substance that will neutralize these toxins. Fortunately, a human vaccine against anthrax was approved by the FDA in 1970, and it is mostly given to military personnel. Recognizing a potential risk however, since September 2001, the government has launched a nation-wide program to increase the supply of antibiotics suited to treat anthrax, and vaccines are now readily available in every state in the event of an outbreak. As of now, however, this event seems highly unlikely. The conclusion is that there is no cause for concern; the incident was clearly isolated, and whatever may happen, we are certainly prepared for anything.

"As A Great River Flows"

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ride.

In a touching and somewhat eerie scene of the film, five men of the *chevrei* gather around Malchi and inform him that they wish to bless him before his departure to Germany. Sitting on a lawn chair in the backyard of his house, the men surround him and place their hands over his head. Then they begin to intone *Birkat Kohanim*. Malchi sits with his eyes closed, slowly rocking back and forth, trying to absorb the blessing.

Don't get the wrong idea about this film; its purpose is not to inspire the next wave of *baalei teshuva*. It is meant to motivate and promote optimism.

"Optimism is my middle name," Malchi later tells the camera jokingly in English, and yet, the seriousness of the statement is not lost on the audience. Following his return from Germany, Malchi tells his friends that he is not sure the treatment worked; but he will pretend it did.

Haluzi takes us on a quick flashback tour of Malchi's other lifetime, pre-*baal-teshuva* era,

when he had an illegitimate child. In an on-film interview, Gal, Malchi's son, recounts that he did not meet his father until he was seventeen years old. In a scene where Malchi is talking to his estranged son, the awkwardness of what is said and the lack of what needs to be said resonates with the audience as deeply painful.

Likewise, the relationship between Malchi and his secular parents is also strained. In a conversation between Malchi and his father regarding army service, a subject on which they possess unbridgeable differences of opinion, the tension is palpable. Still, both men maintain that they have nothing but respect for the other's choice of lifestyle.

As a man who has experienced all the hardships of becoming a *baal teshuva*, Malchi sometimes takes to the radio in an on-air session called "Talking with Nir," where young guests call in and discuss the challenges they are encountering in their own quests of becoming religious. Malchi gives them advice and encouragement.

Much of Malchi's own encouragement comes from the teachings of Tai-Chi, and quotes from great Tai-Chi masters are dispersed throughout the film, preaching harmony between body and soul. But while Tai-Chi remains a great reservoir of inspiration, Malchi's ultimate strength is derived from his faith in G-d.

Malchi believes that the G-d who gave him his illness can just as easily take it away. He does not believe that disease and death are related. Rather, he explains, when a person is born, G-d takes the hourglass of his life and turns it over. When the sand runs out, he dies. But a person can be sick and still have much sand left to go.

At the end of the film, there is no miraculous salvation, no *deus ex machina* to relieve Malchi from the impending doom of death. But there is a solid determination, and a heartfelt prayer, for the power to keep on living.

Peace in the Middle East

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ture of what needs to and what will ultimately be done. "The challenge isn't what the outcome is," explained the ambassador. "The challenge is how to get to the outcome from where we are now." To embrace this challenge and to ultimately solve it successfully, the Israelis and the Palestinians must learn from the past and remember that "every opportunity in the Middle East is

fleeting," he said. Therefore, it is essential that additional opportunities not be wasted since "when it [the window of opportunity] closes," Ross concluded, "you are always worse off."

This interview was conducted in conjunction with Yigal Gross of *The Commentator*.

Tit for Tat: Livingstone

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make reference to the fact that no paper in Britain printed the offensive Mohammad cartoon out of respect for their Muslim citizens. Rather they take the foreign publishing of a cartoon offensive to Islam and use it as their platform. They attempt to compare Islamophobia to Judeophobia. In truth, the situations do not compare at all.

Personally, I don't think that the incident of the Mohammad cartoon was handled properly. I believe that anti-Semitic remarks and cartoons must be prohibited as well as all racist remarks, photos, or propaganda. Religious defamation is morally wrong. There are numerous religious beliefs in our global society; all must be equally respected. There is no place for double standards in a fair and responsible global society.

Livingstone suggested that had he made his comments on different grounds, it would have not been so bad. There are major points against this suggestion; in fact, it is completely hypocritical and makes no attempt to either cover up or apologize for his verbal assault. On February 11, in his capacity as the mayor of London, he joined the Muslims in protest of the offensive Islamic cartoon. Livingstone also stated that "much of Europe's media engages in an orgy of Islamophobia." This was in regard to the controversial Mohammed cartoons. Yet Livingstone was personally offensive to the Jewish reporter. I am not saying that as the mayor of London, Livingstone shouldn't have condemned the offensive publication, but he should most certainly have shown an equal amount of respect toward the Jewish people.

There must be no difference between Islamophobia and Judeophobia. Both are wrong and both should be prosecuted. The mayor London must be consistent in his dealings with all citizens. After all, he was elected to represent them all. This is his duty and obligation.

Livingstone's failure to be just and fulfill his official duties with honor translates to the creation of his own political demise. One must question why Livingstone has chosen to treat two distinct groups of citizens so differently. The answer is revealed in the electorate. Fifteen percent are Muslim and the support of this group was very vocal when the issue with Finegold became public. One of Livingstone's most honored visitors, Sheikh Yussuf al-Aaradawi, spiritual leader of Hamas, said, "O God, destroy the vile usurper Jews, the vile Crusaders, and infidels." How does a liberal man such as Livingstone, one who is seemingly open-minded and just, host such a guest? But Livingstone, nicknamed Red Ken, makes no comment here. It's difficult to consider the possibility that Livingstone may not be an anti-Semite. How can a person be against racism, making statements like "an ideology that starts by declaring one human being inferior to another is a slope whose ends is at Auschwitz—that's why I detest racism," how can a person have such double standards? By refusing to apologize, Livingstone makes it clear that he meant what he said. The fact that he maintains he has nothing to apologize for should worry the British government and the London electorate.

Livingstone said that his suspension "strikes at the heart of

democracy" and further states that "politicians should only be able to be removed by the voters for breaking the law. Three members of a body that no one has ever elected should not be allowed to overturn the votes of millions of Londoners." While I believe Livingstone is partially right in his argument, the panel does not simply decide how to deal with breach of law from personal focus. The law is the law: it is based on the rule of law.

In a democratic society elected officials must make informed decisions based on law. These decisions must be open to scrutiny and held to a higher standard than that of an ordinary citizen. The panel is legal and qualified, and the general public doesn't read or have access to the information or to the unbiased sources at their disposal. It is both unrealistic and ineffective to want the electorate to decide on such a sensitive issue. Livingstone's comments were not appropriate and he clearly broke the *standard of ethics* as it is written in the law.

Personally, I have faced anti-Semitism in both junior and senior high school. I was the only Jew, different, and often an easy target for anyone wanting to spout off. While I want to be sensitive to the feelings of the Muslim community with regard to the printing of offensive cartoons, I cannot find any basis to connect these two situations.

The world will be patiently watching and waiting for the British High Court to make a decision with regard to Livingstone's comments. Democracy without checks and balances is doomed to fail, and political officials who lack the ability to be honest and upright to all citizens must be accountable for their actions.

Eating a Healthy Breakfast

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It has also been shown that breakfast improves concentration and overall performance. Studies indicate that children who eat breakfast are able to concentrate better and even achieve higher scores on standardized tests. In addition, adults who eat breakfast are more productive at work. Eating a well-balanced breakfast eliminates the irritability and fatigue associated with a lack of energy and increases strength and endurance. A study conducted by the International Food Information Council Foundation tested cognitive performance from 30 minutes up to four hours following a meal. Results showed that hunger led to difficulties in performance, and those that had recently eaten a well-balanced meal achieved significantly higher scores.

Aside from the extra vitamins and nutrients that it provides, eating a well-balanced breakfast can decrease the risk of certain conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. Research presented at the 43rd annual American Heart Association Conference showed that the rates of insulin resistance and obesity, both of which increase the risk for diabetes and heart disease, were 35-50% lower in people who ate breakfast on a regular basis. Another study published by the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition in November of 2000 found that drinking a glass of orange juice each day increases HDL cholesterol, which helps keep arteries from becoming clogged. In addition, foods

high in potassium lower the risk of high blood pressure and stroke.

While eating breakfast every day is extremely important, it is necessary to make healthy choices in order to gain the associated benefits. Nutritionists suggest eating at least one or two pieces of fruit with breakfast to fulfill the daily recommendation of eating five fruits and vegetables. Fruits contain potassium and vitamin C, which have been shown to help decrease the risk for heart disease, cancer, and other chronic diseases. Another important component of a healthy breakfast is fiber, which decreases LDL cholesterol and the risk of heart attack. Breakfast foods, such as cereal and oatmeal are rich in fiber and serve as healthy choices. Other healthy choices are foods which contain whole grains and protein. Cereal, bran muffins and whole-grain rolls are saturated with fiber and vitamins. Eggs and low-fat milk are good sources of protein and help satisfy hunger for longer periods of time than many other foods. A breakfast of whole-grain cereal, milk, and fruit satisfies all of the above categories while providing a well-balanced and nutritious way of starting the day.

So, the next time you are pressed for time in the morning, don't miss the opportunity to start your day off in a healthy way. Eating foods such as yogurt, fruit, dry cereal, whole-wheat crackers, and low-fat bran muffins allow you to jump-start your day and stay healthy without taking time away from your busy schedule.

BSE

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With the discovery of BSE in cattle, the risk factors with regard to human health are not only increased, they are unknown. For over two years, the borders remained closed and the Canadian beef industry was virtually destroyed. Unfortunately, the discovery of BSE in the United States proved that Canada was also correct. BSE had no borders.

The solution can be found in a commitment of both governments to foolproof live animal testing. This is the ethical solution. It is good for every American, and every Canadian. Politically it would ensure the high value of North American cattle and beef exports. It would maintain the public trust and prevent harm to consumers. It would also satisfy the public's right to know.

There have been great advances in testing over the past years. For example, Dr. Ruth Gabizon has done experiments in Israel that have shown that "misfolded prions" can be detected in the urine of diseased animals. As

they dissolve in the brains of infected animals the prions as well as brain tissue are dissolved in the urine. Imagine if this deadly disease could be stopped in its tracks with a simple urine test. Another promising lead has been developed by GeneThera. They have developed a system for the collection and testing of blood from live cattle to determine the presence of BSE.

While some argue that testing all cattle is cumbersome and costly, this is the real cost of protecting public health and safety. BSE must be taken more seriously by both the Canadian and American governments. Scientific research as well as viable solutions must be funded, supported and encouraged to protect all North Americans. After all, BSE in cows and New Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease are cruel and fatal diseases that respect no border.

The YU Seforim Sale 2006

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thing that will translate into large profits.

Yet it was not financial and business aspects of the sale that made it so memorable for Goldenberg. When asked what he would do if he were in charge of next year's SOY Seforim Sale, "I would work on bringing back as much of my staff as possible," he replied. "The attitudes and the selfless environment they brought to the sale were truly remarkable. The YU and Stern students that worked at this year's sale were all juniors and sophomores. If they volunteer next year this would pave the way for another strong sale."

The event would not have been the success it was without their help. The 45 full-time volunteers, including Judd Bogdansky (YC '07), the vice president of the sale, manned the cash registers, sections and the customer service desk four hours

at a time. They were responsible for every aspect of the sale, ranging from the ordering, to the computer work, to guaranteeing free parking for the customers. On average, they contributed a total of somewhere between 100 and 150 hours each. They began



working immediately after winter break, and were not relieved from duty until the sale was completely cleaned up and shipped out.

Despite working hard, the students bonded and had their share of laughs. The cashiers experienced humorous moments when they interacted with many of their customers. On the first day of the sale the "Kids Books" section manager had a dance-off with three six-year-olds. Equally funny was the time when the

Stern women, who were being extremely diligent, asked a current Rosh Yeshiva for identification just to make sure he actually taught at YU.

Still, despite the good time, Goldenberg and Bogdansky are not committing to next year's sale just yet. While they both agree that providing the leadership for the event has filled them with a sense of unbelievable satisfaction and accomplishment, and that it is something they will take with them throughout their lives, heading the sale was not an easy task.

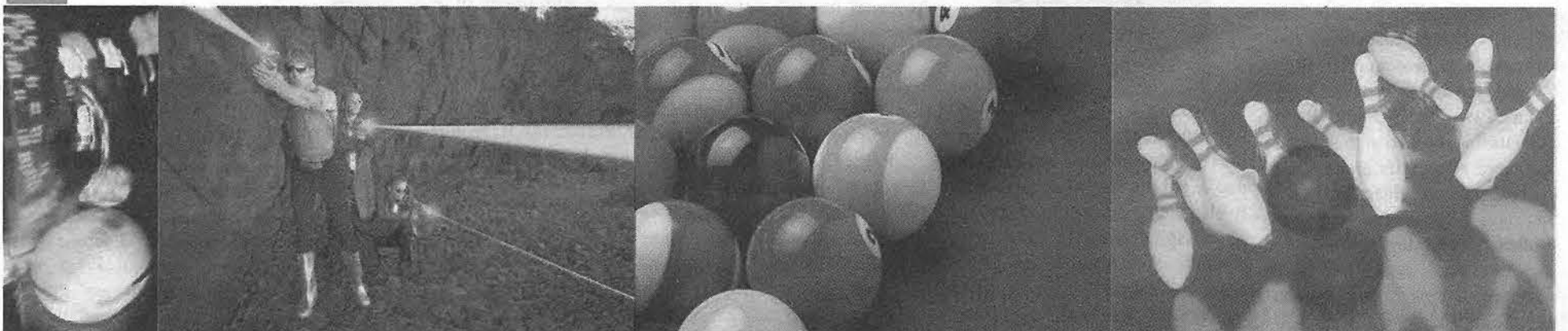
Regardless of their choice, they are a large part of the reason that the 2006 SOY Seforim Sale was so successful. Under their leadership, the event ran smoothly, ensuring that whoever is in charge next year will most definitely call upon them for wisdom and business advice.

COMING SOON...

YSU & SCWSCP PRESENT

girls v boys
NEW RUG CITY

LASERTAG POOL BOWLING



MARCH 23rd 2006