

The Yeshiva University OBSERVER

Volume 51 Number 9

May 2006 / Iyar 5766

YU Students Rally for Darfur

By AVIVA SEGELMAN AND LAURA SHUMAN

On Sunday, April 30, 330 members of the Yeshiva University community joined with an estimated 20,000 other people in Washington, D.C. to rally against the genocide in Darfur, Sudan. The rally, which took place at the Washington National Mall, featured speakers such as Nobel Prize winner Elie Weisel, American Jewish World Service President Ruth Messinger, and celebrity George Clooney, among many other political and religious leaders. The slogans "Never again" and



"Not on our watch" were resounding themes of the day, and the speakers demanded actions, not just words, from our country's leaders.

The YU delegation to the rally was successful, due to the efforts of the Society for Social Justice, with the support of the Center for the Jewish Future and the Office of University Life. The Society for Social Justice is comprised mainly of the group of students who traveled to Honduras through the AJWS during winter break. For weeks, YU students were encour-

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A BEIT MIDRASH DOUBLE THE SIZE EXPECTED THIS COMING FALL

By TIFERET UNTERMAN

Architectural plans for a larger, more accommodating beit midrash on the Beren campus are currently underway. As women's learning progresses and as chavruta learning is incorporated into more *shiurim*, the need for a bigger beit midrash becomes more pressing. Students are often found davening and learning in other areas due to the congestion of the many who come to learn in the current beit midrash. Mr. Jeff Rosengarten, vice president of administrative services along with Dean Bacon, have been working with architects, striving to create a space that will be larger, more user-friendly, and will maximize the use of the facilities.

The current beit midrash has a space of 900 square ft. with the capacity to sit 50 people and space for 20 bookshelves. At

present, architects have been exploring the possibility of a beit midrash on the seventh floor. This would be spatially savvy, Mr. Rosengarten explained, considering that the conference room on that floor is being moved to 215 Lexington. The President's office is also being relocated to 215 Lexington, thereby freeing up a lot of space. Although there has been consideration to build the new beit midrash on the first floor of 245 Lexington, this would be unlikely since any construction there would be temporary, owing to the fact that the space will most likely be dedicated to creating continuous library floors, allowing for the relocation of the reserve library there.

Layout plans for a beit midrash on the seventh floor would include 1900 square ft. of space which would seat approximately 113 people, more than

doubling the size of the existing beit midrash. This space would also allow for about 25 book cases with possibly greater height than the existing ones. Rosengarten pointed out that this space would be "not as claustrophobic, much roomier, and more attractive" than the current beit midrash. One suggestion which architects have presented for better utilizing this space includes 25 or 30 seats which would be built similar to the structure of the counter space found in Les Bistro. Rosengarten explained that this would allow for individualized learning for students who need fewer distractions to learn comfortably, while creating a less intimidating and more private space for them to learn in.

The seventh floor has an additional feature which makes it

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Construction on the Beren Campus Begins

By ALANA RUBENSTEIN

Take a good look at the 245 Lexington building because come the fall it will be hard to recognize. Over the summer the entire first floor will be revamped and reconstructed to make the current space bigger, more practical and more aesthetically pleasing.

The makeover of the lobby will begin immediately after finals end, with the intention of giving the area a whole new look. Everything that is currently on the first floor, including the deans' and registrar's offices, will be removed and replaced by a larger reception area so that students can congregate without having to crowd around. "The first floor has become a congested mess," says Jeffery Rosengarten, associate vice president of administrative services. Once the construction is finished there will be an area double the current size in which to wait for the elevators. There will also be

beautifully furnished seating areas for students to use for hanging out and relaxing.

"[The construction] will transform the 245 Lexington building into something very much like the 215 building," says Rosengarten. Like the Levy Lobby in the Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB) building, there will be a large space that will be divided into classrooms and seminar rooms. Eventually, the area will be converted into one room that can be utilized for a variety of purposes.

The inside of the building is not all that is being refurbished. The entranceway in the front will be made over with the addition of a protected front porch. "I think that's going to be an attraction," predicts Rosengarten. It will give students a place to talk that is not on the street and not completely inside by the continuous hustle and bustle of the elevators.

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YU Hosts Nobel Prize Winner Dr. Robert Aumann

By LAURA SHUMAN

Yeshiva University recently hosted a daylong set of lectures by the winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics, whose addresses attracted large crowds. On April 24, Professor Robert J. Aumann, who is currently on tour of the East Coast, made his first appearance at YU at the Beren Campus' Sy Syms School of Business. The crowd of students and professors attended partly out of curiosity of his explanations of game theory, but also to hear about its applica-

tions. "There's no easy way of summing it up," says Aumann in regard to game theory, but broadly speaking, games are "different situations of people with different goals, and how they interact." It is the formulization of the optimal behavior of these participants. While game theory itself is not new, he has made a number of contributions regarding the theory, including analyses of what

happens when the same players play the same game repeatedly, or when the number of players is essentially infinite, or when players have only limited knowledge of relevant information.

While game theory has appli-



cations in politics, economics, and even the Talmud, Aumann spoke about game theory and its application to the college admissions process, medical interns, and marriage stability. The lecture was infused with wry wit and humor, characteristics Aumann is known for.

Although the first part of Aumann's lecture was surprising-

ly light and "rather simplistic," according to one student, the substance of game theory began to emerge when the audience was given time to ask questions. It was then that Aumann began expounding on game theory, explaining that it can be divided into two categories. Conceptual game theory, which uses models to gain insight into conflict situations, "doesn't give you precise answers," he explained. Game engineering, the second kind of game theory, which was the topic of the lecture, is very precise and uses real models.

Aumann answered questions regarding everything from stability in Africa, which he explained could only be discussed in conceptual terms, to Israeli politics. He discussed the algorithm that he had written, which predicted exactly which coalitions in the Israeli government would form, solely on the basis of numbers.

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Fighting the Stereotype



BY ALANA RUBENSTEIN
INCOMING EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The classroom setting is not the place that I tend to be disrespectful or confrontational. I usually reflect on the views offered by my teachers and peers and consider the merits of their thoughts and ideas. When I vocalize my responses, it is usually not in an argumentative or imposing manner. This philosophical approach to my myriad of classes took a sudden reversal last week.

One of my professors made a statement that hit a nerve, forcing me to break my usual restraint. As she outlined an assignment,

the professor insinuated that all students at our college are similar and have a uniform outlook on many issues. Unable to hold myself back I blurted out "Isn't that a bit stereotypical?" She said no, citing that we all come from similar backgrounds, etc. It became obvious that I wasn't going to succeed in changing her mind, so I accepted her rebuttal as she continued on with class.

My acceptance, however, was only on the surface. As I walked back to my dorm room later that evening I was still perturbed by her words. My professor had nailed the Stern stereotype on the head. She tried to give credence to the cliché that most students at Stern fall into one group. While I have tried to explain our multiplicity and independence to peers at secular universities, I never thought I would encounter that point of view on campus.

It is true that we are all Jewish, but that is not synonymous with the claim that we are

analogous. It is obvious that many of us share the same value system and have similar beliefs regarding certain basic principles, but this does not mean we have the same opinions across the board. There are various ways one can remain a committed Jew without crossing halachic boundaries. For example, you may encounter two women in the elevator who dress differently and have differing religious outlooks, but I doubt they would accuse each other of being heretical and non-religious. I consider this concept to be one of the many beauties of our religion.

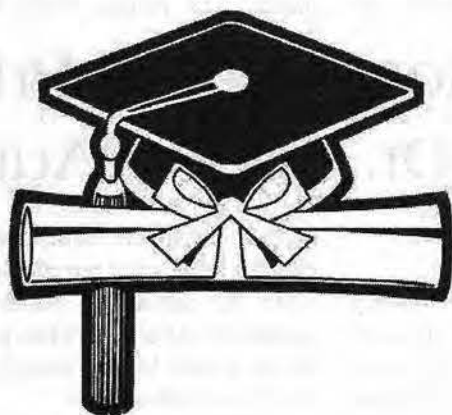
Similarly, when it comes to significant ideas not related to our faith, we have equally diverse outlooks and goals. I recently wrote an article for a class on why students chose to come to Stern. In the survey that I solicited from other students, no two women gave the same answer. While we are all here to learn and grow, different interests and passions motivate us. This diversity

can be seen by the abundance of flyers and posters hanging in the corridors of the Beren Campus. It is not atypical to see an advertisement for an upcoming biology event next to an announcement for basketball intramurals. There are thirty-two different subjects one can take classes in ranging from Accounting to Spanish. For someone to say that we are all the same because we are all Jewish women is not only inaccurate but also disrespectful.

After I calmed down and thought about what had happened, I began to rethink my initial anger. I still firmly feel that the women of Stern College represent a wide spectrum of beliefs and character types, but perhaps my resentment was somewhat misdirected. We should take some responsibility for the inaccurate perceptions of our student body. After all, as it says in the Talmud, "silence is like approval." By not speaking our minds and creating a forum of discussion in our university we

are giving off the impression that we all agree with the way others perceive us. By not sharing our ideas, we are conforming to the opinion that we are all one and the same.

I am tired of being perceived as a "Stern girl" instead of as an individual. This college, like any other university, is comprised of many diverse persons. As next year's editor-in-chief of The Observer, I look forward to having a medium with which to express myself. Likewise, I encourage you all to do the same. Use this summer to reflect on your interests and goals and come back to school next semester ready to get involved. I challenge you to make your voice heard through The Observer and the many other avenues that have been provided by Stern College.



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ADINAH WIEDER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Kant writes that, "It is what represents an object that makes the object possible, rather than the object being there, that makes us perceive the object." It is how we perceive things that makes the reality rather than how the reality exists. According to Kantianism, knowledge is whimsical rather than a reality. Kant later proposes other ideas in an attempt for synthesis; we first get an appearance and that mixed with our consciousness is what we perceive. However, since everyone views the initial object differently, everyone perceives things differently. The following occurrence illustrates the significance of a different perspective. The names of the individuals have been changed.

Josh is a developmentally delayed young man, who comes to visit his sister Hannah every Shabbos at the group home at which I work. Inclement weather, illness or inconvenience never deters Josh from visiting. Both of Josh's parents are mildly mentally retarded, as well. Up until a year and a half ago, the family lived together. Josh's mother succumbed to cancer and then, Hannah moved into the group home.

Last weekend, Josh came to visit his sister just as he does every weekend. Usually, Josh talks about upcoming Shabbatonim and various friends. This weekend, he began to tell me about all the disabilities that he knows about. We discussed Down Syndrome. Every time Josh uttered a statement his father would proclaim, "My son the genius." Josh said, "I know what chromosomes look like. They look like little pieces of string with a ball in the middle." I explained to him that people with Down Syndrome have an extra chromosome number 21, thus an extra ball with string." He then glanced at another resident who is wheelchair-bound and said, "I know a lot about physical disabilities too." We then discussed various physical disabilities that severely impair motor functioning. Josh paused for a moment, looked up at me and said, "Sheesh, with all these disabilities that are possible you just have to be thankful." I looked at him in disbelief. He continued to point out the obvious disabilities the other residents displayed. He then looked at Jessica and said, "Jessica's in the wheelchair, she can't even walk, and look at Shira (she has Down Syndrome) it's just an extra ball with string, I could have gotten extra string and I didn't."

Every week that Josh would come, I would pity him. All I saw were lost opportunities. His parents will never be able to peer into his room and smile with pride as they watch him pour over his schoolbooks. They will never be able to hear him learn a *Tosofos* or a *Mishna*. He will never experience the satisfaction of mastering a difficult physics problem or understand any kind of biological processes that involve more understanding than "a piece of string with a ball in the middle." He will never experience reading a piece of literature and being transformed to another place and time. His emotional state will never reach the level of an adolescent and therefore, he will never experience the

intensity of emotions that accompany age and advanced life experiences.

Josh does have a disability, however after hearing his statement I realized how we tend to take living for granted and overlook the opportunities set before us. With Josh's words echoing in my mind, I realized that the school year is ending and I have to do some reckoning of my own. I thought about all the things I complained about and how trivial my bemoaning seemed compared to the troubles that Josh faces daily. It was the first time that I contemplated all the things that I did do and how fortunate I was to have the means and support system to accomplish them.

Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to witness in action the women who "make" Stern College. This experience has given me a newfound respect and admiration for the deans and faculty. Deans Bacon and Orlian embody all that Stern strives to instill within its students. They are women of great character and dedication. Their commitment to students and to excellence is what makes the university a wonderful place. It is due to their efforts that women can proudly say that they are students at Stern College for Women. Deans Braun and Hait advocate for students on a daily basis in the hopes of providing students with a rewarding college experience. They are readily available to provide advice and guidance.

The Observer's success would not have been possible if not for the student body. I thank you for your suggestions and your readership. The amount of student participation on campus this year has been unlike any other year. It is from Deena Hassan, President of Stern College for Women's Student Council, that I learned what it truly means to lead. The only way to gain the respect of those around you is to earn it by respecting them. Deena has taught students to respect each other for their differences and that despite the differences they can still work together to reach unprecedented heights.

This year, the Observer was blessed with an unbelievable staff. I have had the pleasure of working with the finest young women who will undoubtedly influence the Jewish future. I respect each one of you tremendously. You are truly renaissance women! Aviva Segelman, thank you for always helping us out in our many times of need. You are the editor, front-page article writer, and quote obtainer—we could not have done it without you. Tiffy Unterman, thank you for being the official Jeff Rosengarten shadow and for being instrumental in assuring the women of Stern College get a beis medrash. Shoshana Fruchter, the woman who sees the good in everyone and everything at all times. Your passion and dedication to God, His Torah and to Klal Yisrael are remarkable. You have been a source of much inspiration for me throughout the year. Your efforts on behalf of the Observer are innumerable. Judy Gorelick-Feldman, thank you for putting up with me. I admire
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ILANA LEVIN
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In our opening issue of the Observer this year, I raised questions about the value and legitimacy of newspapers, when judged against the need for an administration of any type to accomplish real work efficiently and competently.

Nine months of overtime minutes on my cell phone, only two all-nighters, 1,023 emails to and from Adinah, almost as many mind-numbingly painful meetings, and countless trips to Viva and Baskin Robbins later, I've actually not really changed my opinions about newspapers at all (that would be called flip-flopping, which only liberals do). I have, however, seen what we were able to achieve this year, using the Observer as an instrument to call for and effect change.

Though the building of a new beit midrash had been on President Joel and Dean Bacon's agenda for some time, the weekly (ok, daily) phone calls to Jeff Rosengarten asking for updates only ensured that it would remain a priority in construction plans. We're looking forward to the finished product next year—even if it's not on the first floor of 245 Lex. And if that's the only contribution the Observer has made this year, it will have all been worth it.

Without taking a disproportionate amount of credit for the recent changes in Hebrew language requirements, the Observer's compilation of the constant hallway conversations about the need for improvement opened a dialogue with the administration and gave a voice to many frustrated students. We are optimistic that the resulting changes will improve not only the Hebrew Department but the Judaic Studies Department on the whole.

Discussion about a possible women's megillah reading at Stern initiated debate about the value of such an event and provided a forum for students who felt that their voices weren't being heard by the administration and who had nowhere else to turn.

And while the Obstrucster was created in the spirit of Purim humor, we're hoping that the underlying truth in depicting Stern as "the periphery of the Jewish future" will convince the Center for the Jewish Future, and Yeshiva University as a whole, to take greater notice of the underused resources that can be found at Stern. The CJF in particular has a lot of work ahead in fully arriving on the Beren Campus and in proving that Stern has a role in its agenda. And YU has yet to transform Stern from a college whose students attend Judaic Studies courses into a recognized center for women's serious Torah learning.

But there's a limit to what we can demand of the administration; there's a point at which complaints about community, atmosphere and mentality should be directed at students and their leading representatives.

I have full confidence in the incoming TAC Board's ability to revolutionize the culture surrounding Talmud Torah at Stern: to change how we view learning, how much we learn, and where we learn. (Full disclosure: Shoshana Fruchter, TAC president-elect, was our features editor this past year and my roommate for two, going on three, years.) Shoshana's theme of involving every type of student along the diverse Stern spectrum (which, I believe, is not just an empty campaign promise, particularly because she ran unopposed) promises to create an energetic, engaging community like Stern hasn't seen before.

The Student Life Committee, which will be chaired for a second year by Tiferet Unterman (also a front-page writer for the Observer this past year), promises to continue in its agenda to convert Stern into a seven-day-a-week college by pushing the administration and our facilities to their limits. But only the willingness of the student body to demonstrate a need for these changes can determine the Committee's success.

As for me, I'm looking forward to returning to the other side of the media/government divide—this time, though, perhaps more sympathetic to those who rally behind the value of freedom of the press.

* * *

At the risk of sounding sentimental, I need to express appreciation to those who encouraged me and helped me maintain my sanity this year.

I want to thank my parents who have been supportive of all my decisions, allowing me to choose my own course in attending Stern and in accepting the position of editor this year.

I am grateful to all my roommates who, in addition to serving on staff in one capacity or another, allowed our dorm to serve as a second Observer office at times.

Thank you to the staff of this year's Observer, whose complete dedication and commitment to "the cause" made working on the paper a rewarding, worthwhile, and—yes, even *fun* experience. I have no doubt that Adinah, together with incoming editor-in-chief Alana Rubenstein, will raise Observer standards to even higher levels and be even more demanding than ever before—so you should definitely stick around.

And as I sit at the last working computer in 20C Brookdale Hall for the last time, I need to thank Adinah for being the greatest co-editor. The inspiration created by your unlimited drive and boundless energy to fulfill our ambitious goals will remain with me even after our last paper has gone to press. I have four words for you: *this was the year*.

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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.



Saying "Never Again" to Genocide in Darfur

BY ADINA SCHWARTZ

Many of us are unaware of the terrible situation in Darfur and Chad taking place right now. I would like to take this opportunity to give an overview of what has happened since the conflict began in 2003.

For centuries, the people of Sudan have argued over land: the Arab nomads want a place to graze their livestock while the black tribe members want farmland. The government in the Sudan is primarily Arab in race, however the country itself is a combination of both black and Arab.

The black people in Darfur are very much unrepresented in the government. In 2003, some of the black tribal members in Darfur began to rebel. In swift retaliation, the government sent troops, known as the Janjaweed, to villages in Darfur, where instead of fighting rebels, the militia targeted innocent civilians.

After first dropping bombs on the villages, the Janjaweed ride into them, murdering the men and children, and gang raping the women and girls. Those left alive flee to refugee camps along the Sudan-Chad border. Even in these camps the people are not safe—they are dying of wounds and of malnutrition; they are literally starving to death. Additionally, the threat of the Janjaweed is still upon them. As

the world turns a blank eye, the Sudanese government has become even more ambitious, sending the Janjaweed into the refugee camps and Chad. The state of affairs in the Sudan has been officially termed "genocide" by President Bush and his administration.

With the passing of Yom HaShoah I think it is apropos to discuss our responsibility as Jews to say "never again." Though I would never equate what is happening in Darfur to the Holocaust, even so, we as Jews know the pain of a world ignoring the murder of the innocent, and right now, the world is very much turning its back on the war-torn region of the Sudan. The world said "never again" after the Holocaust and "never again" after the massacres in Rwanda, but genocide is happening again in Darfur.

We as Jews know what is just and right from personal experience; therefore, we are obligated to help to the best of our capabilities. I strongly urge writing to local congressmen, donating money to aid agencies, and checking out sites on the web about the genocide in Darfur (such as www.savedarfur.org and www.darfurgenocide.org). In the spirit of Yom HaShoah, let us all say "never again" together and mean it.



"The Ten Commandments": A World Without Heroes

BY PEREL SKIER

You know you are living in strange, dark times when even "The Ten Commandments," that infallible classic of old Hollywood religion, is different.

It started innocently enough. This Pesach, like every Pesach, I casually crawled inside the refrigerator with my 409 and *shmatah* (rag), craning my neck out at an impossible angle so I could keep up with "The Ten Commandments" on TV. I do this every year, as my parents and grandparents have before me; it is a tradition that I imagine outdates the Exodus. Every April, without fail, those clever network executives get together and go, "Hey, it's almost Easter. Don't the Jews have some kind of holiday about now? Somebody broadcast the Charlton Heston movie." All great religious movies gain their immortality this way; witness the Charlie Brown Christmas special.

Of course, this means that "The Ten Commandments" usually gets broadcast right before Easter, at which point I am more likely to be taking down my *chumtzedik* dishes than putting them up, but hey, it's all good, right?

Regardless of what day it airs, for me, half the fun in getting ready for (or cleaning up from) Pesach has always been "The Ten Commandments." As a child not old enough to be alarmed by Nefertiri's horrific dialogue ("You will rule Egypt, and I will be your footstool"), the movie awed me with its sheer scale. When you're a kid, words

like "pharaoh" and "plague" mean little to you. And what in the world is a chariot? My elementary-aged friends were never allowed to watch "The Ten Commandments," and I can hear the argument; after all, Cecille deMille was no stickler for tradition (or, you know, facts). But he portrayed an exodus that *felt* like an exodus, with all the grandeur and magnificence that you associate with the Torah's explanation. It gave me, a second grader with no head for stuffy Maxwell Haggadah-type description, a framework in which to understand the real events of Pesach. When we sat down for the Seder each year, it was easier for me to feel that I myself went out of Egypt, because I could see the thousands of angry soldiers waiting at the shore; I remembered the gallons of water (non-CG water, speaking of miracles) parting at the middle. No, the movie wasn't accurate, but I don't think anyone expected that much from it. It captured the awesome and celebratory feel of Pesach—*norah*, in Hebrew. As a kid, it made me proud to be Jewish. Hey, God clearly was not to be messed with, and He was looking out for me and my people. It completely made up for the fact that I didn't get chocolate bunnies like everyone in the comic strips.

The years progressed, but "The Ten Commandments" retained its place in our Pesach preparations. I could no longer watch it with a straight face, but the many hours of wiping and

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The Matisyahu Phenomenon: Another Jewish Reggae Artist's Perspective

BY ARI BEN MOSES

Editor's note: Ari ben Moses is a Chicago-based Jewish reggae performer. Last month, while I was compiling my article about Matisyahu for the Observer, I sent him the draft and asked him for his own opinion, as a Jew performing the same kind of music as Matisyahu but without the same level of success, regarding Matisyahu's big break. His response surprised me in its thought-provoking warmth and support for Matisyahu's accomplishments. Ari ben Moses' unique answer to my article is printed below. You can learn more about his band at aribennesband.com.

-Perel Skier

"Holy Mount Zion, Holy Mount Zion, JAH sitteth in

Mount Zion, and rules all creation, yeah..." ~ Bob Marley, from the song "Jammin'".

Reggae music has been greatly influenced by Jewish culture and Scripture since its inception in the 1960s. The earliest hits of the genre, "The Israelites" by Desmond Dekker and The Melodians' "Rivers of Babylon," clearly demonstrate this influence, the latter using text straight from the Psalms of David. This element became even more pronounced in the 1970s with the development of the "Rockers" Reggae style. In "Moses...The Prophets," Peter Tosh sings: "Remember Moses, Remember Moses, him not dead, him not dead...that man a trod

earth still..." Bunny Wailer, a founding member of the original Bob Marley and The Wailers, has similar lyrics in his song "Rastaman" which states, "Rastaman a lion, Rastaman from Zion. Remember Jeremiah, he was a Rastaman, and even Isaiah, he was a Rastaman."

The very anthem of Reggae music, "Satta Massagana," has an Amharic title which means "give thanks to G-d," and its lyrics are reminiscent of Tehillim: "The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords sits upon His throne, and He rules us all; look into the Book of Life, and you will see that He rules us all." In "People Funny Boy," the biography of great Reggae pro-



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DEENA HASSAN
PRESIDENT OF SCWSC

In the words of a famous professor, the year went by "in the blink of an eye." Last year at Yom Ha'atzmaut, my first school-wide event as President of Stern College for Women, I was approached by my predecessor who told me that my term had begun, and before I know it, it will be over. I did not believe her, but Molly, you were telling the honest truth. Sitting down to write my final article in the last Observer for this year is making me reflect on what this year meant to me and the student body.

Firstly, I would like to thank the students of Stern College for allowing me the opportunity to challenge this campus. I challenged you to allow yourself to get involved and to unify. I must say you rose to the challenge and emerged victorious. The activity and participation on our campus has been extremely overwhelming. *Yashar koach* to the 250 women who played Survivor, and all the women who waited for an hour and a half to see the elephants walk down 34th Street!

The enthusiasm that was found on our campus this year

was due to the women that sat on the SCWSC board: Nava Streit, Sharon Shmuel, Dahlia Sherman, and Liz Shelton. Each one of the board members this year had the opportunity to create and follow through with successful program ideas. Fiesta Night, Survivor, Comic Hypnotist, Comedy Night, Blow Out Clothing Sale, New Roc City, and Yom Ha'atzmaut, are only a few of the events that would not have been successful without the constant dedication of our board. It is with their help and support that I was able to make it through the hard times. Thank you.

In addition to the strong women I worked with on my board, I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to my co-presidents, Rivka Kahn and Hillary Lewin. Being able to work with these women always kept me on my toes. They were inspiring, exciting, and always had surprises up their sleeves! I have learned so much from working with you, I wish you much luck in the future, and I am positive that the world will only hear great things from you in the future.

There are many different dynamics to being a student leader on college campuses. One of the main aspects of it is allowing yourself to learn from everyone that is around you. Every person I have interacted with this year has taught me tremendous lessons that I will carry with me throughout my life. Dean Braun, Dean Hait, Rachel Kraut, and Shana Glasser: you have taught me some of the most important

lessons. You have pulled me up when I fell, and you were my support when I was standing. These role models in Stern College are extremely knowledgeable in every aspect of life. I hope that every student takes advantage of the resources that they provide for us; I know I did.

I am leaving Stern College with a range of emotions. I am excited to take the next step in my life. I am nervous as to what lies in my future. I am sad that my term has ended. But I am extremely confident walking away, leaving the students of Stern College for Women with the new student leaders. The women you have elected as your new student leaders are excited, creative, and motivated.

When I was home recently, my rabbi turned to me while our families were enjoying a Friday night meal. He asked me "Deena, what was the one thing you learned this year?" Granted, we have all asked ourselves this question numerous times, but looking back, searching for the one thing that stuck out in my mind was extremely difficult. And I think that I will walk away from this university knowing that sometimes things get difficult and it is hard to continue but you have to remember: it's just an acorn that fell; the tree is still beautiful.



RIVKA KAHN
PRESIDENT OF
SSSB STUDENT COUNCIL

It seems like it was just last week that I was sitting right here staring at this blank screen trying to write my first article of the year for the Observer. It was at the time extremely overwhelming, I had all these visions and ideas and big plans for the year ahead and couldn't wait to share them with everyone and get them started. Now at the end of the year I look back at what was, and I am feeling a sense of sadness. It is sadness due to this very eventful year coming to an end.

This was no ordinary year in Sy Syms. Not all the occurrences were pleasant. Without having an official dean there were a lot of students who felt the school was in limbo and unstable. And of course the fact that we are losing a few great members of our faculty who have been here for quite some time does not help in any way to squelch those feelings. However, through those times something good came out of it; students responded and tried to take action by raising their voices. Isn't that what we've been taught to do, and encouraged to do, all our lives and especially as

future leaders of the Jewish community? Well, if that is the case, and in my humble opinion I certainly believe it to be, I'm proud to have been a part of such a great year and time in YU.

This year I was truly privileged and lucky to be working with Deena Hassan and Hillary Lewin with their respective boards. No one knows how much work these fellow students put into every event from the smallest to biggest-scaled concert/chagigah. Thank you to my board that has been a tremendous source of support and help, seeing as how we worked together this year to give you the students as much as possible.

I really feel lucky to have been a part of such a wonderful and talented team and something much greater than I might ever be able to participate in again, mostly because where else am I going to be president of a student council? But either way I will take with me what I've learned and I wish that everyone can just take the time out to really take advantage and stop and see what is going on in YU. There is something for everyone and on almost every night of the week. Get involved and make the most of your time here. I most certainly did and all I can say is...it was priceless.

POINT-COUNTERPOINT

Choosing the Valedictorian

BY SHOSHANA FRUCHTER
AND ESTHER GENUTH

As the end of the year approaches there is much speculation as to who will receive the honor and award of valedictorian. It is interesting that the undergraduate students of Yeshiva University maintain different policies with regard to the process of choosing the recipient. Whereas in Yeshiva College, the students are given choices of whom to vote for, in Stern College for Women solely the administration is given that role.

The criteria that determine valedictorian status should be mainly based on grade point average. While college is a time to explore interests and serve the broader university community, it is primarily an academic institution. Academic achievement and diligence therefore should be the valued and qualifying requirement for each candidate. Maintaining a high GPA is difficult and challenging, and should be appropriately recognized.

While extracurricular involvement in service to the university is an honorable and a worthy judgment of character, it should not be addressed in the decision process as to who should receive the title of valedictorian. An overwhelming number of students are involved in on-campus committees, student councils, and

volunteer programs. To choose students because of specific programs they participate in would be valuing one form of student leadership and involvement over another. Deciding the valedictorian based on grade point average is a less biased and more objective measure when evaluating the senior student body. Although the types of classes chosen and difficulty levels of courses affect GPA, it is still a less biased method of assessing academic achievement.

An additional problem that arises when students cast their votes for valedictorian is that some students may not be familiar with enough of the members of the graduating class to make an educated decision. This gives certain students an unfair advantage above others in a process which should be as objective as possible, and is another reason as to why GPA should be the main determinant in assessing students' overall academic achievement.

One student will stand up at commencement this year to represent the student body to deliver the valedictory address. The student should represent the university's values and ideals. The impersonal method of choosing this student solely based on GPA, a task left only up to a simple computer program, is inappropriate for such a great distinction.

Dictionary.com defines the valedictory address as "a farewell oration delivered by the most outstanding member of a graduating class," and defines "outstanding" as "standing out among others of its kind; prominent." What makes a student stand out among his peers? What makes him prominent? Not merely a strong average.

The student representing the graduates with the academic honor that the title valedictorian implies should of course be at the top of her class. But being "at the top" of the class is a little more complicated than an Excel spreadsheet would have you think. The academic difference between the honored valedictorian and the barely recognized student whose GPA was 0.00001 lower is negligible. Distinguishing between the students merely because of a millionth of a point is ridiculous; considerations like the rigorosity of the students' in questions

courses, their school involvement and positions of leadership they have served in, should be weighed in this distinction.

Besides the silliness of reducing such a great honor to such a small decimal point, the student chosen to deliver the valedictory address should represent the student body. Many a student could lock herself in her room for most of her three—maybe four—years on campus, put her social life on hold and only meet with textbooks, and do exceedingly well in her courses. But that ability, even the success in doing so, doesn't warrant great distinction and honor. The student that represents the student body at commencement should be recognized for managing to balance intense school work with extensive community work.

It is simpler for all those involved in choosing valedictorian to set up the computer program, click a few keys and determine the deliverer of the address. Figuring exactly how much students' involvement should play a role is complicated. Therefore, an objective point-value system, akin to the one used by college admissions, should be developed, or, better yet, the student body itself, the people actually being represented by the speaker, should choose its valedictorian.

Strangers in a Strange Land

BY LESLIE SPINDEL

As I thumbed through my family's Haggadah before the Seder, looking at the pages of modern interpretable pictures, I wondered what meaning my family would pull out of them this year. My family, the children of immigrants, sat around the table, and while we were enjoying our first night of the Seder, we came to the first picture in the Haggadah. Almost out of habit, I asked everyone around the table rhetorically: "What do you think the picture means?" One relative looked around the table, saying, "It looks like illegal immigrants crossing over the border." That comment sparked eruptions from other family members. I wondered—had I just opened a can of worms?

We were all preparing for the Chag on erev Pesach, but thousands of people around the country were involved in nationwide protests for the rights of illegal immigrants. Reflecting from our experiences—weren't we immigrants in Egypt? Doesn't the Torah say to treat the stranger in your midst with great respect, because we too were strangers in a strange land? Living in America, aren't we strangers as well? We know quite clearly that we don't belong here, yet we choose to stay anyway. Who's to say that we deserve to be here, any more than a person who crosses the border? Just because I hold a piece of paper that's stamped "American" doesn't make me better than the person who has none. As legal citizens, we feel as though we're entitled to something special, yet we're not willing to work hard for it. First generation immigrants, and even second, have a mentality not

only to take the jobs natural citizens disdain, but to work through those jobs in the most trying conditions, with minimal pay, only to be snubbed by "real" Americans. We need to appreciate these people, who very often take jobs which put their lives on the line and have health risks that are unimaginable. These people want the same thing that we want: the illustrious American Dream.

I agree that some problems need to be addressed. Open borders are an impossibility—too easy for terrorists to slip through. We also cannot close our borders completely, because people who are in dire need of a place to call home will be denied access to the one refuge in the entire world—the one safe harbor.

As my family sat at the table that night, reading and interpreting more pictures from the Haggadah, a division became apparent among us. One of my close relatives is a legal immigrant, yet she still has a strong sense of sympathy with illegal immigrants. When someone yearns for freedom, yearns for independence and a better life for their children, they will do whatever it takes to bring those dreams into fruition.

I'm not saying that we should kick out all illegal immigrants, or even make it so that the people here who are illegal become legal; I'm simply asking that we remember that we ourselves were slaves in Egypt before God took us out to freedom. These people are coming out of their own personal Egypt, escaping with only the clothes on their back, coming to America with the hope that this is the place where they will be set free. Are they so different from us?

Iran and Uranium – Bad Combo?

BY RACHEL-ALI ELBAZ

With the announcement from the Iranian government that they have successfully enriched uranium, the debate on a pre-emptive strike or full war has once again began to roar. While Iran claims the enriched uranium will be used for nuclear fuel and not weapons, most of the civilized world would agree that this program presents a great threat to the entire Western world. Claiming that their program is irreversible, their supporters argue that Iran has equal rights to enjoy nuclear power and possess nuclear weapons as any other country. Many individuals in a free and civilized society agree with this statement the first time they hear it; after all, Western society values equality, and equality dictates that everyone is entitled to the same rights. However, upon further consideration, this statement does not take into account the fact that with freedom and "rights" come responsibility. Simply put, the enriched uranium must be used for the benefit of society, not for destruction. This is a fundamental point that cannot be ignored as we search for the correct reaction to the Iran crisis.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad claims that his country has no interest in nuclear weapons; they have only the desire to develop the capability for peaceful purposes. But only the naïve can possibly believe such a claim, because in another interview this same man has made statements that called for Israel to be "wiped off the map." Taking this into consideration, it comes as no surprise that Iran has ignored the request of the United Nations to cease the enrichment of uranium.

It is interesting to note that Iran is a member in good standing of the non-proliferation treaty

and supposedly has all nuclear activities under the watchful eye of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Supporters of "Iran's right to possess nuclear power" claim that it would be impossible for Iran to build a nuclear weapon with the advance inspection process of the IAEA. Impossible would be a fair term, had Iran allowed the IAEA to verify their claims, but it did not. Furthermore, if Iran had even



accepted the offer from Russia to process uranium in Russian facilities, the uproar on this issue would be dull and boring; however, Iran refused this offer.

The political and diplomatic relations between the West and Iran are complex and fickle. Part of the problem is undoubtedly based on the fact that many in the international community have expressed the fact that they would not support war in Iran. The international community and particularly the European community do not understand American foreign policy and believe that the United States answers to no system of accountability. In truth, the United States is the sole and unquestioned super power on earth; however, the citizens of this country generally harbor a great sense of responsibility. Furthermore, I believe it is the very political institutions that the West in general and the United States in particular were built on, that are the foundation to a world that is secure for all.

Diplomacy would of course be the best method to solve the

problem. Tireless efforts have been and continue to be advanced in this regard. The reply from Iran is a series of rants and threats about suicide bombers. This is shameful, uncivilized and nothing less than the mark of perverted thinking. The United States must not allow itself to be bullied. If one comes to destroy us and our way of life, we are responsible to destroy them first or at least destroy the tools with which they plan their acts of destruction. Furthermore, we must remember that when the crazed individuals who are bent on the destruction of others put their plans in motion, they often murder, torture and permanently injure their own citizens as well as the intended victims.

Colonel Sam Gardiner is a military analyst who attended a conference on Middle East Security last month. He presented an estimate that at least 400 targets would need to be destroyed to put a stop to Iran's nuclear program. He added that a successful long-term solution would require a broader military program. While this is disturbing to many, it may be the easiest solution to a problem that will probably become very nasty. Suffice it to say that while diplomacy sounds like the best idea, the reality of the situation is much different.

The brutal and devastating destruction of nuclear weapons has only been witnessed once. Shamefully, it was the United States that unleashed this horror, an event that claimed thousands of innocent people. Some died instantly, some suffered for days, months, or years, and others have dealt with pain that has been physical, emotional and psychological all their lives. These facts are reason enough for the United States to shoulder the responsibility of preventing nuclear devastation from ever reoccurring.

Hatikvah's Back Story

BY MYRIAM CAMHI

Of all of Israel's national symbols, it is our national anthem, Hatikvah, which has the most interesting back story, although it is generally unknown.

Naftali Peretz Imber composed the song around 1878, first introducing it to the settlers of Rishon Le-Zion who successfully popularized it to the extent that it was often sung when the Zionist Congress gathered, and it was eventually instituted as the official song of the Zionist movement. However, it is a fact generally ignored that Hatikvah was never officially established by the Knesset as the national anthem of the State of Israel, until November of 2004.

It is also interesting to be aware of the response of religious Zionists to Hatikvah. Rav Kook, for instance, disagreed completely with Hatikvah's message, even though he was not opposed to singing it. Nevertheless, he wrote

an alternate poem in response to it, called Ha'Emunah, which he hoped would replace Hatikvah as the national anthem.

The basic difference between the two poems is their respective attitudes. Hatikvah was written in the midst of the uncertain times of the first aliyot and consequently carries some sort of pessimistic feeling to it, believing that the only hope for the survival of the Jewish "flame" is if at least some Jews remain who are willing to keep it lit. Rav Kook, on the contrary, expresses a more optimistic outlook. He believes that the root of Zionism is not in the "last Jew" who finds the strength to continue, but in the Torah which is everlasting.

In a line-by-line comparison of the two songs, it becomes clear where Rav Kook agreed with Imber (if he kept the line) and where he disagreed (if he inserted a sharp and contrasting response).

The first stanza in Ha'Emunah responds to the first two in Hatikvah. Although both

describe the feelings of the inner heart, Imber talks of only one heart and one soul who are alive and anticipating the return to Israel, showing that this age old hope has not been lost. Rav Kook, on the other hand, establishes the fact that all of our hearts are forever filled with the belief of our return to Israel, and he uses a stronger and more optimistic term – faith – to describe our feelings. Furthermore, Imber hopes to return to a land with only historic importance, while Rav Kook regards it with religious significance and holiness, although both refer to Israel in the same term.

The third stanza of Hatikvah stands in contrast to the second in Ha'Emunah. Here, Imber implies that everything is lying on the shoulders of one individual who has not abandoned his faith, someone similar to Herzl. Without this individual, we have no hope. Although this seems optimistic, Rav Kook responds

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Academic Advisement Corner

With the year coming to a close, those of us at Academic Advisement wish you well on your final exams and your summer plans. For those graduating, we wish you the best with your future goals and would welcome hearing from you.

Next year we will continue to help students:

- With their junior and senior checks,
- Manage their schedules,
- And hear their concerns.

The Study Clinic will continue and is considering expanding its hours. We are interested in knowing from students which hours they prefer. Please email Dr. Gumora @ gumora@yu.edu with your suggestions.

The following helpful hints should make your final exam studying more successful:

Remember to turn chapter headings into questions. The answer to the question is the essential material to learn.

Remember to sort and organize material into categories when applicable. This will help you to learn the information more effectively.

Leave enough time!!!! The brain can only absorb so much material in one sitting.

Think positively. Negative thinking uses up too much energy and you need all you have on studying.

Seek help if you need either studying or hand-holding support.

All the best from,
Miriam Schechter, Director
Rochelle Mogilner
Dr. Gail Gumora

An Optimist Among Us

BY JAIMIE FOGEL

It is not uncommon to hear complaints around the Stern hallways. Whether it is about the food, the dorms or the classes, there is a rapidly growing list of things that will never be quite good enough. It is no secret that people love to complain. It has been the backbone of survival, and more famously, the backbone of the Jew's survival, for centuries. But why do we focus on the petty negatives? We all chose to attend Stern because it had certain benefits and opportunities no other college offered. If after a long year of tests, papers and stress, you find yourself scrambling to remember the reasons you may have chosen Stern, read on, and I'll try to refresh your memory.

Attending an all-women school has many benefits. Firstly, the students here are all Orthodox. Let me say that again—they are all Orthodox! How lucky are we to go to a college where we don't have to explain why we wear skirts in the wintertime; where we need not offer an explanation why our term paper just couldn't be finished over the holiday break; where an English teacher can be sensitive enough to let her stu-



dents know when assigned reading contains lewd subject matter and offers other options if they so prefer. We can, potentially, make friends with everyone we pass in the hallways; right from the start, there are commonalities and mutual understandings that both parties share. We are not forced to be friends with whoever goes to the Hillel on Shabbat and hope they really are frum. We have options and freedom of choice in our social lives.

And on the topic of "holiday breaks," it is practically impossible not to realize how incredible it is to never have to miss class for the constant celebrating we Jews love to do. My friends in secular college dread the *chagim*. It's torturous to make up three or four missed classes, to ask professors for extensions and to get back on that plane the second *yom tov* is over to be in school on time for class the following morning. In addition to vacation coinciding with the *chagim*, for all one-day holidays or memorial days on which we do have school, there are wonderful programs, speakers, and learning opportunities provided right here on campus. Before every major *chag*, the Talmud Program runs a program where they serve Dougie's (a must at every Stern event) for

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Stern College Produces Future "Jeopardy" Contestants?

BY DEANNA FRAZIN

The theme song to "Jeopardy"—"America's favorite quiz show"—is common knowledge. It seems as though everyone knows that intoxicating, nerve-racking little ditty. What is less known to the general public are the answers—rather, questions—to "Jeopardy" itself. It's to be expected and acceptable that many people would not know such complicated things as the population of Malaysia. Unacceptable, however, is when people do not know the rudimentary, basic facts that are too simple to even gain mention on "Jeopardy."

In my experience at Stern I have found that a large population of the student body is unfamiliar with things that 4th graders should know. I have witnessed and taken surveys on how many American-born Stern students know about, for example, the Civil Rights Movement. The results are appalling—many students have never even heard of it! This event is so significant to our country's history that it is shocking that an American-raised college student has no knowledge of it. At Stern, I have also had the pleasure of witnessing many students from America who are unaware of basic US geography. Attention: Chicago is not in Ohio, and no, Washington DC is not in the middle of the country.

Yeshiva University's motto is "Torah U'Madda." It seems as though the students at Stern have the Torah part down cold; the Maddah portion, however, is disconcerting. Of course Stern is a very fine and reputable academic institution; nevertheless, the fact that a student can go through her entire college experience and not know about very basic events in US history is alarming.

It could be that these students' elementary and high schools are to blame. One may argue that in Jewish schools there is no time to teach these "secular" topics. However, many historical events can also be tied to both Jewish history and Jewish ethics. The Civil Rights Movement involved many efforts by Jews as well. Jewish schools should bend over backwards to teach students about any global events which connect to Jewish ideals and the notion of *tikkun olam*. A person

America. When a country harbors your people—for we are only guests in this country—it is necessary that you learn something about your own basis of existence. Everyone at some time in their lives is going to have to deal with the secular world; one must be prepared for this in every aspect. I am not saying that one should go out and memorize the Declaration of Independence, nor should they memorize every world capital. However, a little basic knowledge is useful and necessary in everyday life.

Since it is too late to go back in time and teach the students what they should have learned in elementary schools, Stern must take this problem into its own hands. Perhaps there should be more secular requirements at Stern. Through any means necessary, graduates of Stern should emerge from school with a well rounded and excellent knowledge



should not be overly consumed by secular society; however, one must face the truth. Stern College is located in New York City, the center of the United States of

base and education. After all, who knows—you may even be a contestant on "Jeopardy" one day.

The Matisyahu Phenomenon

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Reggae circuit for almost 20 years.

Rebbe Soul is another West Coast artist who has performed Jewish Reggae for many years, and King Django, a dancehall singer from NYC who many people are familiar with, has long been combining Jewish ideas with modern Reggae sounds. He, too, is very respected on the European Reggae circuit. My own experience comes from working as a keyboardist and singer for Tuff Gong Records, along with my efforts on the Reggae Sunsplash tour. I even performed in West Africa as a part of one of the first Jamaican Reggae festivals to reach there, alongside Steel Pulse and Kymani Marley, son of Bob Marley.

This brings us at long last to Matisyahu, a wonderful dancehall-Reggae style toaster, who has developed a following larger than any other Reggae artist today with the exception of Sean Paul (who happens to be from a Jamaican-Jewish family). Matisyahu's style is authentic, his technique is well-developed, and he has gained the respect of even the Caribbean Reggae music

scene itself. While I do know many non-Jamaican Reggae singers who could perhaps claim to be more talented and experienced (both American Rocker T. and Gentleman from Germany are more technically advanced and better produced), Matisyahu has managed to reach an audience far outside the boundaries that confined these other artists. The reason for this "phenomenon," as you called it, is simple: Matisyahu has a dedicated, organized, and wealthy religious group solidly backing him from his very first concert in NYC. The Lubavitcher Hassidim have made Matisyahu a priority in their efforts to spread their own message about Judaism to the world at large. As you know, the Lubavitch have long had a policy of reaching out to people in both the Jewish and secular world, unlike most of the other Hassidim who largely keep to themselves. Obviously, they have no objections to making Matisyahu their spokesperson to the world, both Jewish and Gentile.

I have no problems with this, personally. Many organizations, be they religious, political, or industrial, have used singers and musicians to advertise their par-

ticular agendas to listeners worldwide. Perhaps there is a "kitsch" factor, as you suggested, but Matisyahu is much, much more than a gimmick. He is very skilled at the Jamaican patois dancehall style, and his lyrics are heartfelt and ethical without being overly moralizing. As someone who has accompanied many of the biggest names in Reggae music (I have performed with Maxi Priest, Junior Reid,



Burning Spear, Sister Carol Shinehead and Ijahman Levi, to name a few), I can assure you that his abilities are genuine and his talents are developing quickly. He will soon be able to take his place beside some of the greatest names in the genre without compromise. I enjoy his music, and his widespread appeal has actual-

ly increased the number of demands that I get to bring Ari ben Moses Band around the country to perform. He also has a reputation for being a sweet and friendly person, and that says a great deal in this business.

I believe that Jewish music is not just for Jews, just as Judaism and The Torah itself are not just for Jews. Judaism has profoundly affected many religions, cultures, and peoples outside of its own sphere. Our laws, stories, ancestors, history and culture are an essential element of the Human experience. I believe that we are all at our best when we seek to share our best efforts with others. How could it not be a *great mitzvah* to bring the beautiful, exciting, engaging and heart-warming sounds of Matisyahu and his band to the all the peoples of the world? His message is consistently positive and optimistic, instilling absolute faith in the Most High to all who hear it. Could this possibly be wrong? I think not!

Honestly, I have no understanding of how it could be better not to share something so wonderful with the rest of the world. Matisyahu has opened the hearts of thousands of people to Judaism, who probably never

gave it much thought before hearing his music. Whatever or whoever has created this "Matisyahu Phenomenon" can only serve to bring people to learn more about Judaism, and I am sure that he has brought millions of young Jews a renewed interest in their religion and culture, as we have all seen recently.

In the most positive light, Matisyahu, with the help of the Lubavitch community, has succeeded in showing that being Jewish can be "hip," and that we are not out of touch with the most cutting-edge aspects of world culture. Being an active part of any system, whether it's a family, congregation, or community, brings success to both that system and ourselves. Being an active part of the world is most certainly a great mitzvah, and I praise Matisyahu for putting aside trepidations about traditional restrictions in order to make this profoundly Jewish contribution to Reggae music and the all peoples of the Earth.

NEWS

Middle East Experts Address the Future of Israel

BY ALANA RUBENSTEIN

In its last event of the year, the Marsha Robbins-Wilf Scholar-in-Residence Program sponsored five well-known Middle East experts to discuss the impact of the Palestinian and Israeli elections on the region's peace process. The men and women who filled the Schottenstein Cultural Center were addressed by Ambassador Dennis Ross, former United States special envoy to the Middle East who is currently a counselor and distinguished fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy; Shibley Telhami, the Anwar Sadat professor for peace and development at the University of Maryland and nonresident senior fellow at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy Brookings Institution; Avraham Sela, former chair and current senior lecturer at Hebrew University; and Bryan Daves, assistant professor of Political Science at Yeshiva University. Leon Charney, who former US president Jimmy Carter called the "unsung hero" of the first Camp David negotiations, moderated the discussion, which was being taped for his television show "The Leon Charney Report."

The panel, as mentioned by Daves in his opening remarks, was arranged to shed light on where the Middle East is headed,

specifically with regards to Arab-Israeli relations. Both groups have recently had elections that brought monumental results. Hamas took over the Palestinian government and the centrist party Kadima won the most Knesset seats in Israel. Being that neither party has ever been in power before leads to the obvious question of what happens now, a query the speakers were eager to answer.

Charney began the discussion with former Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)



Chairman Yasar Arafat. Three of the five speakers had met him at various points in their careers. Ross described him as an "icon to the Palestinian people" that put the Palestinian cause on the map, but was quick to acknowledge his shortcomings. Ross said he could have facilitated peace in the region but chose not to. Charney and Telhami also had conflicting reactions to the leader. They were both quick to describe him as intelligent, but Charney added that he was also duplicitous, while Telhami recalled that his

superficial knowledge of American foreign policy was troubling.

The conversation then moved to current Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and what the Hamas victory means for him. Sela believes that Abbas is in trouble since he must work with a new government that has a completely different outlook than him. "[It was] not just a change in government," he explained. The victory marks a change in ideology, a change in regime and a change in the socio-economic group represented.

Yet, if Abbas is in trouble, the panelists agreed that Hamas was in trouble as well. Ross and Daves pointed out that the group is in debt, a crisis that will not just go away. International Banks have recognized the US position of refusing to send Hamas funding, and many of them are following in her footsteps.

The next leader Charney brought up was former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. While he is currently not involved in politics, a fact Charney is mourning, his policies are still present in Israel. "[Sharon] settled on a concept of separation before Hamas won," said Ross. Their victory is the embodiment of a rejection of peace, proving that separation, a policy that indicates that the

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Council Elections Bring New Leadership to SCW

BY YAFFI SPODEK

Elections for 2006-07 Stern College for Women Student Council (SCWSC), Torah Activities Council (TAC), Sy Syms School of Business Student Council (SSSBSC), and class boards were held on Wednesday, April 25, after an intense week of campaigning. Although several candidates ran unopposed, the school walls were bedecked with creative, eye-catching posters, featuring campaign slogans that urged the students to vote for the various contenders.

Elizabeth (Liz) Shelton, newly elected president of SCWSC, is not a newcomer to the world of student leadership, having served as treasurer of SCWSC this past year. "I enjoyed being treasurer and really got a feel for what the students need and like," remarked Shelton. "I decided that as president I can do a lot more, especially things I wasn't able to accomplish this year." Making up the rest of SCWSC is Adina Orenstein (SCW '07) as vice president, Shoshana Michelson (SCW '07) as treasurer, Rena Wiesen (SCW '08) as recording secretary, and Karen Okrent (SCW '08) as corresponding secretary.

Shelton hopes to unify the student body within Stern, as well as between the Wilf and Beren campuses, and wants students to be proud that they go to SCW.

"With school-wide games and events like Survivor, I hope to close the gap that students sometimes feel towards each other," Shelton revealed, describing some of her goals for next year. Her priority is that every student's voice should be heard in forums like this year's "Raise Your Voice" meetings, so that students can express themselves and let SCWSC know what they think needs to be changed or improved.

President-elect Shoshana Fruchter (SCW '07) will lead TAC for the upcoming school year, along with her new board comprised of Vice Presidents Rebecca Barnett (SCW '07) and Shoshana Agatstein (SCW '07), Treasurer Atara Lindenbaum (SCW '07), and Secretary Erin Cooper (SCW '08). Fruchter's main objective as president is to unify the SCW Torah community through encouragement of greater student involvement in TAC. She plans to do this by introducing new programs and continuing those that are already running successfully. "I plan to work toward SCW being not merely a haven from the secular-college scene," said Fruchter, "but a cultivating and opportunity-filled environment, which challenges, while encourages, women to continue their religious and spiritual development with

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New Professors and Courses are Being Offered Next Semester

BY CHANIE DINERMAN

With the spring semester virtually over, students are beginning to explore their options for the upcoming fall. Aside from the regular classes offered by returning staff members, many new professors will be joining the Stern College for Women (SCW) faculty and many new courses will be instituted across the board in all areas of study. These opportunities will allow students exposure to new topics and ideas, adding a little flavor to the standard course offerings.

The biology department is welcoming two new faculty members to expand their course selection and research opportunities. Dr. Margarita Vigodner, who specializes in male fertility, will be joining the Biology Department at SCW, leaving her current position at Rockefeller University. She will be teaching advanced biology classes in epidemiology and reproductive biology, and will be setting up her own research lab involving SCW students. There will also be a

research associate in the Biology Department for the first time. Julia Grushko, an SCW graduate who is finishing up her Ph.D. at Sakler Institute of Graduate Biomedical Research, will be available to assist students, particularly honors students conducting research for their honors theses. A one-credit course meeting every other week will also be offered to teach biology majors how to critically read and analyze scientific articles.

There are also many welcomed newcomers in the Judaic Studies Department. Dr. Rabbi Kanarfogel was particularly enthusiastic about the new additions and plans he has for the Judaic Studies curriculum. "A lot of what we are doing is in response to what the students want," he explained. Per requests, close attention is being paid to all levels of study.

Rabbi Daniel Wolf will be teaching three courses in halakha next semester. He currently teaches in the Graduate Program for Advanced Talmudic Studies (GPATS). Rabbi Shmuel Hain,

who also teaches in GPATS, will join the SCW faculty as well, teaching a second advanced Gemara *shiur* due to increased interest. Rabbi Mordechai Willig, Rabbi Dr. Sol Roth Chair in Talmud and Contemporary Halakhah at RIETS, will be teaching both a Hilchot Shabbat class and a class in *Yoreh De'ah* on the Beren Campus next semester.

In other areas of Judaic Studies, Rabbi Dr. Sasha Pecaric will be joining the Tanakh faculty. Rabbi Pecaric has been the rabbi in Warsaw, Poland and has written his own *peirushim* on Tanakh. His interesting approach to Tanakh, which combines philology and *parshanut*, will serve as a particularly fascinating addition. Joining him will be Mrs. Sarah Greer, principal of a school in New Haven, Connecticut, who will be teaching on an advanced level.

Rabbi Kanarfogel plans to further develop the halakha curriculum by offering classes in

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Yeshiva University Remembers on Yom HaShoah

BY SHAYNA HOENIG

Yeshiva University (YU) and its students, like most of the Jewish world, are committed to remembering the atrocities of the Holocaust. On Monday night, April 24, men and women gathered in the Levy Lobby of the Beren Campus to commemorate the Holocaust. The event, sponsored by TAC, SOY, YUPAC, and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), included lectures that focused not only on the past, but more expansively on the present in spite of the past.

The program began with the lighting of six candles, representing the six million Jews who perished in Europe, and a moment of silence. Then Rabbi Jacob J. Schacter of the Center for the Jewish Future (CJF) delivered the first lecture, entitled "Historical Significance of Yom Hashoah." Rabbi Schacter offered a historical analysis of the day's origins, discussing what preceded the creation of the day, originally called *Yom Hashoah V'Mered Hagolaot*

and later termed *Yom Hashoah V'Hagvura*.

He explained that although the Israeli Declaration of Independence recognized the centrality of the Holocaust in the establishment of the State, most *sabras* (native Israelis) were reluctant to associate the newly-formed state with a time period of Jewish History that highlighted what they perceived as passivity on the part of the Jewish nation. Most Israelis were instead inclined to establish a "conspiracy of silence" regarding the general atrocities of the Holocaust. Furthermore, the survivors themselves were hesitant to discuss their experiences, perhaps because they felt they had not been given sufficient time to undergo some sort of emotional recovery.

Yet when Yosef Sprinsack was appointed to a subcommittee in the Knesset in 1951, he pushed for the creation of a day that would be set aside for the sole purpose of remembering the

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Teachers to Return for Upcoming Semester

BY DEBORAH ANSTANDIG

Stern College for Women (SCW) encourages professors to pursue academic endeavors outside of the classroom setting by allowing them to take a semester "off" to engage in research and writing with the hope of advancing their professional development. This past semester, Professors Luders, Silver, Ladin, Levine, Fried, and Stenhouse took a sabbatical in order to delve into their respective areas of expertise with significant results.

Dr. Joseph Luders, David and Ruth Gottesman Chair, Assistant Professor of Political Science, has been in the process of revising a manuscript for his book about the outcome of different social movements. "In the book, I develop a set of theoretical propositions about targets to explain why certain movements are more or less likely to be victorious," he explicated. "I evaluate the merits of my approach by looking at the achievements of the American civil rights movement, and by comparing degrees of success across different areas such as voting rights and desegregation." In addition, Luders presented new research at a conference in Chicago last month addressing the topic of whether "rising economic inequality produces greater political inequality," he said.

Dr. Carole Silver, professor of English, has dedicated the last two spring semesters to external activities. Silver chose to work in Cape Town, South Africa where she can immerse herself in both literary projects and beautiful surroundings. Last spring, she wrote an introduction and notes to a book entitled "A Lady Trader in the Transvaal," which describes a woman's travels in South Africa. This past semester Silver has written a short piece on Cape Town's paintings and sculptures and is in the process of working on a collection of the region's fairy tales with Rebecca Rosenberg, SCW '05 and former editor-in-chief of the Observer. "Everyone reprints 'animal fables,'" said Silver, "but there are wonderful tales of ogres, princesses, monsters, heroes, beauties and beasts taken down by explorers in the late 19th and early 20th century. Many have not been republished; I'm finding them, writing notes and a long introduction." She hopes to include these stories in the curriculum the next time she teaches her course in "Myth and Folklore."

Her colleague, Dr. Jay Ladin, professor of English and director of the SCW Writing Center, used his sabbatical to fulfill a fellowship through the American Council of Learned Societies. His book, "The Book of Anna," a mixture of poetry and prose diary entries written in the voice of a fictional survivor of a concentration camp, was accepted for print,

and he completed "Life Blow," a book of poetry structured according to Emily Dickenson's poem "Death Blow, a Life Blow." Ladin is also completing a book about modernism in which he explores the influence of modernism and language on American politics.

Dr. Michelle Levine, professor of Bible, spent the last semester exploring Nahmanides' literary approach to biblical narrative, focusing on the book of Genesis. Her work is based on the dissertation she completed at New York University where she wrote about the "various literary strategies by which Scripture presents the Biblical personalities and the variegated means by which it develops their character portraiture," Levine said.

Rabbi Aharon Fried, professor of Psychology, also dedicated his time off from SCW to Jewish studies. He wrote a textbook on Jewish education in which he attempts to combine the research he has done in education, psychology, linguistics and Torah. When the book is published it will serve as a guide for teachers of Jewish education. Fried also began developing assessment materials to assist in the evaluation of yeshiva and day school students with learning disabilities. "Currently available assessment tools fail to look at the Judaic studies component of a child's curriculum," he said, "in spite of the fact that in many cases it comprises more than 50% of a child's learning."

Dr. William Stenhouse, professor of History, spent the past academic year (both the fall and spring semesters) at the Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America, an institute at Columbia University, as a research fellow. Participating in regular seminars, he has been researching 16th and 17th century Italian museums. "I am particularly interested in how peoples' experiences in museums affected the sort of history they wrote," Stenhouse said. "I want to show how scholars started to use objects alongside texts as historical sources because of the settings in which they saw and discussed exhibits." In undertaking this project, Stenhouse had the opportunity to share his research with professionals in a variety of disciplines, including classicists, historians, and art historians.

Cardinals, Archbishops Visit

Stern Beit Midrash

BY ALANA RUBENSTEIN

On Tuesday morning, March 28, the Stern College for Women (SCW) beit midrash was filled—and not just with the regulars from Rabbi Kahn's undergraduate Talmud shiur, the members of the Graduate Program for Advanced Talmudic Studies, and a few other women who wanted to start off their day learning were at hand. Accompanying them were 31 members of the Catholic clergy who wanted to understand what it means to be a modern Orthodox young woman in a world where adolescents are generally apathetic to religion.

This was not the first time members of the Roman Catholic hierarchy graced the buildings of Yeshiva University. For the last two years, members of their faith have visited the Wilf Campus in an attempt to establish a relationship with "what they consider authentic Judaism," said President Richard Joel. This year, "we thought it was a good idea to show the women's school was as elevated as the men's," he said.

Prior to clergy's entrance, President Joel briefed the students who were present in the beit midrash. He explained that when Pope Benedict XVI was still Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, he was very interested in having a relationship with YU. Joel made it very clear that it was the clergy who had requested the visit, and that the YU administration was only responding to the request. The group, which consisted of three cardinals and 30 of arch-

bishops and priests, are all "very smart, very textured and very nuanced people," explained Joel, who wish to establish a serious relationship with genuine members of the Jewish community.

A short while after the clergy's arrival, Dr. Rabbi Norman Lamm, chancellor of YU, and Rabbi Zevulun Charlop, dean of the Mazer Yeshiva Program,



Pope Benedict XVI

accompanied them along with President Joel. Although most of the cardinals and archbishops were dressed in their black clergy garb, they all covered up their crosses. President Joel briefly introduced them and a translator interpreted his words into French. The clergy then spoke with some of the women, asking various questions about what they were studying and discussing the value of studying Judaic disciplines.

Sarah Gordon, a first year student in the Graduate Program for Advanced Talmudic Studies, originally from Montreal, addressed the group in French. Then Lynn Kaye, another student in the program, went through their daily schedule and explained the rationale behind it. "We learn these texts because it helps us understand the way we practice nowadays Jewish law," Kaye said. "[It is especially]

important as women because it's only fairly recently we've been able to learn at this level." Elana Stein, also a student in the program, followed by describing how the program allows the women to travel to different communities to spread their knowledge with those who "don't spend their waking hours pouring over texts like we do."

After hearing from the students, the clergymen dispersed themselves among the women in the beit midrash to join their *chavrutot* for a short period of time. "I thought it would be longer," said Adina Orenstein, a junior at SCW, who had a chance to interact with the visitors, yet she enjoyed the experience a lot. "I thought it was really great," she exclaimed. "I didn't find it offensive at all. They obviously have a lot of respect for what we were doing or they wouldn't come to visit at all."

Sharon Weinstein, a student in the Graduate Program for Advanced Talmudic Studies, also had a positive reaction to the visit. "They were all genuinely interested in our answers," she said about the five people she personally spoke with. "[They] had huge smiles on their faces as we were interacting with them and responding to their questions." Some of these questions included why some of the women had their hair covered, why there are no scheduled prayer services at SCW, and what specific subjects were being learned. "They

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Yeshiva Visits Fertility Clinic

BY DEBORAH ANSTANDIG

On March 13, the New York Times reported on a trip that YU Kollel Elyon and Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) *semikha* students took to the Genesis Fertility Center in Dyker Heights. Twenty men went to the clinic as part of a course they are taking on Halakha and Infertility in which they engage in sources that deal with the intricacies of halakha about these topics, learning from medical and halakha experts both locally and in Israel. The trip allowed them to explore firsthand the issues they have been learning about.

Rabbi Kenneth Brander and Rabbi Dr. Eddie Reichmann, who co-teach the weekly course, accompanied the students. Rabbi Brander, who is also dean of the Center for the Jewish Future (CJF), holds special certification in these areas of halakha from the Puh Institute in Jerusalem, an institution that has been engaging in the matters of fertility, medicine, and halakha for over ten years. Rabbi Reichmann (MD, Einstein '90, RIETS '97) is both a professor and a doctor of emergency medicine at Einstein's Montefiore Medical Center, and a

writer and speaker on bio-ethics.

As Rabbi Brander explained, the issues surrounding infertility do not escape the Jewish community. Approximately 10% of Jewish American couples grapple with this problem. YU is the first rabbinical school in America to begin exploring the related issues up close from both halakha and medical experts.

And the issues are not so simple. Times reporter Andy Newman captured some of the questions that arise, particularly in regard to women using alternative medical procedures to conceive. "Let's say a woman has a fully functional womb but her eggs are not viable. Her sister says, 'Take some of my eggs.' Who's the aunt and who's the mother?" asked Rabbi Brander in the article. "What is the relationship between son and father where conception happened posthumously? Does the son say *kaddish* (prayer for the deceased) for the father?" The questions are endless.

The trip to the fertility clinic is not the only supplemental activity the students have participated in through the course. Rabbi Josh Joseph, who coordinated the program, recounted a

class session when Dr. Scott Chudnoff, an assistant professor at Einstein and gynecologist at Montefiore Hospital, made a presentation to the students. Rav JJ Schacter was there as well to answer any question which would arise. "The dialogue between these doctors and Rav Schacter produced an amazing synthesis between the science and the *halakha*," said Rabbi Joseph.

He is particularly impressed with the caliber of the young rabbis enrolled in the course. "[They are] *talmidei chachamim* (Torah scholars) who really get it," he said. He stressed that the course is designed to teach young rabbis how to approach *psak halakha* (determining law) in a variety of different circumstances to prepare them for questions they may receive from future congregants.

The students and their larger communities are not the only people who stand to benefit from this course. Rabbi Brander hopes to run seminars on this topic for pulpit rabbis in the tri-state area and plans to develop a video conferencing system throughout the country.

FEATURES

A Look at the Beit Midrash at Stern: Uniting SCW

BY SHOSHANA FRUCHTER

It's not unusual to find yourself walking to an afternoon class in SCW, dodging the women praying in the hallways, staircases and empty classrooms. That's because, according to a recent survey taken by The Observer, almost a third of the women at Stern *daven mincha* in those spaces.

"If I do *daven* in this building, I *daven* in the library or an empty classroom because it's quieter there than in the beis medrish on the sixth floor," commented SCW junior Michal Malik. She was referring to the main beit midrash, located on the 6th floor of the 245 Lexington school building, which is generally crowded most of the day.

The beit midrash, a room made of the combination of two small classrooms, was once able to provide space enough for the women interested in the learning and praying environment it provided, but now, as it services the entire student body and is home to the Graduate Program in Advanced Talmudic Studies (GPATS), which currently has about twenty women enrolled, is filled to capacity.

Adeena Goldstein, also a junior at Stern, finds the beit midrash a suitable place for prayer. Noting the different waves of busyness, she reported, "I find it noisy sometimes, but I realize there is a certain time of day when it's quiet in there, around 4 o'clock, when

the Talmud Program's in class," which serves as a perfect time for *davening*.

The Observer study found that the same number of women *daven mincha* in each of the Brookdale and Schottenstein batei midrash as in the main beit midrash at 245 Lexington, a summer-time trend explained by women's return to the dormitories at the end of their school day and simply praying there. Each group makes up a third of the women polled.

Students *daven* at any and all times during the day around their class schedules, often not having enough time to seek refuge in the beit midrash for *davening*. "Sometimes [I *daven*] in the beis midrash," while at other times, "during my break," SCW junior Tamar Dobkowski explained, "outside a classroom."

A large majority of women pray in their rooms each morning, with the notable exception of fewer than ten women who wake up at least an hour earlier than necessary for classes to pray at the nearby Congregation Adereth-El, on East 29th Street. A handful of women attend the daily services for *mincha* each day, the survey showed.

Some students at Stern lament the lack of community generated by such a setup. A time to meet with the *tzibbur* at Stern made by bringing together the students at Stern with a set time to *daven*, would bring together the women of SCW and help

strengthen the community. Some women wish there were a *minyan* on campus, to serve that purpose. "If there was a *minyan* at 8 [each morning], so many women would go," predicted sophomore Jaimie Fogel.

Women have petitioned Rabbi Kanarfogel for a *minyan* in the morning at Stern, but the project seems impossible, as schedules of at least ten men would have to be significantly altered to arrange the *minyan*. The possibilities for a *mincha minyan* are more feasible since the men in the group could come from outside of Stern to help create the quorum.

Large numbers of people use the beit midrash daily for prayer and learning, and while many have deemed the place "too crowded," like Tirza Schlanger, they continue to use the beit midrash, especially at times they can assume will be less hectic. While a third of the women at Stern currently choose to *daven* in the hallways, staircases and in empty classrooms, many theorize that bringing together all of these women for daily prayer with collection of ten men and the establishment of a *mincha minyan* at Stern would alleviate the traffic in the beit midrash and help unify the student body. As Chanie Dinerman, a woman who makes a daily effort to go to the shul for *mincha*, expressed, going to *minyan* "really balances out my day—it makes me feel like part of the community."

SCW Senior to Travel to Ghana

BY ALIZA PEYSER

Ruth Messinger, the executive director and president of the American Jewish World Service (AJWS) spoke at SCW a little more than a month ago and left the audience inspired. As the students discussed possible ways to become involved, Gavi Mintz (SCW '06) was already planning her trip to Ghana with AJWS this summer.

AJWS is a Jewish organization which responds to all global needs. It assists many different countries and communities regardless of race or religion with development projects that are sustainable. Last summer SCW senior Cindy Bernstein participated in Volunteer Summer Program, exactly like Mintz has planned, and returned to the Beren Campus to prepare the AJWS-YU Alternative Winter Break trip to Honduras.

AJWS runs four seven-week

programs during the summer. Three of the programs are run for young adults between the ages of 18-25 and one program is run for high school students. "This year's projects are building a new school for a village in Ghana's



Upper Volta region; constructing new homes in an area hit by Hurricane Stan last fall in Guatemala; working on a sustainable agriculture project in Thailand; and the high school group will dig a portable water

system in a village outside of Siguatepeque, Honduras," according to the organization's website.

The schedule is grueling. Participants engage in hard labor beginning at the crack of dawn.

The program also includes various weekly discussion sessions. Perhaps most importantly, there is ample opportunity to experience and interact with members of a different culture as well as with members of the American group. Each team is composed of 15 members and two group leaders. The participants come from diverse Jewish backgrounds. The website explains that the AJWS "Volunteer Summer is a pluralistic program that welcomes and accommodates young adults from every stream of Judaism."

Mintz is one of the members of the Ghana team. As an Orthodox Jew, she recognizes

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Dorot: Interconnecting Generations

BY ALYAH COHEN

On a sunny Sunday morning, students from several universities are gathering in front of the office of Dorot, W. 85th Street, for the Pesach Package Delivery Program. A photograph of the group is taken and the participants are directed to a classroom for an orientation. Today they are delivering Pesach packages to the senior citizens of Manhattan.

After the orientation, all the participants receive the names and addresses of the people they will be visiting. Calling beforehand to discuss what time is best for the delivery, the volunteers pick up their packages and are ready to go. Generally, they are very welcomed by elders that appreciate their visits. The bond between young and old is quickly forged as conversations flow about volunteers' lives and study, elders' health and grandchildren.

As directed at the orientation that morning, the volunteers tried to observe the living conditions of the elderly people they were visiting and would later report to Dorot if they discovered that their hosts are unable to do housekeeping themselves and are living in dirty or messy apartments. This way the volunteers act as intermediaries between the elders and Dorot, to better meet the elders' needs.

Dorot is a not-for-profit organization which helps the elderly from every economic class to live with enough food, company

and assistance. "Dorot" is the Hebrew word for generation, appropriate for the organization's primary goals, according to its website, to "foster beneficial relationships between the generations" and to "enhance the lives of older people through a dynamic partnership of volunteers and professionals and the elderly."

Dorot's 32 programs are geared to matching volunteers with homebound elders in New York. SCW senior Annie Berman is the Stern volunteer coordinator in the program. She is in charge of recruiting volunteers for some of Dorot's programs. This year, Berman organized several events on her own initiative to raise interest in Dorot's work. The result is clear: this year's Pesach packing garnered more than twenty women from Stern, making it the most well-represented university volunteering.

Berman, like other active volunteers, tries to visit the elderly as much as possible. According to her, "The elderly people who take part in Dorot's services are really making a statement that they are trying to reach out to someone, to make a connection with someone, that they need people to interact with."

Feedback from the Pesach packages delivery was very good, so Berman strongly encourages people to remember that positive experience and to volunteer on a regular basis. The amazing part of the volunteer visiting is that

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Celebrating Differently: Morocco for Pesach

BY CLAUDIA AMZALLAG

Slama alikoum! When thinking of a vacation, images of open cafes in Europe, or maybe stunning landscapes in Australia, enter your mind, while traveling to Morocco is quite unusual for Americans. However, many people have started to consider Morocco as an ideal place for vacation and particularly during Pesach.

This new trend could be easily explained. After all, located in northern Africa, bordering the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, between Algeria and the Western Sahara, Morocco is an appealing country complete with beautiful sites and a culture to match them.

The trip provides an interesting cultural experience, considering that most people there are Muslims. Although the official language in Morocco is Arabic, since it was colonized by the French, the latter language is used in business, government, and diplomacy settings. (Oh!

That explains why they all speak French!) For those not traveling out east, the closest you've been to Morocco is watching the movie "Casablanca," which, beautiful though it is, is a far cry from spending Pesach in Morocco.

Besides the great culture and the exotic pull of such a vacation, the greatest strength pulling YU students to Morocco is the group of Moroccan students at both YC and SCW which grows yearly. So despite the prevalent opinion that the interaction between the international student population and the Americans at SCW is minimal, the new trend for students to travel to Morocco for Pesach has proved that the two groups have no problem integrating.

Last year, Sarah Danzig, originally from Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, was hosted by Rosine Knafo in Casablanca. She describes her experience as "beautiful" and "warm," but most importantly, "unforgettable." This year, more students were

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CJF Programs Train Future Jewish Leaders

BY ABBY ATLAS

It's hard to imagine life without the Center for the Jewish Future. Posters advertising for summer leadership programs, educational seminars, and missions to Germany plaster just about every inch of free wall space on the Stern College Campus. The programming is so extensive, the beneficiaries so many, yet, amazingly, a year ago at this time, the Center for the Jewish Future (CJF) was only in its inception.

While it is true that many of the programs run by Yeshiva University have been in existence for decades, the advent of the CJF has united them under one umbrella organization. The goal of the CJF is, according to CJF Dean Rabbi Kenneth Brander, to unify the "multi-faceted efforts [of Yeshiva University] to shape and impact the Jewish future." Very dedicated to achieving this ambitious and lofty goal, the CJF hired a talented staff of rabbis, educators, social workers, and other professionals. Rabbi Moshe Bellows, the director of the Inspiring New Leaders Division of the Center, is one particularly unique and accomplished member of the CJF staff.

Bellows, a rabbi, lawyer, behavioral therapist, and former actor and head of his own television and film development company, always knew growing up that he would be "involved in the [Jewish] community," yet did not realize that this involvement would be of a formal, profession-

al nature. Despite the fact that Bellows does not currently practice law and no longer runs a film development company, he says that his extensive education enhances, on a day-to-day level, his performance as a director for the Center for the Jewish Future. Bellows says definitively that he "would be lost without any [one part] of" his educational experience.

It's understandable that his varied exposures would contribute positively to his job, but more mysterious is how and why Bellows got involved in the CJF. After acting on television for five years, and running a successful television and film development company, what could have inspired Bellows to leave the world of business and entertainment last June and accept Rabbi Brander's offer for a position as a director of the CJF?

Bellows says that his inspiration to "leave [the world of entertainment] and give back" was a colleague of his, Rabbi Binny Freedman, director of *Isralight*, an organization committed to helping Jews across the spectrum develop a sense of Jewish pride, where Bellows volunteered as the director of the New York branch. Bellows recounts a crucial, life-changing conversation with Freedman last year, shortly before Bellows' wedding to Dahlia Krukofsky in June. Bellows remembers Freedman telling him, "In ten years [you'll] ask myself 'where are all the Jewish leaders?'" When Bellows contemplated the effects a short-

age of quality Jewish educators and community leaders would have on his future family and on the Jewish community at large, he heeded the call to join the CJF.

Bellows explained that he serves as "in-house consultant" for the various Yeshiva University communal and educational programs. He and his "incredible staff" develop and



Rabbi Moshe Bellows

execute training seminars for YU students before sending the students off to facilitate programs in the Jewish communities. For example, before students traveled to Germany this past January, they attended instructional seminars to learn how to be most effective while there. According to Bellows these "services were desperately needed," because students participating in communal leadership programs had "no formal training" until these seminars were created.

Each seminar's curriculum is unique, made to train the students facilitating that particular program in the most effective way possible. Bellows' educational methodology is to employ "active learning," in contrast to the stan-

dard frontal lecture mode of teaching. Statistically, Bellows argues, his method is far more effective than the standard method. Students who actively participate in the learning process retain 70-90% of the material taught, Bellows claims, as compared with 5-15% if the learning process is non-participatory.

Running these intense, carefully designed seminars is not a one-person job. Working closely with Bellows is talented clinical consultant Laura Freiman. In addition to training the participants of the YU leadership programs with Bellows, Freiman is the coordinator of the Quality Education Skills Program (QUEST), the "flagship program" of the Inspiring New Leaders Division of the CJF. Unlike the other seminars run by the CJF, QUEST is a full one-year fellowship program. QUEST, co-led by Bellows and Freiman, teaches students to, as Freiman says, "facilitate conversations on various mental health issues." Freiman describes that the work environment under the management of Bellows is both "supportive and professional." His style, she explains, "is to empower others rather than to direct them," adding that, "He harnesses the strength of his staff and then empowers his employees to produce their best work."

Judy Goldgrab, director of the Eimatai High School Leadership Development Project, also works with Bellows. This program aims to, as she describes, "encourage [the] stu-

dents to reach their own conclusions on issues facing our community and recognize their potential to impact our community and world." Goldgrab, like Freiman, describes Bellows' new employment as a director at the CJF extremely positively. "Moshe's involvement over the past nine months has strengthened many components of Eimatai."

In addition to the positive feedback from his employees, Bellows' effectiveness as director of the Inspiring New Leaders division of the CJF is apparent from the feedback of the participants. One participant remarked, "We learned to make sure that the message is clear when running a session because...there is no second chance." With the skills acquired at the seminars, QUEST fellows are better equipped to go on to participate in other communal organizations.

Bellows' contributions are clearly impacting the Jewish community with incredible force. His efforts, and those of his staff, are filling a gap within the Jewish community. Bellows, however, is not satisfied with the status quo; he has high hopes for the growth of the Inspiring New Leaders division of the CJF. One day, he hopes that QUEST will not just be an extra-curricular fellowship program, but rather a course, or even major, offered in Yeshiva University. YU is "raising the bar" for Jewish communal work, says Bellows emphatically. "We're creating a movement."

New York's Supermarket Right Around the Corner: D'agostino's Fresh Food Market

BY SURI GREENWALD

Although New York City is known for its fast-paced way of life, there is still a quiet supermarket where you can do all of your shopping without the stress of annoying long lines and a noisy atmosphere that a typical New York City store tends to offer. D'agostino's supermarket provides all of the basic food shopping necessities and more, all under one roof. The upscale supermarket offers fresh meat, fish, fruits and vegetables, snacks, baked goods, drinks, and other food items to its varying customers. You can also pick up any household items, ranging from paper towels to mouthwash to other products, which include make-up, purses, flowers, and electrical items. For the health-conscious, D'agostino's sells a lot of organic products as well, and was one of the first stores to initiate such a line. The supermarket chain sells over 30 certified humane products, meaning the product is made under the supervision of the Humane Farm Animal Care (HFAC), which is an organization in support of humane animal treatment. D'agostino's is also starting to offer sushi bars in many of its

main locations around the city for all those sushi lovers out there.

The store also plans on starting a computer-based delivery option to those who are too busy to go shopping. This way many people, including home-bound residents, who would otherwise have no other option for shopping, will now have access to all of their basic necessities in a convenient way.



D'agostino's supermarket is named after the pioneers who opened this unique store over 70 years ago. Nick and Patsy D'agostino immigrated to America from Italy in the 1920s with the hopes of making a better living. Initially, their means of a living was as butchers, peddlers, and working at the mill. In 1932, the D'agostinos decided to open up a small grocery with the

money they had saved until then. This initial D'agostino's supermarket was located on Lexington Avenue and 83rd Street, and it rapidly grew into the large chain that it is today. Now with over 20 store locations in New York City and Westchester County, Nick and Patsy D'agostino have actualized their dream of success. Today Nick D'agostino Jr. is Chief Executive Officer, keeping the business in the family.

D'agostino's fame rapidly spread and soon became known as New York's Supermarket. Often movies and TV shows shoot scenes in front of a D'agostino's, or have the actors holding bags from the supermarket, to give viewers a true sense of the New York City life.

There are two large D'agostino's located close to Stern, one at 341 Third Avenue at 25th street, and the second at 528 Third Avenue at 35th street. As convenient as the Stern cafeteria is for food, D'agostino's offers much to those who want to stock their refrigerators with very different food products.

To check out any specials or recipes from them, visit their website at www.dagnyc.com.

Hatikvah's Back Story

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with the belief that the individual who will ensure that the Jews will live in Israel for all eternity was the very first Zionist: Avraham Avinu.

Another optimistic aspect appears in Rav Kook's response to the fourth stanza, which ignores the destruction of the Holy Temple and focuses instead on the excitement and joy that we'll have when the third Temple is rebuilt, which he found more appropriate.

This comparison clearly indicates that Imber and Rav Kook maintained two completely different outlooks on Zionism. Imber subscribed to it, because he was tired of persecution and anti-Semitism, but he did not adhere to any religious aspect. His hope was placed on those courageous individuals that were able to hold on to the dream for the sake of everyone else, clearly communicating the message that the land of Israel is the last hope for the survival of the Jewish

people.

Religious Zionism, however, views the return to Israel as something we have known to be imminent for centuries. It's the fulfillment of the prophecies spoken over 2000 years ago, the

promise made to Avraham Avinu which was recorded in the Torah. Ha'Emunah is not about running away from a n t i -



Semitism; rather, it's a cry of longing for the moment when the Divine presence will once more dwell among us. It's our strong faith in that ancient promise that has kept us alive throughout the course of history.

Therefore, although we sing a slightly modified version of Hatikvah today, Ha'Emunah and Rav Kook's message still play a crucial part in religious Zionism's views, and it is important to recognize that there is a more optimistic outlook with regard to our history as a people.

THE ISRAEL SECTION

Halevi Addresses Students on Yom Hazikaron

BY SARAH MATARASSO

"We are here tonight to honor the 22,123 servicemen who have died fighting for our country," began Yael Schiller in her opening remarks during this year's Yom Hazikaron ceremony, which took place in Lamport Auditorium on Tuesday evening, May 3. Before marking the transition from the somber day of Yom Hazikaron to the festive celebration of Yom Ha'Atzmaut, the YU community took an hour and a half to commemorate and honor those who have given their lives in defense of the State of Israel.

After a brief address to the audience in which Schiller emphasized the community's commitment to remembering the fallen soldiers, she invited six YU students to light memorial candles. These six students had either served in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) or performed National Service, Sheirut Leumi. With quiet violin music playing in the background, Sharon Shmuel, SWSC Recording Secretary, recited the poem Magash Hakeseif ("Silver Platter") while TAC President Hillary Lewin, proceeded to read it in the English translation. As they finished, the evening's guest speaker, Dr. Yonatan Halevi, was invited to address the audience.

Dr. Halevi has served as the director general of Jerusalem's Sha'arei Zedek hospital since 1987, lectures extensively around the world, and makes time to personally interact with and treat patients, despite his busy schedule and administrative position. When former prime minister Ariel Sharon fell ill, Halevi appeared on TV as a medical expert regarding the case. Halevi, whose fluent English was clear and whose delivery was quite eloquent, decided to trace Israel's history by explaining his own life story. As he himself put it, "I would like to share my personal history, as it is intertwined with the history of Israel." And intertwined it is: Halevi was born exactly five weeks after the declaration of the State in 1948. He discussed his own life and the story of the young State by grouping the last 60 years into the nearly six decades that have passed since its declaration.

Growing up in Tel Aviv in the 1950s, when there were barely one million people living in the country, Halevi remembers going with his father to listen to Ben-Gurion and Begin speak in Dizengoff Square and what an impact it made on him. "I remember the young vibrant country that wasn't sure it would (continue to) exist... I remember spending time in a bomb shelter during the Sinai Campaign," mentioned Halevi, as he proceeded through

his description of the 1950s.

By the time the 1960s rolled around, Israel population was almost at two million people and he describes the country as having "matured." He explained the impact of the Eichmann trial, how proud people were of the young, 10-year-old Mosad and the amazing work they had done in finding the Nazi criminal who had been hiding in Argentina. He distinctly remembers listening to the testimonies of World War II survivors and the educational role it played in the lives of Israeli youth. This was also the decade when Halevi was to begin his medical training; at 18, he was a member of the first class of medical students at Tel Aviv's Sackler School of Medicine. Unlike many of his peers, he did not begin his army service right after high school. However, it was in the Six Day War that he lost high school friends who were killed in battle. His clinical training took place from 1969-70 and Halevi describes his first exposure to patients with numbers tattooed on



Dr. Yonatan Halevi

their arms. "If you wanted to practice medicine at that time, you had to speak Yiddish," he explained.

In the 1970s, the country's population had reached three and a half million. Halevi spent six months in the Sinai as a "flying physician." He also lost one of his best friends, a pilot who was killed during the Yom Kippur War. During this decade he performed four years of military service as a doctor. He served in Gush Ezion and recalls treating the students at the newly-founded Yeshivat Har Ezion. By 1975, settlements began emerging in Yehuda and Shomron.

In the 1980s Halevi began lecturing in Arab villages, believing that bringing medicine to these areas would bring peace one step closer. He would personally drive patients from places like Ramallah and Jenin and bring them to Beilinson Medical Center, where he worked at the time, to treat them. During Milchemet Shlom Hagalil, Halevi was stationed in Lebanon. In 1983 he began his fellowship in gastroenterology at Yale University and, for the first time, understood that American Jewry and the Jews of the Diaspora have a role to play, although he half-jokingly mentioned that he would be happy for all Diaspora Jews to

move to Israel. Upon completing his fellowship he returned to Israel and, following the first Intifada in 1987, he accepted the job as director general of Sha'arei Zedek hospital. However, Halevi's acceptance was conditional; he would only work in the job if he could also work as the head of a medical center in the hospital and maintain patient contact. He does not regret accepting this administrative role, despite the fact that "I could have treated 10,000 more patients by now" had he remained in his earlier job as chief of the Beilinson Medical Center in Petah Tikva.

The early 1990s were characterized by the massive Russian immigration during which there was a 20% increase in Israel's population, which reached almost six million people. During this time he was exposed to many Modern Orthodox philanthropists who gave him an even clearer picture of the role of the Jews in the Diaspora.

Israel in this decade could not be discussed without first mentioning the current Intifada which has "had a horrible impact on Israel at large, on Jerusalem in particular," said Halevi. Sha'arei Zedek alone has absorbed 40% of Jerusalem's victims of the Intifada from 2000-2004. Halevi described his close relationship with the late Dr. Applebaum, z"l, with whom he had lectured at NYU the day before Dr. Applebaum was murdered in the Café Hillel bombing.

And so Halevi concluded his recounting of Israel's history and his own personal history as well. He then asked, "What do we have after these six decades?" He described the economic and cultural accomplishments Israel has made and the country's progresses in the medical and scientific fields. "I think a country of seven million people that has existed for 58 years should be very proud of itself," concluded Halevi.

Listening to the words of Halevi truly helped the audience appreciate how far Israel has come since its birth 58 years ago. The speech was followed by the recitation of *Kel Male Rahamim* in honor of the fallen soldiers. Also in honor of the soldiers who have fallen in defense of the State, Avi Posnick, vice president of the Israel Club, led the school-wide siyum on mishnayot. Following the siyum, Rabbi Meir Goldwicht, a Rosh Yeshiva of RIETS, delivered a *d'var Torah*. A short video presentation and a ma'ariv service, which included the recitation of special *pirkei Tehillim* in honor of Yom Ha'Atzmaut, ended the evening and marked the transition from Israel's day of mourning to its day of rejoicing.

Israel Club: a Year in Review

BY Yael Schiller

A week before Yom Haatzmaut I was on the phone with a good friend of mine in another university discussing the forthcoming plans for the *chag*. She raised the concern of a low turnout to the event, due to the proximity of the date to finals, and inquired as to how students

leadership, creative ideas or the free food at its events. It is successful because the students at Yeshiva University demand an Israel presence on campus and because they are dedicated to making sure that they constantly keep Israel as part of their lives. A shout-out in a crowded elevator "When's the next Israel Club event?" or "I have an incredible



would come to two events within 24 hours just a week before finals. My initial shock at her genuine concern led me to realize something about this university. To me, Yeshiva University's Israel Club could be summed up in one word: dedication. And suddenly, the entire year was put into perspective.

Every event from fundraising for former Gush Katif residents, political lectures, film events, *garin aliyah*, the shabbaton, winter break mission to Israel, to a lobbying mission in Washington,

idea for an event!" are far from rare in school. We are privileged to be in a university where the turnout for an Israel event is never a concern and where time is only a concern because there is too little of it and so much we want to do.

To the students graduating, unfortunately, there's no guarantee that you will ever again spend time surrounded by so many pro-Israel, highly intelligent people who are such independent thinkers and are so motivated to pursue their passions. The good



and so many more successful events throughout the year, all shared that one common element: dedication.

When over 80 students apply to attend a two-day lobbying mission to Washington, D.C. which takes place in the middle of midterms—that is dedication. When students in Israel for winter vacation take three days of their ten-day break to do *chessed*—that is dedication. When students come out in overwhelming numbers to listen to professionals, politicians, thinkers and experts—that is dedication. When Lamport Auditorium is full for Yom Hazikaron/Yom Haatzmaut just one week before finals—that is dedication.

Israel Club is not the largest club on campus because of its

news is that everywhere you go, there will be at least one such person—and that will be you.

To the rest of us who will remain on campus next year, I am anxious to return to campus next semester. I look forward to seeing what our dedication can do. I have no doubt that the incredible Israel Club leadership next year will display an even greater level of dedication to future programs and will create an even better Israel presence on campus.

This past year has been truly amazing. A day never passed without one of our students leaving an impact on me. I can only hope that somehow I've made an impact on you.

Thank you for everything, you truly changed my life.

Nobel Prize Winner Speaks at YU

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"In the past it has worked quite well," he said, although he has not made calculations for the new coalition, because "if I said something, somebody might take it seriously," he added with a smile.

And there is no doubt that this could very well be true. In addition to being a Nobel Prize winner in Economics, Aumann has a long list of other credentials. In the 1940s, Aumann, who also answers to the name Yisrael, attended Mesivta Jacob Joseph in New York, as well as City University of New York and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Although he was unable to continue simultaneously studying in both yeshiva and secular college, he still has a special interest in the interface of mathematics and Torah. "He is a role model for our students" said Ira Jaskoll, interim dean of SSSB. "He shows how one can be a Torah observant Jew and still reach the highest level of accomplishment, the Nobel Prize."

By the time Aumann gave his final lecture, attended by YU students, faculty and the extended community, he had covered game theory in its conceptual and practical applications, in addition to a Talmudic expansion of his theory. Regarding his personal approach to Torah and

Science, Aumann made a clear distinction between the two areas. Science, he said, "is a way of modeling our observations and in a priori system; acting as a frum Jew breaks down into a code of conduct and experiences." Perhaps his most controversial statement was that "science and religion are not contradicting, but do not particularly support each other."

The responses to this approach were varied. "It was an apt observation that science and many other thought processes are models to describe our observations of the world," commented Avi Narrow-Tilonsky (YC '06), an Economics major. Nina Bursky-Tammam (SCW '07), a Physics major, agreed that Torah and science are not on the same plane. "There was never a need to reconcile the two," she said. "That's what I love...because in the end, I have a religion that I am not going to doubt."

Over 500 people heard Professor Aumann throughout the day. Days later, students on both campuses could still be heard discussing the complexities of game theory. His speeches were both impressive and insightful, and will not be easily forgotten.

Cardinals, Archbishops Visit Stern Beit Midrash

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seemed to have been truly intrigued and inspired by our learning, religion and lifestyle," Weinstein added.

Aside from the individual contact, Weinstein felt that the whole notion of members of the Catholic hierarchy visiting YU was important. "For many reasons it seems that YU acted correctly on both moral and religious grounds," she said. "The cardinals request to come visit YU stemmed from an appreciation and respect for our religion which we should only try and foster. To turn down their request would be doing the exact opposite and, in a world rampant with anti-Semitism, would not be wise." Weinstein also feels that this was a huge *kiddush Hashem*, affording the women of YU an opportunity to be an *ohr lagoyim* (light onto the nations).

Yet Weinstein acknowledged that not everyone is necessarily as comfortable as she was with the visit. "I am generations away from the Crusades and persecutions that our ancestors experienced and recognize how it might be harder for certain people at YU, specifically those of an older generation, to feel as comfortable

as I do with this sort of visit," she said. Other women did not want to be interviewed or named in this article because they were still unsure with how they feel or were uncomfortable with what went on.

After visiting the beit midrash, the Catholic clergy met with President Joel, Rabbi Lamm, Rabbi Charlop and other Roshei Yeshiva to discuss their concerns on a large range of topics, including worldwide morality and how traditional views are increasingly under assault. Two French students also spoke with the visitors about the education and experiences they are getting at SCW.

And while he is unsure whether the Catholic delegation will be coming again in the future, Rabbi Charlop felt that "anytime when people of completely different faiths, particularly Catholics and Jews [since] it's been a very difficult history, meet in a bid to understand each other, especially to meet together on certain value issues and not on doctrinal imperatives, is very important."

A Beit Midrash Double the Size Expected This Coming Fall

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advantageous as a spot for a new beit midrash, as it is the only floor that has a terrace. This terrace space can be built into a porch area, which can be used as a space for learning outside, or it can possibly be turned into an atrium-type area, thereby extending the beit midrash for use all year long. This addition "makes it visually less crowded," Rosengarten said.

Some students have expressed concern over placing the beit midrash on the seventh

floor. "Placing the beit midrash on the first floor would display the value and importance Stern places on learning Torah," noted Ariella Nadler, a junior at Stern College. "The seventh floor will be inconvenient to get to, especially on Shabbos." Concerns such as this are being considered. To make the beit midrash more accessible on Shabbos, Shabbos elevators will be programmed to go directly to the seventh floor, making no additional stops.

Relevant administrators, faculty members, and students will be asked to review the plans

before any final blueprints are agreed upon. "I feel good about the process," says Rosengarten. "The layout will create a much more magnificent space. This is a major step forward in promoting a beit midrash in Midtown as an important aspect in what goes in here." Most importantly, Rosengarten asserted that this new beit midrash will be completed "sometime in the fall of 2006."

Construction on the Beren Campus Begins

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To accommodate these improvements, the current offices in the lobby of the building will be moved to the newly acquired 12th and 14th floors in the 215 and 205 Lexington buildings. The deans' offices, academic advisement offices and registrar's offices will all be on these floors, which will be accessible via the elevators. "[It's] not one-stop shopping," says Rosengarten, "but it's getting closer." Although it will require some juggling, the end result will be more spacious and professional-looking offices. Additionally, like last summer, there will be some renovations

done in Brookdale Residence Hall. There will be a fire sprinkler system installed throughout the building to make it safer and the front lounge will be revamped.

This is only the "first phase in a multi-year project to renovate that building," says Rosengarten, in reference to the 245 Lexington building. "We have a vision and idea... and I think we're on the right track." Some of these ideas include an expanded library that would span over four floors. Unlike now, all the floors would be attached, one on top of the other, by a staircase which would lead up to the second and mezzanine floors and

down to the basement. On the main level of the building would be a reading and study area that would also be connected. A new cafeteria, one with high ceilings and windows overlooking the street, would be built where the reserve library is currently located.

Administrators, deans, food service personnel, librarians and the students have all been consulted for their input since the construction will touch upon many different aspects of the Beren Campus. "I'm very excited about the changes," says Rosengarten optimistically. "[There are] a lot of wins here."

YU Students Rally for Darfur

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aged to send postcards, provided by the Save Darfur Coalition, to President Bush. Additionally, phone cards were distributed to call the White House, to protest the genocide, and to demand that action be taken. On Wednesday, April 26, a Darfur "teach-in" was organized by Cindy Bernstein and Azi Grysman, where SCW and YC volunteers delivered a five-minute presentation to each class about the situation in Darfur, as well as what they could do to help, and information about the rally.

Yeshiva University sent the largest delegation from New York City to the rally. According to Presidential Fellow Rebecca

Stone, "Part of it was a gamble; they ordered six buses and hoped to fill them all. In the end all the seats were filled. Our contingent was just so proud to see the turnout that we had." The blue

causes. Despite approaching finals, students still made it their priority to attend and rally for the sake of humanity.

Nilly Brodt (SCW '08) articulated that she "felt compelled as a Jew who always asks the question 'How could the world let the Holocaust happen?' to attend this rally." Many students echoed these sentiments. Hanan Lieberman (YC '08) stated that "every human life at least deserves a chance—that view is a view that is just part of our Jewish belief system—though should be a world belief."

The large number of students at the rally can also be attributed to YU Roshei Yeshiva Rav



and white YU signs with the slogan "Yeshiva University Students Say: Never Again" were seen all over. The number of students in attendance at the rally displays the university's and the students' commitment to humanitarian

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Arts and Culture

Students Display Musical Talent at this Year's Arts Festival

BY ESTHER FISCHER

On April 4, eight students and a room full of parents, friends and faculty members gathered in the Schottenstein Cultural Center on the Wilf Campus for a night of sublime music. The performers and the pieces they played included Tzippy Alport (piano) playing "Nocturne" by Frederic Chopin; Eitan Stavsky (piano) playing "Prelude in C# minor" by Sergei Rachmaninoff; Esther Fischer (piano) playing "Solfegietto" by Carl Philippe Emmanuel Bach and "Für Elise" by Ludwig Van Beethoven; Yair Shachak (violin) playing "Rustle in the Wind" by Yair Shachak; Jonathan Bedder (piano) playing "Overture from Barber of Seville" by Gioacchino Rossini; Avi Cooper (piano) playing "Intermezzo in G minor" written by himself, as well as "Fast Zu Ernst" and "Traumerei" by Robert Schumann; Saul Rubin (cello) playing "The Swan" by Camille Saint-Saens and "Bourree" by W.H. Squire; and Deborah Anstandig (piano) playing "Bourree" by Handel.

"I was very impressed with all of the performers," Avi Cooper said. "I thought their hard work and love for the music were

self-evident, and I would absolutely help organize it again. Thanks also to everyone in the audience that came."

Following the recital, there was a reception with food and drinks, where those who attended the recital had a chance to express their thoughts. "I realized that I had missed one of my call-



ings in life," said Rochel Chana Moss, a student at SCW. "I love music and attending this performance made me realize how important music is for me." Another student at YC, Jacob Hartz, said, "I was surprised we had such talent at YU."

Many individuals also expressed an interest in participating in future classical music performances. Describing the concert as a "kaleidoscope of sounds which mesmerized the imagination," Yechiel Husarsky said, "We need more of these

types of concerts. People here at YU have become too interested in trying to get ahead in life that they don't take the time to slow down and enjoy what life has to offer—namely the arts." Yair Shachak, one of the performers, said that the classical concert "gave a great chance for musicians to express themselves, something which is very important for the growth of a budding talent." While he thinks that more time and effort should be spent at YU to nurture musicians, such as increasing the space available for practice, he also recognizes that with students' busy schedules, there is not much time for extracurricular activities.

Organized by Yael Dubrovsky and Avi Mintz, this year's Arts Festival also featured a Jewish rock concert with Aharon Razel, Soulfarm, Midnite Remedy and Yaakov Dov Miller; an Art Gallery where students presented their paintings and sculptures; and a Poetry and Prose open-mike reading. Dr. Norman Adler headed the entire Festival, aiming to encourage artists of all fields to share their work and to enhance cultural awareness in a halachically sound environment.

"Never Let Me Go": Life at Hailsham and Beyond

BY SHIRA MARGULIES

Kazuo Ishiguro's "Never Let Me Go" is a story of growing up and learning to understand the world. It is a story of three friends, Kathy, Ruth and Tommy, who are raised in a strange boarding school called Hailsham. As readers, we become acquainted with Hailsham through the eyes of Kathy, who speaks to us in first person and acknowledges that we are reading her story. As a first person narrative, we do not know anything that Kathy doesn't know, and we learn things only when Kathy chooses to inform us about them.

In this way, Ishiguro slowly unfolds the mysteries of the peculiar world in which the students of Hailsham live.

The Hailsham students are special. They must be kept in perfect health so that they will be able to donate their vital organs at a later point. Growing up, the students of Hailsham are aware of this, but they rarely talk about it and purposely turn their attention towards other matters instead. They focus on the guardians —

their teachers — and on their own relationships with each other. Kathy discusses her particular group of friends and especially those most important to her, Ruth and Tommy.

Tommy strives to fit in, but has a difficult time doing so. He is not as inventive as the other students, and since creativity is prized highly at Hailsham (for reasons which we only discover later), Tommy soon becomes defensive and develops a terrible temper. Forced to learn the hard way how to behave properly among other people, Tommy suffers from the taunts of his fellow students and struggles to find himself in the

midst of it all.

Ruth, on the other hand, is a lively girl with an overactive imagination. She often tries to get everyone's attention and fantasizes about being favored by one of the guardians. More importantly, she is also Kathy's best friend. Together, they ride imaginary horses and initiate a secret guard with their friends to prevent the supposed conspiracy against one

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"BODIES . . . The Exhibition": Fascinating or Too Close for Comfort?

BY YARDANNA PLATT

"BODIES...The Exhibition" is a display of roughly twenty corpses and 260 body parts that has been running for several months both in New York's South Street Seaport and around the country. This incredibly well done exhibition was made possible by a technique known as "polymerization," which includes dissecting the materials, immersing them in acetone, and then sealing the bodies in a large bath of silicone in a vacuum chamber which evaporates all fluids and hardens the tissue so that the corpses will not decay. Entire bodies can be seen and theoretically touched because they are frequently not even encased in glass. Accordingly, it is possible to discern every muscle, tendon and hair in an exhibit that is considered to be breathtaking and fascinating by some and "a little too close for comfort" for others.

Walking through the BODIES exhibit can evoke different visceral reactions; visitors can find themselves spellbound by the informative and aesthetically

pleasing displays, but can also find themselves concurrently repelled by the macabre items presented. As Professor Buchenholz, of YU's Music Department explained, "Going to something like this is like passing



an accident on the highway. No one wants to see anything ghastly, but everyone slows down to take a look." One may value being able to discern a regular lung compared to one plagued by emphysema, but at the same time wonder whether it is just as educational and appropriate for the public to gape at a woman's flayed womb and to be able to press their noses against glass encasings of conjoined fetuses.

Another concern regarding

the exhibit is the method of procurement of these cadavers. Whispering rumors have claimed that the bodies were put on exhibition without proper consent. However, according to the BODIES website (www.bodies-the-exhibition.com), all of the organs and display items were obtained legally through the Dalian Medical University's Plastination Laboratories in China. That being said, the website did in fact mention that many corpses and organs were donated by both identified and anonymous sources, without explaining what measures were taken to ensure the rights of those whose tissues that may have been taken without permission.

Although this matter may require further investigation, many wonder if it is ethical to support an exhibit where their obtainment of legal consent was questionable. As Rabbi Weiss of the Stern College Biology

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Max Liebermann: From Realism to Impressionism

BY SARAH GUIGUI

The Jewish Museum is currently presenting an intriguing retrospective of approximately fifty paintings of the German artist, Max Liebermann (1847-1935).

The exhibit opens with "Self-portrait with Kitchen Still Life" (1873), a portrait originally intended for the artist's mother. The painting reveals Max Liebermann in chef's clothes. The first canvases on display, dating back to the artist's debut, revolve around the theme of peasant life, a topic largely explored by the Realist movement. One painting in particular, "Woman Picking Potatoes" (1874), seems to be directly inspired by Jean-François Millet's "The Gleaners" (1857). Both paintings depict poor women in a field attempting to pick up the leftovers from the harvest and make a powerful

statement about the working class.

Beginning in 1873, Liebermann developed a strong inclination for French painting when he left Germany for France. There, he studied the art of Millet, one of the most successful French Realist painters at the time. Impressionists in Paris, such as Manet and Degas, profoundly impacted Liebermann's later style.

"Concert in the Opera House" (1921), for instance, is clearly inspired by Degas. The subject of interest is one that Degas had a known predilection for: the bourgeoisie. Moreover, the angle at which the subjects are presented to viewers is remarkably similar to that which Degas often employed. Other pictures are also typical of the Impressionist style in the way touches of bright col-



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Let "The Year of Magical Thinking" Put You Under Its Spell

BY SARA CHAMAMA

I am hardly the only one who thinks the world of Joan Didion and her magnificent writing chops in her newest book "The Year of Magical Thinking." The people at the Pulitzer Prize must like it a lot, too—it was a finalist for this year's biography Pulitzer Prize. The New York Times Book Review also really liked it, enough so that they put it on a pedestal and complained two weeks in a row that books they reviewed were inferior to and did not reach the same heights as Didion's work ("Didion, a writer incomparably superior to Jong..." writes Ron Powers in reviewing "Seducing the Demon: Writing for My Life," by Erica Jong).

So what exactly is it about "The Year of Magical Thinking" that causes one to sit up and take notice? It's possible that it is Didion's usage of seemingly simplistic language and recalled memories (oft repeated) to compose an exquisite creation that can, and without a doubt will, move even the most hardened of souls. Go ahead. I challenge you to read "The Year of Magical Thinking" and not feel Didion's pain squeeze your heart as well. I'd like to see even one individual read Didion's labor-of-the-heart and not bawl (or at least leak a tear or two).

"The Year of Magical Thinking" could never be mistaken for a happy-go-lucky piece; it is miles away from being anywhere near happy. In fact, the best it does is bittersweet memories of a love once shared and now, alas, forever gone: the type of memories that allow one to smile through their stream tears. But in its quiet rage and anguish, this book manages to weasel its way into the reader's heart, making it haunting and unforgettable.

Joan Didion, famed author and wife of fellow famed author John Gregory Dunne, chronicles her grief in the year following the death of her husband of nearly 40 years. To top it all off, their daughter, Quintana came down with some mysterious disease that forced her doctors to put her in an induced coma a measly five days prior to John succumbing, mid-dinner conversation, to a heart attack. One minute he was there, the next—gone. Or, as Didion so succinctly sums it up in her opening lines to the book, and indeed the only words she could write on this for the first six months following John's death:

Life changes fast.

Life changes in the instant. You sit down to dinner and life as you know it ends.

The question of self-pity.

We follow Didion through the various stages of grief, loss and despondency as she frantically tries to reconstruct the last few days of her husband's life. She pores over the autopsy report looking for clues; she searches John's Word files for what he could have been thinking. Most telling, perhaps, is the title of the memoir "The Year of Magical Thinking" wherein Didion would utilize magical thought that she would wake up and her husband would be lying there beside her. She refused to remove the stack of books in his to-be-read pile for fear he would need it when he returned. While she gave away his clothing to Goodwill, Didion could not bring herself to give away his shoes, for he would

obviously need to wear shoes when he returned. She berates herself for losing the page of the dictionary that John had last opened to—by doing so, she was erasing him slowly but

surely from the world. And all this thinking was placed underneath a seemingly coolheaded and rational exterior, where no one would ever guess at Didion's magical thinking.

Our hearts rend alongside Didion's. How can they not when she writes things such as this:

"I used to tell John my dreams, not to understand them but to get rid of them, clear my mind for the day. 'Don't tell me your dream,' he would say when I woke in the morning, but in the end he would listen. When he died I stopped having dreams."

The book is overflowing with such poignant words and raw emotion. From word to word, from sentence to sentence, from paragraph to paragraph, from chapter to chapter and cover to cover, there is no release from the nonstop pain and feeling, from the piercing words of goodbye from one soul to another.

So, while "The Year of Magical Thinking" may not be a book that cheers you up, next time you feel the urge to have a good cry, put down that trite and manufactured-solely-for-the-purpose-of-making-the-reader-cry Nicholas Sparks novel you have and pick up the real deal—Joan Didion's "The Year of Magical Thinking."

Showcase 2006: Queens for Two Days

BY CHAYA SARAH SOLOVEICHIK

Showcase 2006 was held on Sunday, April 2 and Monday, April 3 at the Schottenstein Cultural Center on the Beren Campus.

Entitled "Showcase 2006: Coronation Day," audience members received colored crowns upon entrance, while SCW students, acting as representatives from many diverse countries, entertained them. The arrangements were as varied as the countries, including the melodic harp playing of Eva Simons, ballet dancing by Olivia Bondarsky, a lively swing dance performed by Yael Sussman and Jodeya Zoldan, and a rendition of Macbeth, the one dramatic piece in the show, performed by Deanna Frazin, Deena Hassan, and Eliana Rudolph.

The tap dancing performance, choreographed by Zoldan and performed by Zoldan and Aaryn Rubin, was especially interesting. Extremely enthusiastic, the two easily drew the crowd's interest as they musically banged away on the stage. Rena Needle executed a great rendition of "O Mio Babino Caro" and Josh Groban's "Cinema Paradiso," while the SCW band, Kan Kan, provided the audience with two spirited songs. And throughout it all, the two jesters, Adina Orenstein and Yonina Schnall, along with royal attendant, Adina

Schwartz, acted as emcees and kept the presentations running smoothly with their quips.

The sound equipment malfunctioned a bit during the first night of Showcase, making it difficult at times to hear the presenters, but it ran more efficiently the next night.



"It was very entertaining, and I was really impressed with the talent," Yael Saden Barach, a senior at SCW, said. "I especially enjoyed the 'Phantom of the Opera' performance, and it left me wanting to see more, although I had never seen the play before."

Rudolph, also a senior, who portrayed the phantom in that piece, initiated the first SCW Showcase, which was performed last year in the fall as "Showcase 2004: A Midsemester's Night Dream" and revolved around a Shakespearean theme. As director of Showcase both this year and the past year, Rudolph explained that the purpose behind Showcase is "to unite Stern students in a way that provides a positive outlet for their abilities, to raise awareness of the talent contained within the Stern stu-

dent body and to join together to raise money for worthy causes."

"It was nice working with people and getting to know them, especially those I would never have met otherwise," said Sussman, who participated in three acts of Showcase, "and here we were backstage together, trying to whisper."

Rivka Slurzberg, who was also involved in three routines in Showcase, expounded on the large amount of effort and time necessary to perfect the performances, sometimes making it difficult to concentrate on other matters, such as schoolwork. But she also acknowledged the need in SCW for such an outlet. "It brought out talents I never knew I had," she said, and mentioned that even after Pesach break, other students who had seen Showcase 2006 were still expressing their satisfaction.

The proceeds from Showcase will be donated to Sharsheret, a national non-profit enterprise established to assist Jewish women confronting breast cancer, and Magen David Adom. Last year's Showcase was held on only one night, with an attendance of approximately 200 and a profit of \$1,500. To allow for Showcase to expand and develop, it was staged on two consecutive nights this year with a total attendance of about 500.

Out of Africa and into Israel

BY ELANA MEYERSDORF

Wonderfully woven and starkly realistic, "Live and Become" will forever change the way you look at Ethiopian Jews. The film follows the life of an Ethiopian boy who is rescued from Africa and brought to live with a French family in Israel. Growing up, he experiences all the hardships of socializing into a new country, in addition to enduring the whispered and sometimes outspoken taunts of classmates and their parents claiming that he is not Jewish. The ironic twist is, however, that he is not.

Slapped goodbye by his mother who commands him to leave her behind in Africa and go to Israel and "live and become," nine-year-old Solomon, renamed Shlomo upon his arrival in Israel, is haunted by the secret he must never divulge. Confiding to the moon each night as if it is his mother, his lower lip trembling and his deep, chocolate eyes brimming with tears, young Shlomo simply breaks your heart.

The fact that Shlomo is not Jewish does not mitigate the pity we feel towards him; in fact, it intensifies it. It is clear that he never asked to be put in the position he is in; it was thrust upon him, and he unwillingly suffers the consequences of growing up, black and gentile, in a white, Jewish world.

Although the audience is also aware that the insults hurled upon Shlomo are actually true, it does not diminish the fact that the

racism he suffers is cruel and insensitive. In this sense, director Radu Mihaileanu acts as debunker of Israeli myth; for all its purports of being a welcoming, democratic haven, there still exists among white Israelis a feeling of superiority that is manifested in hatred.



Mihaileanu illustrates the chasm between native Israelis and Ethiopians poignantly in one particular scene. Shlomo, along with other Ethiopians, receives a letter from the government calling for a physical examination. The physical, however, turns out to be an attempt by rabbis to immerse the Ethiopians in a mikvah. The rabbis, who never had aspersions cast upon their Jewish identity, do not see what the big deal is; they are merely trying to do away with doubt. But the Ethiopians are enraged, pandemonium breaks out, and they run away, incensed at the indignity of trying to be converted to Judaism when they are already Jewish.

In another scene, Shlomo's adoptive mother is approached by the principal of his school, who tells her that the parents of the other children are demanding the withdrawal of Shlomo, due to the

fact that they think he has diseases from Africa. Shlomo's mother, played touchingly by Yael Abecassis (who looks like Israeli Andie MacDowell), shouts at the parents that there is nothing wrong with him, and to prove it, she gets down on her knees and licks Shlomo's face.

Of course, the ending of the scene is rather humorous, but the previous ill-will cannot be completely shaken off. This scene encompasses two of Mihaileanu's strongest capabilities: the ability to create a tear-jerker without being trite, and the ability to insert some much needed comic relief into a too-tense atmosphere.

The first half of the movie is undoubtedly the strongest. Moshe Agazai, who plays Shlomo as a boy, gives a performance to rival that of Haley Joel Osment. But as the character of Shlomo grows up, he is replaced by two subsequent actors, one playing teenage Shlomo and the other playing post-teenage Shlomo. The teenager is undoubtedly the weakest actor in the bunch, which is perhaps why Shlomo's teenage years are the shortest segment of the film.

The one touch of unreality in this film is the ending, when Shlomo, after years of dreaming that his mother is still alive, is reunited with her at last. The departure from the realm of reality, it appears, was sacrificed to create a happy ending.

An Optimist Among Us

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dinner and afterward, two students in the program give a *shiur* about some facet of that holiday. It is great to see women only a few years older than myself teaching anything from eating *kitniyot* on Pesach to planting trees on Tu B'shvat.

And on the topic of Torah learning...where else can you continue or begin your Torah education post high school? No matter how many *chevrotot* you set up in a secular college, they can never compare to the Judaic classes offered in Stern. Every day we have the opportunity to learn from respected scholars on a level we could not have done in high school and even seminary. In addition, most classes in colleges are given in lecture form, where hundreds of students crowd into an auditorium to hear a professor, who will never know your name. In Stern, I have never been in a class with more than 25 students and so far, every professor has known my name.

The parts I truly appreciate about Stern, though, are the little things. The shuttles between campuses which save you from

an awful ride on the A train; the shuttles to Penn Station and Port Authority; and security guards who remind you to put on your skirt before the electrician comes in to fix the broken machine at the gym. This is truly a college for women, by women.

A couple of months ago on a Thursday afternoon, I was walking past Duane Reade on 34th street. A Hispanic New York police officer who was walking by stopped, looked me straight in the face and said, "Have a good Shabbos, ma'am." I almost tripped while crossing the street as I marveled at what a small, lucky world we live in.

"Never Let Me Go": Life at Hailsham and Beyond

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of their guardians. These games and others are what keep the students of Hailsham busy, making it seem as if they live normal lives, when in reality, they are being prepared for something much different than anyone in the outside world experiences.

Together, Kathy, Tommy, and Ruth must learn to make their way in the world. After leaving Hailsham, they go to the Cottages for approximately two years, a pleasant place (although it doesn't compare to Hailsham) where other young adult Hailsham alumni also live. There, the concept of "possibles" comes into play. A possible is an individual living in the outside world from whom a student at Hailsham and other such institutions might have been cloned from. Although the person is not like a parent, the students nonetheless keep on the lookout for their own possible or the possible of a friend.

Throughout the entire book and especially at its end, the question arises: to what degree is

the practice of cloning, as it takes place in the story, ethical? Is it moral or ethical to raise children without any family and without any purpose for living other than to donate their organs? By raising these issues, Ishiguro highlights the worries and concerns that some people may presently have, living as we are in an age where

technology is advancing and situations similar to the one described in Ishiguro's book may actually become possible. These are issues that must be carefully considered, since we never know what the future might bring, seeing as science fiction

might not always remain fictional.



Kazuo Ishiguro

Celebrating Differently: Morocco for Pesach

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hosted by their friends in Casablanca. Nooshene Nili, a junior in Stern College, was absolutely more than pleased with her trip. Excitedly reporting on her trip, she indulged in telling all kinds of stories and says she plans on going back soon.

When asked if her experience conflicted with her preconceived impressions of Moroccan life, Nili answered, "I did not go with any ideas, I went with the flow and I loved it. I think that a lot of people have wrong ideas in terms of life in Morocco. There are no camels!" she added with a laugh.

Nili was surprised to see the evident economic class differences. There are people riding in Porsches and people who walk around selling anything they can find, who push used shoes around in a cart. Poverty in Morocco is not as taken care of as it is here in New York. There are not as many homeless shelters and organizations working for the cause. Nevertheless, Morocco is an incredible lifestyle for the Jews, Nili says. With beautiful weather and maids to service, life for those who are economically comfortable is truly incredible.

The hosting families, like the Wizmans, Revahs and Ouaknines, welcomed their guests with enormous warmth down to delicious cuisine. Eli Rouimi, a student at YC, describes his stay at the Ouaknines, and compares the

Moroccan community to the one in his hometown of Montreal. The difference is quite evident. "The Montreal Moroccan community started growing about 20 years ago and came with the old, and very traditional mentality and kept it," said Rouimi. "In Morocco they already evolved." Rouimi noted that one similarity lives on in both communities: "People always know everything that goes on in everyone else's life."



Rouimi noticed that there is not a lot of Jewish youth remaining in Morocco today. It is very hard to find anyone between the ages of 18 and 25 in Morocco. As children graduate high school they go to France, New York or Canada for university, after which their parents often move to be close to their children. The trend began rather recently, with the first Moroccan Stern College student, Sarah Wizman, now living in Montreal with her husband and daughter and studying at McGill's medical school, having graduated just a few years ago. Her two younger sisters, Deborah and Esther Wizman, are currently attending SCW. With the present situation in France, more and more Moroccan students are attending Stern and YC, and the

Jewish population in Morocco is decreasing.

The youth return home for Pesach and the summers, creating an exquisite atmosphere. There are also great pilgrimage that take place during the course of the year, in which Jewish families gather to visit the tombs of great rabbis. The experience is described as memorable.

The Moroccan Club provides the student body with several events, the biggest of which is the

annual Shabbaton. The Moroccan Shabbaton is by far one of the most solicited shabbatonim, and each year many more people join than those who registered. Learning from that first year,

the club now prepares for that high interest. The menu and songs attract Americans, Moroccans, Persians and even students who have already graduated. YU has always been supportive of the club and has thereby enabled it to create great events. For those who want to get some great weather and try a new culture...Morocco is the answer!

Esther Kadosh, an SCW sophomore, attributes the tourist inflation to the media attention and the publicity throughout the Internet. At www.morocco.com you'll find great information on cheap flights, hotels and everything that you'll need to prepare your trip to Morocco.

"BODIES . . . The Exhibition": Fascinating or Too Close for Comfort?

continued from page 14

Department explained, "It is a lot like a treatment for a disease that was discovered on the heels of unethical experimentation. Are we morally allowed to benefit from these discoveries, and in doing so, are we not condoning the misdemeanors committed in procuring the therapy at hand?" Rabbi Weiss then concluded that it is not hypocritical to walk through this exhibit for educational or scientific purposes, at the same time condemning its curators for overlooking the rights of the anonymous donors in collecting items for their exhibit. On another side of the spectrum, more religious observers consider the display to be *nivul hamet*, or

"desecration of the dead," because of the artsy demonstrations of the body in different positions, and under different health-related circumstances. In



assessing all of the possible reactions to this exhibit, it seems that no dispassionate consensus will ever be reached.

Perhaps the display can

be summed up though the respective reactions of Dr. Weissberg of the Stern College Biology Department, and Rachel Levinson (SCW '07) alike: To the former, it was "breath-taking," and to the latter it was "disturbing." Although it seems that viewers in the heat of the moment will draw the line when they can no longer viscerally handle what they are seeing, objectively speaking, no one can universally discern between what is appropriate, and what is tasteless and vulgar.

82

Average age of Holocaust survivor

77

Average life expectancy of Americans

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"The Ten Commandments": A World Without Heroes

continued from page 4

scrubbing and sorting (nearly as long as the movie itself) were made more bearable by its presence. My brothers and I had a point system wherein we would try to count the most flagrant biblical errors, and whoever caught more won. As I remember, we ruled out Nefertiri altogether. And after awhile, the cringe-inducing melodrama and from-whole-cloth storyline seemed less like an affront to good taste and more like the crazy old relatives that gather at your house on the holidays: crazy, but endearingly so, and no less beloved.

That was the way of things. And now, this.

From director Robert Hamli Sr., we are gifted with a hip retelling of "The Ten Commandments" that I would describe as "surprisingly like the 'Passion of the Christ,' only not as pro-Jewish."



As with the older "Ten Commandments," Moses is the central figure in this movie; however, he is no clichéd hero, nor are the people he leads remotely sympathetic. No, this is Moses as the grim, moody and possibly schizophrenic leader, driven not by a love of his people but by the grisly conviction that he is right. It takes the movie only 35 minutes from the time Moses is born until he encounters the Burning Bush, and "encounters" is a very fitting description of how his life unfolds; nothing is explained. We see Moses wandering across the desert in one scene, then we see a woman in the next, and in the following frame, after a minute of film and no actual dialogue, Moses is shown traveling with the woman and a baby. And you thought things happened fast on ollysimchas.

In fact, the movie dislikes using any dialogue that requires commas. To illustrate, I have provided here a brief sample of the Robert Hamli Sr. Method of Communication:

MOSES: We are free. We must go quickly.

AARON: We leave Egypt?
 MOSES: Yes.
 AARON: Then let us go.
 Then there is Pharaoh's stimulating exchange with Moses.
 PHAROAH: I am Pharaoh.
 MOSES: I am Moses.
 PHAROAH: I say they stay.
 MOSES: I say they go.
 PHAROAH: But I am Pharaoh. I am a god.
 MOSES: I am Moses. I come from God.

One could argue that Hamli kept the dialogue so brief and vague because he was trying to work with the actual descriptions of the Torah itself, but if that's the case, he must have been using a translation from the planet Zepton. What the above encounter eventually builds up to is Moses versus Pharaoh in a contest of willpower. It is all about the two of them and their egos. Moses in particular grows increasingly disturbing as the movie wears on. Nowhere in Dougray Scott's

portrayal is there any echo of greatness. Instead, Moses is perpetually frustrated, tired, even angry, lashing out at his people as though they're all simpletons. Perhaps he really loves them, but all we see is that same moment when your parents are driving in the car and threatening to pull over, again and again: Moses is constantly at the end of his rope.

And speaking of the planet Zepton, there is Moses' inexplicable half-brother, Meneroth. Meneroth, a kind, gentle soul, is by far the most sympathetic character in the movie. He is an Egyptian—I believe he is head of the army or some other noble position—constantly at Pharaoh's side, yet warmly devoted to Moses, for reasons that are completely beyond comprehension. His purpose in the film seems to be to represent all those poor, *goodly* Egyptians who were afflicted by the plagues, callously murdered while the Jews watched them die. Since the Egyptians are never portrayed as being especially

cruel, the viewer is left with the impression that the *plagues* were the real injustice in the Exodus, taking poor Meneroth's firstborn son, striking grief into the heart of Moses' loving brother. Meneroth begs Moses for mercy, but Moses stiffly tells him to blame his pharaoh. Meneroth asks if Moses agreed to the killing of children, and Moses says he is an agent of God.

"But why me?" Meneroth persists. "I have not hurt you. And my son is only a child—he has not hurt you. Why must he suffer for the sins of my fathers?"

To tell the truth, it is an excellent question, one frequently asked about the law stating that Moavim and Amonim cannot convert because their ancestors didn't give the Jews bread for their journey when they were first settling Israel, or the law about wiping out Amalakim. These are especially delicate issues because they seem so unjust, and while there are many illuminating commentaries out there that clarify the law, the nature of the offense and why so harsh a sentence was decreed, ultimately, the law is what God says it is—regardless of how much sense it makes to us. Some of the bloodiest battles in Judaism are fought internally over laws just like this, that we don't understand but must accept, and that struggle is part of what it means to be Jewish.

All of which is great, but



completely beside the point. Because perhaps we could have had this existential crisis in a movie about, say, Shaul's strug-

gle with his mission to destroy Amalek, or the difficulties Ruth faced after she converted. For the life of me, however, I cannot figure out how we managed to get painted into this particular corner in a movie that is, after all, about the liberation of a people that had been oppressed for over 400 years. "I have not hurt you?" The Egyptians of that generation slaughtered babies as a form of population-control. Their tactics of punishment and degradation were some of the cruelest the Jews have ever experienced. How many Egyptians of that time could truly make Meneroth's claim? OK, now how many *non-fictional* Egyptians?

But deMille's movie was no better, you object. The original "Ten Commandments" was every bit as fictional as the new. So Meneroth has replaced Ramses in the Egyptian-half-brother category; whoop-de-doo. At least there's no Nefertiri in Hamli's version.

There is, however, a crucial difference between the two films.

The liberties taken in deMille's version were mostly stylistic. It was a big Hollywood movie filled with big Hollywood glam. Nefertiri? Pure glam— whoever heard of a movie without a love interest? The swelling music, chiseled heroes—even the triangle between Moses, Ramses and Nefertiri. Few and pitiful are the people who watch "The Ten Commandments" and come away thinking of Moses as the one who stole Ramses' chick. It's all standard, the typical Hollywood treatment given to any subject matter, be it biblical or vaudeville in origin. DeMille's

movie never pretends to be anything more than that: the Exodus, Hollywood style. It's all in fun, and consequently, pretty harmless.

Advertising his rendition as "the most accurate retelling of the Exodus to date," Hamli, on the other hand, is trying to rewrite history.

Hamli constructs an image that is supposed to be shocking, refreshing and realistic in its departure from tradition. Tradition, among other things, calls for good guys and bad guys, right and wrong, truth and falsehood. But

tradition is passé like never before. Today we prefer our Meneroths: politically correct, socially conscious attempts to create equivalence where there is none. Only a society that explains suicide bombers as misunderstood militants could produce a movie about the Exodus where the Egyptians are the victims and Moses is just another delusional egotist. Yet Hamli can swallow nothing less. The people in his movie are never named, not as Jews or even Hebrews; God barely has a cameo. They are not essential in this Ten Commandments. Hamli makes his point instead through the ugly, almost crass dialogue between Moses and Pharaoh: religion of any type is just a subtext to seize power.

There is nothing innocent about that claim. Not when you are pushing the Ten Commandments as "the most accurate retelling to date" to make it.

Unfortunately, the Robert Hamli Sr. School of Thought is quite popular these days. Films like his reflect the despair and cynicism of a world where there are no heroes, no miracles.

These are dark times, indeed.

Join Next Year's Observer!

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F A S H I O N

Here's the Deal with the Spring Heel

BY SARA LEVIT AND CHAVIE MACHEFSKY

When we recently came across the new collection of shoes for spring, a noticeably higher-heeled bunch (towering at seven inches, ladies!), we were reminded of a recent, mortifying experience. Upon leaving the Sy Syms building on a brisk afternoon, bopping our heads to Lionel Richie on our iPod all the while, an unsuspected pothole left us with our bums on the street, and an immobile foot. The unfortunate debacle did, however, serve a purpose, exposing many evils: 1) It proved yet again that Apple and its

iPods are out to make monkeys of us all (creating the rude-o, the deaf-o, and the space-out-o), 2) It makes us wonder why with all the construction and scaffolding in the Big Apple, the city can't take the time to fill a few holes, and 3) while the pothole



Chopines

remains one of New York City's greatest flaws, it could not be overlooked that a possible culprit lay on our very own feet, our oh-so-darling Peter Pan boots, with the rubber, wedged and wobbly soles. Could it be that the very objects of our desire, the shoes that deserved honorable mention, could betray us so? When we contemplated their purchase, picturing our feet enclosed in their buttery green suede and punctuated in their clever red buttons, could we ever have foreshadowed the accompanying swollen calf/ankle, better known as the dreaded cankle? The whole situation left us wondering, did the heels, on our shoes really have to get any higher?

Apparently, they did, as in spite of the pain and known medical and structural evils that are all part and parcel of fashionably high heels, heels are growing taller and wilder, as this spring's shoes clearly exhibit (Christian Louboutin's seven-inch heels are merely one example). The super-

official reasons are obvious and often enough stated: heels are flattering; they lift the butt, lengthen the legs, and contract the calves. While standing in heels, a woman is prone to stand with an overemphasized lordotic curve (the slight curvature inward in the spine above the behind) in order to maintain balance, thereby emphasizing, according to some, a woman's "best assets." And of course, heels make



Louis heel

women taller. But these aren't really reasons; they are excuses. What could be the social influence behind these purely external and shallow motives?

Perhaps nothing. Perhaps the aesthetic factor simply overrides all else; maybe it's because those killer heels are just plain pretty. But there is a bizarre ironic twist regarding women's servitude to fashion. Height is usually an indicator of power (Napoleon Bonaparte aside); ordinarily, one would assume a taller gait when attempting to commandeer

authority and control. However, high-heeled shoes seem to do the exact opposite for women. Not only do they emphasize the physical appearance of the woman, thereby (arguably) demeaning her other characteristics, they actually create a physical weakness. Women clutching at banisters, grasping hands, tottering and teetering and even falling—we've all seen women (and perhaps been women) who made themselves more vulnerable in those stilettos. High heels actually strengthen the antiquated myth of female weakness. And yet high heels remain a sign of status and prestige. Women are on waiting lists at Barneys anxiously awaiting the opportunity to shell out around \$800 for sky-high heels. The mere cost of these shoes may be what

makes them so irresistible—they become a status symbol not because of the height, but because of the implied wealth they signify, just as automobiles did in post-war America in the 1950s. Shoes have always been used to display social standing and distinguish between different classes and vocations. While heels were at first purely utilitarian, used to better keep the foot braced in a horse stirrup, in 1553, a petite young bride first used heels to improve her stature at her wedding to the Duke of Orleans. Around this same time, "Bloody" Mary Tudor used heels to turn her from a "mini-me" into a "look-at-me" in her royal court, thereby bringing heels into fashion for men and women until the 19th century. The mid-1500s in Spain, Italy and France, saw high-class women, with the help of their servants, battling with Chopines, which could reach up to 24 inches in height!

Shoe fashions often began with the royalty, as exhibited by Louis XIV's footwear, still worn

today and referred to as the "Louis heel." The French revolution saw an interesting turn in



Balenciaga's gladiator stilettos
Geppettos by Gucci and Azzedine Alaïa

heel height. Beginning with Marie Antoinette's execution in 1793, to which she wore two-inch heels, the French wore the flattest shoes the 18th century saw. The newly shrunken heel proportions denoted the equality among men free of class segregation by sug-



Suede platforms by Balenciaga
Geppettos by Christian Louboutin

gesting that everyone was born on the same level. The fad of flats carried into the 19th century with the popularity of Grecian sandals. 1865 brought welcome relief to tired soles with the first sneaker, known as a plimsoll. But it was a short-lived rest, as 1955 brought the stiletto, hailing from Italy, to the scene. Platforms finally saw their

revival, re-birth and discovered new-found devotion in the flower-power haze of the 1970s. In retrospect, this

spring's heels can't hold a candle to the 24 inch chopines of past centuries. However, women today are on their own when it comes to weathering a walk down the block—heck, even to the water cooler down the hall, in these indulgent stilts. With our heads in the clouds, let's just hope we can still see the potholes in the road.



Christian Louboutin

Summer in Style

BY JULIE AST

As the summer months approach, new fashions featuring higher hemlines, tank tops, and tees are appearing in clothing stores, leaving those who adhere to a modest dress code with few style options. While trendsetters in Manhattan are wearing the latest baby doll dresses and mini shorts, those who dress modestly must use ingenuity to achieve a trendy look.

The meager selection of modest clothing in summer styles does not deter Stern women. Rachel Shpayher, a fashion design major at Stern College, has worn three-quarter-length sleeved shirts and long skirts since her Bat Mitzvah. As a style savvy dresser, she refuses to wear frumpy floor-length skirts. "For summer I go to the same clothing stores I usually shop at and look for the lightest material I can find," she says. "I love dresses. I have some now, but I'm going to keep buying them for summer. You can throw a light cardigan over a sleeveless one and it is no problem."

Eve Stieglitz, a Sy Syms junior, disagrees with Shpayher. "Putting a cardigan over a dress

takes away from the beauty of the dress," she says. "J. Crew has a lot of nice party dresses, but they are all sleeveless. I have a wedding that's coming up in the summer and I'm worried about finding an attractive dress."

Sometimes, specific clothing stores offer a gamut of stylish options in more conservative styles. Shpayher shops at Banana Republic, Gap, and Anthropologie for tzniut clothing. "Honestly, I find good clothes from Forever 21 in the spring and fall," says Eliana Rudolph, a senior at Stern College.

Many women find themselves shopping for summer attire earlier in the year when long-sleeved tees in lighter material are available. Rivka Kahn, a Sy Syms senior, buys her summer wardrobe in the spring. "The spring clothing lasts me through the summer," she says. "There are a lot of light long-sleeved tees and three-quarter-sleeved shirts. I can wear them later in the season and still look good." Rudolph finds modest clothing that is geared toward career women. "The professional clothing is similar to our own personal dress code," she says. "In terms of a suit, while they make pants suits,

they also make skirt suits. They make the same suits, but for the summer months in a lighter material."

Some years the current trends offer more modest options than others. This season, mini skirts have usurped last year's peasant style, making it harder to find skirts below the knee. "Right now it's almost impossible to find jean knee-length skirts," Stieglitz says. "They are all minis. One year minis are in and the next knee-lengths are. You need to stock up when knee-length skirts are in style because you never know if they will sell them next season."

"Usually, if I find a basic tzniut shirt for summer, I will buy five of them because I never know if the next summer they will have something available," says Aliza Smason, a senior at Stern College. "Last year it was easy to find skirts because of the peasant trend, they were made longer. This year it is a little harder."

Women who dress modestly at Stern College may not be able to wear shorts or tees, but they find their own way to dress with style.

Middle East Experts Address the Future

continued from page 8

Israeli government has no partner in the Palestinians, was the correct position to take. Both he and Daves believe that recently appointed Prime Minister Ehud Olmert would continue in his predecessor's ways, even if he does not implement a policy as quickly as Sharon might have.

Telhami's take on the question was a bit different. While he agreed with the fact that Hamas makes the idea of unilateralism easier to sell, he does not see this as the main issue. Regardless of what Olmert will do, he sees the PLO heading towards collapse, an occurrence that will negatively affect everyone in the region.

Yet, the Palestinian and Israeli leaders are not the only ones who have a role in how the situation between the two peoples will play out. Telhami believes that "on the Palestinian Israeli issue, Egypt still has the most critical role to play [of all the nations in the region]." Sela disagreed, claiming that Egypt has lost a lot of its influence on the area, including the role it plays with regard to the Palestinian people. He sees Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak as a weak individual. "I don't know if he could be instrumental today," he said. Ross took a middle road approach expressing that

Mubarak has never taken a definitive outspoken stance on the Israeli Palestinian situation but will continue to play some role in what comes next.

Another prominent leader who was discussed was King Abdullah II bin al-Hussein of Jordan. When asked if he was in trouble Daves responded, "not in the short term. [However] as things get worse in the West Bank, it will cause increasing



problems for him at home." Ross agreed, acknowledging that while Abdullah is trying to institute reform he must also deal with the Palestinian people who have a significant presence in his country. Telhami and Sela believe he is in a bit more trouble than the other men expressed. The ever growing gap between the elite and royal family, and his emphasis on Israel and the US, is making him unpopular and spurring the resentment of his people.

Yet, despite the predicament many of the region's leaders are in, Telhami was hopeful for the future of the Middle East on the

whole. "I think so," he answered when Charney questioned him about the possibility for democracy in the region. Yet, "I don't think democracy will come from the outside," he said.

Unfortunately, the future for the Palestinian and Israeli's will not necessarily be as bright. "Chances of violence in the West Bank and Gaza are high," said Daves, describing how he sees Israel in a year from now. Sela took it a step further envisioning a mini civil war between Fatah and Hamas in the near future.

And as for Israel's internal future? No consensus was reached. Charney ended the segment by asking the men if they think Olmert will be able to hold a coalition government for the next four years. Daves said no, while Ross and Telhami said yes. However, it was Sela who got the last word. "I don't know," he said with a chuckle, a fitting answer which can apply to a myriad of the questions facing the Middle East today.

After the cameras were turned off the panelists fielded questions from the audience. The segment will be featured on "The Leon Charney Report" on May 7 at 4pm on channel WNYC 25. It will be replayed the following week and shown across the country on Jewish Television Network.

Student Council Elections

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full force while maintaining their heavy course loads."

One specific area Fruchter plans to focus her efforts on, as a means to obtain school unity, is the beit midrash in the 245 Lexington Building. "That holy sanctuary should serve as our Torah center and obviously be a place each woman considers her personal comfort zone," Fruchter explained. "Everyone should always feel at home in their beit midrash." To achieve this goal, a new project that TAC is working on to initiate at the very beginning of next year is Monday Night Learning (MNL). MNL, an adaptation of a program that Jewish communities at other colleges have already created, will be a weekly event that brings people together to study Torah in the relaxed environment of the beit midrash. Fruchter is optimistic that this setting will serve as the perfect environment in which to prepare for Judaic Studies classes, learn *b'chevruta* (with study partners), and meet other students who are committed to learning, thereby establishing the beit midrash as the center for religious life at SCW.

SSSB's new Student Council President Esther Birnbaum (SSSB '07) will be working with Vice President Michelle Laufer (SSSB '08), Treasurer Rachel Katz (SSSB '07), and Secretary Penny Pazornick (SSSB '08).

Birnbaum referred to Sy Syms as "a school of opportunities" where she knows she can make a difference. In her experience at SSSB thus far, she has witnessed many exciting programs and activities, but has also realized there is much room for improvement and enrichment of student life. "As president, I hope to capitalize and improve upon much of what is already in Sy Syms," she stated, "and I hope to enhance the environment within the school by adding events which are fun and enjoyable, along with programming to help students with their future careers in business."

Other winners included those students elected to their individual class boards. The new Sophomore Class Board is made up of President Ivonne Alfandary (SCW '09), Vice President Michelle Bortnick (SCW '09), Treasurer Chanie Ladaew (SCW '09), and Secretary Anne Press (SCW '09). Junior Class Board members include President Golda Stromer (SCW '08), Vice President Aliza Grodtko (SCW '08), Treasurer Estee Colman (SSSB '08), and Secretary Zahava Nilly Brodt (SCW '08). The Senior Class board will be run by President Yael Schiller (SCW '07), Vice President Esther Genuth (SCW '07), Treasurer Aliza Chambers (SCW '07), and Secretary Nina Bursky-Tammam (SCW '07).

Remembering Yom HaShoah

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Holocaust. Overcoming much opposition from religious figures who felt that a day of mourning other than Tisha B'Av could not be added to the calendar (particularly in the month of Nissan, which symbolizes redemption), Yom Hashoah was established on the 27th day of Nissan. As indicated by the initial title given to the day, which was officially declared in 1959 on the eve of the Eichmann Trial and on the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, Yom HaShoah became an occasion to commemorate both the victims and the acts of bravery that took place.

Rabbi Schacter concluded by saying that it is important to commemorate this day, irrespective of whether or not one agrees or disagrees with its establishment, since the day already exists. Not observing the day would send a message of apathy, which is undoubtedly the wrong message for Jews to send to the outside world.

The evening proceeded with a lecture by Rabbi Zev Meir Friedman, Rosh HaMesivta of Rambam Mesivta High School in Lawrence, NY, on the topic "Bringing Nazi War Criminals in America to Justice." Rabbi Friedman, recipient of the "Pursuer of Justice Award," focused on what our obligation is today in light of what occurred

during the Holocaust. He suggested that Yom Hashoah should inspire the Jewish people to act, but that any response taken must be based on Torah concepts. He discussed different cases of anti-Semitism that were previously discovered and promptly put down. In closing, Rabbi Friedman strongly encouraged YU students to stand up and act on behalf of any future threat that may arise against the Jewish nation.

The final speaker was Ariella Saperstein, assistant director of the ADL's New York office. Her speech, on the topic "Anti-Semitism from the Holocaust to Now—Where are we now?" included a dialogue on present day anti-Semitism. She shocked students with facts from a 2005 survey that polled Americans regarding their thoughts on Jews and anti-Semitism. The survey, which yielded many appalling statistics, indicated that 14% of Americans hold unquestionably anti-Semitic views and 20% of respondents believe that Jews have too much power in the United States. These numbers were up from a survey taken in 1998.

Saperstein further indicated that in 2005 alone, there were 1,757 anti-Semitic incidents, 381 of which occurred in New York. Evidently, neo-Nazi groups still meet and recruit members,

though they are typically considered benign. She impressed on the students the need to continue to be on the look out for and the need to be active against anti-Semitism.

Avi Posnick, vice president of the YU Israel Club, stated that "the event gave people a better understanding of the purpose of Yom Hashoah. I hope that the students walked away from the event with the understanding that the lesson of Never Again does not mean just talking about the atrocities of the Holocaust, but engaging in *tikan olam*. We must make sure we, the Jewish community, and the world remember the terrible events of the Holocaust and ensure something like that does not happen."

Students left the program inspired, full of emotion and with a new appreciation of a time period so close to, yet so far from us. "The way Rabbi Schacter integrated the history of Yom Hashoah, and brought in Eretz Yisroel to the discussion added a facet to Yom Hashoah that I had not known previously," commented Jaimie Fogel (SCW '08). "I really appreciated that they had a program in the first place and the number of students in attendance was impressive."

New Professors and Courses Next Semester

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halakhic methodology and development, which will eventually become a requirement for all first-year students. Rav Dovid Horowitz will teach a new course on the history of Jewish philosophy.

In addition to new staff, former SCW faculty members will be returning. Dean Bacon is especially excited about returning Professor Dr. Lana Schwebel. Schwebel received her doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania in medieval studies and is currently on faculty at Yale University. She previously taught at Stern as an adjunct in the English Literature and Latin departments. This time around she will be joining the staff on the tenure track. Schwebel will be teaching "Global Literature in English Study of Literature," a course that will be studying literature written outside of the U.S. and England but written in English. She will also be teaching a Latin class that Dean Bacon believes will be especially helpful for students interested in medical careers.

Also returning will be Dr. Everita Selina, an adjunct in the

Political Science Department, and Dr. Heather Van Bergen, an adjunct in the Psychology Department. Both will be returning as full-time faculty members, since they will have obtained their degrees by September.

Other returning professors will be teaching new classes. Many departments met with the students in their major programs to consider their interests. Several new advanced courses are being offered as a result of these discussions. The Physics Department will be offering two additional upper level classes, and Dr. Margarita Levin will be teaching Advanced Logic. There will also be an advanced course in digital imaging offered by the art department.

SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Migraine – Could it Come From the Heart?

BY ESTHER FISCHER

For sufferers, the symptoms of a migraine are classical: a throbbing headache sometimes localized to one side of the head, which may be accompanied by nausea and sensitivity to light, sound, and motion. Episodes may be as frequent as a few times a month, and sometimes they last for days on end. Therefore, when a new study outlined a possible mechanism behind migraine headaches, the media was quick to take notice.

Possible link between migraines and heart malfunction

One of the first people to document the link between migraines and heart malfunction was neurologist Dr. Roman Sztajzel, who, having performed heart surgery on a patient to cure her stroke, later received a letter thanking him for getting rid of her debilitating migraines. Dr. Sztajzel was intrigued: could this provide the long sought-after clue to the cause of migraine headaches? The patient had suffered from patent foramen ovale (PFO), an opening in the heart's upper chambers, causing the blood to flow from the left to the right side of the heart. This can cause problems such as strokes, since blood clots can pass through the opening and shoot to the head. Also, air bubbles and dissolved chemicals can slip through rather than pass to the lungs, where they would be exhaled or broken down. Dr. Sztajzel closed the opening in the woman's heart, and miraculously, her migraines disappeared. But he was not the only person to dis-

cover this. Other researchers and physicians have been noticing the same phenomenon for years and have been baffled by it. At the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital in England, cardiologist Dr. Peter Wilmshurst found that scuba divers with PFOs were unusually susceptible to decompression sickness, a disorder that occurs when bubbles of nitrogen form in the blood that cannot be expelled by the lungs. After surgeons began fixing heart defects in



some professional divers as a preventive measure against decompression sickness, several of them noted that their migraines disappeared. In 2000, Wilmshurst proposed that circulatory shunts, such as PFOs, can cause migraines. PFO closure seems to be the most beneficial for patients that suffer migraines with auras, a visual symptom that precedes a migraine attack.

Preliminary results show encouraging evidence for theory

On March 13, 2006, the NMT Medical Team presented preliminary results from a study on patients with PFOs and migraines. They found that large PFOs are 6 times more common in patients that have migraines with auras; that closing PFOs with a technology called STARFlex® led to a 50% reduc-

tion in headache for 42% of patients, and that patients saw a reduction of headache episodes. A follow-up clinical trial called MIST II (Migraine Intervention with STARFlex® Technology) has recently been set up to understand more about the link between PFOs and migraines, and enrollment is expected to be completed by the end of this year. Approximately 600 patients will be participating, half of them will have surgery to close their PFO and half will act as a control. The control group is very significant in this instance, since previous studies on PFOs and migraine treatment have not included controls. Another reason for including controls is that far from everybody is sanguine about the prospects for the study. Dr. Vinod K. Gupta recently remarked in the journal "Neurology" that even though the first study had statistical significance, it is "biologically debatable," and one must ascertain that the results are not merely due to the placebo effect. Furthermore, patients were included that had relatively rare occurrences of migraines, i.e. less than four attacks a month, which could be considered a confounding variable since replication is difficult for these cases. He also points out that another study found no benefit of PFO closure for patients that suffered migraines without auras, and that migraines with auras have previously been associated with a different heart defect, unrelated to PFO.

Feig's Fast Facts:
It's the Time to Discuss
Lyme Disease

BY JESSICA FEIG

Camping east for the summer or going up to the Catskills? If so, you should be concerned. The enemy, albeit small, is dangerous. The foe: ticks.

Deer ticks, found mostly in the northeastern United States, carry Lyme disease. Described by Dr. Allen Steere and his associates at Yale, Lyme disease was first recognized in 1975 in Connecticut in three communities: Lyme, Old Lyme and East Haddam. Lyme disease is caused by a spirochete bacterium, *Borrelia burgdorferi*. The bite of ticks infected with this bacteria transmits the disease to humans and animals. Most common in rural and suburban areas, the majority of cases in the United

States have been reported on the East Coast, from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Interestingly, the lower incidence



of the disease in the West is due to the prevalence of a lizard. The blood of the Western fence lizard contains a chemical that destroys *B. burgdorferi*, the Lyme disease

spirochete.

The discovery of Lyme disease should be credited to two housewives, Polly Murray and Judith Mensch. On October 16, 1975, Mrs. Murray, a concerned mother from Old Lyme, Connecticut, notified the state health authorities of a high incidence of juvenile rheumatoid arthritis in her town. Around the same time, Mrs. Mensch notified the Yale Rheumatology Clinic of a tremendous number of cases of arthritis in her community. As a result, Steere and his colleagues at Yale conducted a survey in three Connecticut communities and detected fifty-one cases of what was described as Lyme arthritis.

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The Many Faces of Botox

BY ELANA MEYERSDORF

People all over the world are exposing themselves to an exceptionally potent neurotoxin and no one seems to care. Perhaps this is because this specific neurotoxin is approved by the FDA. It's called Botox.

That's right; the key ingredient of Botox is Botulin toxin A, a toxic agent that leads to botulism, a deadly form of food poisoning. The poisoning works by causing paralysis, which occurs as the toxin attacks the fusion proteins of the neuromuscular junction and inhibits the release of acetylcholine. This, in turn, disturbs the nerve impulses and prevents muscles from contracting. In the late 19th century, scientists attributed botulism to sausages; when the true source was discovered, it was named after the Latin word for sausage, botulus.

So how does injecting a potentially lethal chemical into your face make you look younger? Simple. If your face can't move, it can't wrinkle. Injections of Botox into choice areas of the face, such as between the eyebrows or creases of the forehead, ensure that the toxin will not spread to more dangerous areas, such as the heart or lungs. Botox is then free to perform its most important task: the temporary reduction of wrinkles.

Apparently, the stuff works, as Botox injections are currently the most popular non-surgical cosmetic procedures. Statistics

show that 2,272,080 Botox injections were performed in 2003, and the numbers have been steadily increasing. The procedure's popularity can be attributed to the relative ease with which it is administered. A simple visit to the doctor's office and a sensation that is often compared to the pinprick of a needle is all it takes. The side effects are also surprisingly minimal.

Botox is so popular that it has given rise to a new phenomenon: Botox parties. A Botox party is just what it sounds like: a party where people get together, chat, mingle and receive injections of Botox from a doctor who is also attending the party. Beware though; these parties have come

under criticism from individuals in the medical profession who feel as if the treatment is being administered with frivolity.

But don't think that the use of Botox begins and ends in the plastic surgeon's office, or the cocktail lounge for that matter. The original use of Botox has nothing to do with crow's feet and loose skin. It was first used in the medical field in 1989 to treat

two disorders: strabismus, a disorder in which the eyes do not point in the same direction (cross eyes), and blepharospasm, uncontrol-

lable blinking. In 2000, Botox was approved by the FDA as a neurological treatment of cervical dystonia, a disorder that causes severe neck and shoulder contractions.

It wasn't until 2002 that Botox was approved as an anti-aging treatment. Ironically, the discovery that Botox reduces fine lines and wrinkles was only made due to the fact that it was an observed side effect of its previous uses.

Today, there is ongoing research being done regarding the use of Botox for medical purposes, building on the treatments that began in the 1980s. For example, patients suffering from excessive sweating and spasmodic dysphonia, a neurological disorder that

affects the muscles of the larynx, are said to respond well to Botox.

The most shocking research on Botox? It was seriously considered as a

potential biochemical weapon. Upon testing, however, it was realized that its rapid degradation on exposure to air would prove ineffective. This did not stop rumors from floating around that an American attempt was made in 1961 to assassinate Fidel Castro by poisoning his cigars with Botulin toxin A. If the rumors are true, then the attempt obviously proved ineffective, as Castro has yet to take a puff from that lethal Botox cigar.



**AMERICAN VETERANS OF ISRAEL
VOLUNTEERS IN ISRAEL'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE (1947-1949)**

**MEMORIAL SERVICE AT U. S. MILITARY ACADEMY-
WEST POINT JEWISH CHAPEL**

SUNDAY, MAY 21, 2006

PLEASE JOIN US TO COMMEMORATE AND PAY TRIBUTE TO COLONEL DAVID (MICKEY) MARCUS AND THE OTHER 39 U.S. AND CANADIAN VOLUNTEERS WHO FELL IN ISRAEL'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

10:00-10:45...Coffee hour in the Chapel Reception Hall.

"Images of '48" – Short DVD Remembering the Struggle
and the Fallen North American Volunteers.

11:00-12:00...Service in the Chapel led by Chaplains and choir.
Guest Speaker: William A Cohen, Major General, USAFR, Ret.
West Point-1959; Flyer in the U.S and the Israel Air Forces.

12:15- 1:00...Graveside ceremony including Taps and Salute by
U.S.Military Academy ceremonial squad.

*The year 2006 marks the 40th annual memorial service conducted at the West Point
Jewish Chapel by American Veterans of Israel to remember and honor the Fallen.*

Getting to West Point:

- From NY State Thruway, Take Harriman Exit 16 Onto 6 East. Follow to the Bear Mountain Traffic Circle. Take 9w North to West Point exit.

- From NYC, Take George Washington Bridge Upper Deck onto Palisades Pkwy North to the end. Take 9w North to West Point/Highland Falls exit.

- From East, Over Tapanzee Bridge, Get off Exit 13n- Palisades Pkwy North to the end. Take 9w North to West Point/Highland Falls exit.

Getting to the Jewish Chapel:

- Past the gate, turn left onto Mills Rd which becomes Stony Lonesome Rd. Turn left onto Merrit Rd to the chapel.

Valid ID such as driver's license, passport or college ID must be shown at the gate by everyone. Minors will be vouched for by parents or group leaders.

Adinah's Editorial

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stant sincerity and your unwavering commitment to everything you do. I have been the recipient of much of your kindness and true good nature. Thank you for always being available. Alana Rubenstein, thank you for all your devotion and tireless efforts on behalf of the Observer this year. Your amenability has made you a pleasure to work with and I am looking forward to working with you next year.

Ilana Levin, or shall I say my better half. Working with you this year has been a

wonderful experience. Our numerous conversations have provoked much thought and growth within me. From you I have learned so much. Your sense of honesty, commitment to perfection and your dedication to Torah are what inspire me the most. It has truly been an honor to work alongside you this year.

Mom and Ta, I know that I do not say it enough but thank you. You have always encouraged me to reach higher and provide me with the support that I need in all my crazy endeavors. You have always been there to ease my load and

carry part of my burden. You have given me the freedom to make my own decisions and have always supported me regardless of whether or not you agree with me. Thank you to my siblings for putting up with me and helping me every step along the way. You guys are the best!

To the Observer supporters and readers: the backbone of this paper was you. Let us all take a hard lesson from Josh's sincerity, and from each of our perspectives, let us be thankful for what we have. Enjoy your summer.

Dorot: Interconnecting Generations

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it's an experience for both parties: an exchange. Ultimately, the deliveries are as much for the company as for the food, and the masquerade gives it a sense of conviviality and a base for conversation. The ensuing conversation is another venue by which Dorot keeps track of the mental and physical health of the elderly they care for.

"For the program itself, there would have been more enrichment if the pairs could have been mixed between universities but the whole was amazing," one of the volunteers declared. Today, Dorot has

10,000 volunteers and is therefore able to have more and more impact on elders' lives.

One of the testimonies from this year's Pesach packing was particularly interesting: one elderly woman who was visited opened her package to discover the contents, curious to see what was inside. The student volunteers explained Pesach and the Exodus from Egypt, and the woman exclaimed, "It is like the Easter for us!" Sure enough, they found out she is not Jewish, but got to spend this April eating matzah anyway.

YU Students Rally for Darfur

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Schechter, Rav Blau and Rav Sobolofsky, who encouraged students to attend. Rav Neuberger showed his support by attending the rally with his congregation. Associate Dean of Students Zelda Braun commented, "It's critically important for our undergraduate women and men to be concerned about the crisis in Darfur. Their commitment and dedication to the plight of the people of Darfur is outstanding and hopefully has made a critical impact."

Every aspect of the day proved to be a learning experience. En route to the rally students had the opportunity to listen to *shiurim* on the buses. Rabbi Daniel Feldman spoke about the obligation that Jews have to aid in social justice. Rabbi Reuven Brand also spoke. In addition to *shiurim* given by the rabbanim, each student was given a folder including Talmudic sources and a quote from Rav Soloveichik detailing the importance of supporting those in need regardless of their religion.

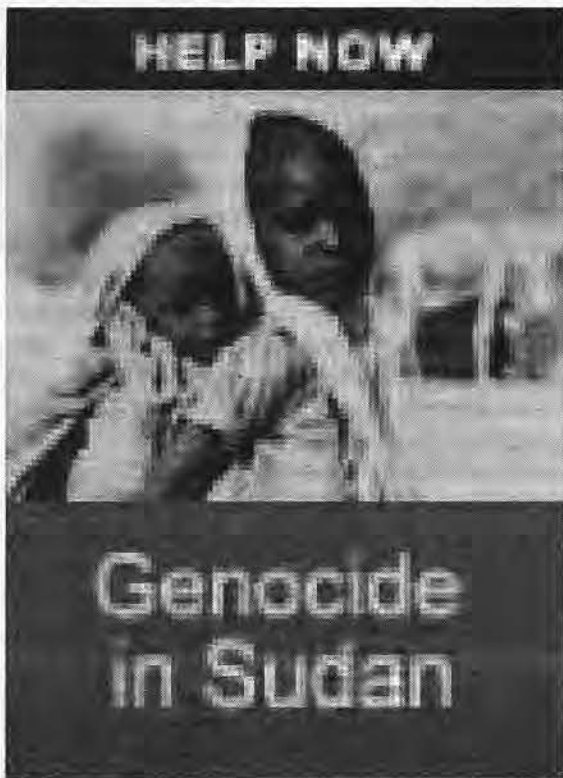
To top off the day, on their five hour trip back, students watched movies such as "Hotel Rwanda," "Hiding and Seeking," and "Paperclips." "Hotel Rwanda," a movie about the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, is

about a hotel manager who saved thousands of people from being killed. The hotel manager, Paul Rusesabagina, addressed the audience at the rally. The documentary "Hiding and Seeking" addresses the controversy surrounding Jewish involvement in humanitarian causes.

As thousands stood facing the dome of Capital Hill voicing support for the people of Darfur, the prevailing message, sent

directly to President Bush, was that he must do more to stop the genocide in Sudan. Just as important though was the message passed on by the speakers to the attendees, urging them to take the next step by rallying the message back to their perspective communities.

The rally to save Darfur was by no means a culmination of a fight for a cause. If anything, it proved to only be a triumphant start to a long and hard struggle to save hundreds of thousands of lives at stake.



SCW Senior to Travel to Ghana

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that this inter-denominational trip will be challenging. "For example, we will have to decide, as a group, how to run services," Mintz explains. At the same time she appreciates the complications she has embraced and thinks that she will gain from the experience. "It's definitely going to be difficult; I think all the other factors will make it worth it." Mintz concluded, "It will also be a strengthening experience to share my own perspectives while learning from others."

"Part of the trip is about breaking down barriers between ourselves and building *ahavat yisrael*," Mintz says. "We'll be put in small quarters and go through an intense experience with people from all different backgrounds. Hopefully, by the end we'll be very close with each other."

Friendships and group dynamic aside, Mintz's life during her hiatus to Africa will be far more complicated in terms of Jewish law than ever before. "I spoke to [AJWS] specifically about different halakhic issues," Mintz says. "I wasn't even sure if I'd be able to go, or if it would work out." She stresses that the AJWS is extremely considerate and respectful about halakhic

observance. Mintz's older brother, Rabbi Etan Mintz, currently the assistant rabbi at the HIR in Riverdale, will be a leader on the Thailand trip this summer and expects to meet similar halakhic challenges.

The participants' involvement with issues of social action does not end with the summer. "Following the summer, participants continue in the domestic yearlong program which includes retreats, public speaking engagements, article writing, advocacy and volunteer service," the website explains. The follow-up programming is about "taking the experience and the passion...you are getting from that intense time there and turning it into something practical," says Mintz.

Mintz originally learned of AJWS's summer program from her brother who participated in a rabbinical delegation with AJWS to El Salvador. "Knowing Cindy [Bernstein] went, and the Honduras trip kept the idea in my mind," Mintz notes. "Hearing about other people's experiences in Honduras got me even more excited about the summer program."

Fitting for her imminent plunge into social action this summer in Africa, Mintz reflects that her activism in areas of social justice has grown lately on the

YU campus. "It's an area of critical importance and was lacking...I hope these projects concerning global and social justice aren't just a fad." Mintz continues, "Fads die out and are not always done for the right reasons."

The AJWS summer programs cost a significant amount of money and they encourage their participants to raise the money in the form of donations, instead of simply paying for the trip. This can be difficult in a community that is not necessarily completely supportive of the expenditure of energies on the non-Jewish population. Mintz relates, "When I'm trying to raise money for my program, people say, 'Should we be working for people outside our community?' Some people are for it and some people are against it."

"Practically, you may have to choose where to put your money and strength, but everyone has different strengths and passions, and people should be working where their strengths lie." Mintz concludes, "As a community, we can't just ignore essential values to Judaism and humanity. As individuals, we need to decide which causes speak most to each of us."

Feig's Fast Facts: Lyme Disease

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Although initially depicted as simply causing arthritis, it was soon revealed that Lyme disease affects many systems. Symptoms of Lyme disease are flu-like and may include fever, chills, headaches, stiff neck, fatigue, muscle aches and joint pain. If the Lyme disease spreads to the heart, an irregular and slow heart-beat or arrhythmia may occur. If the nervous system is involved, there can be a loss of control to one or both sides of the face, a condition called Bell's palsy.

Tick bites can be detected by a characteristic rash called *erythema migrans*, which may appear three to 30 days after a tick bite. This symptom occurs in about 50 percent of the cases. The rash is often described as having a "bull's eye" appearance with alternating light and dark rings. It is recommended to take a picture of the rash, if possible, because it may disappear before a physician sees it, and it can be confused with poison ivy, spider bites or insect bites.

The main risk factor for Lyme disease is exposure to ticks that are infected with the Lyme disease bacteria. Infected ticks are most prevalent between May and November, with peak activity in June and July. Ticks can be found in grassy or wooded areas,

so it is important to be cautious when gardening, hiking, camping or spending time in these areas with friends or family. Even dogs and cats can bring infected ticks into the house. Although these pets can't pass the disease to humans, if the infected tick falls off the animals, it can bite and infect humans.

Generally, ticks can't transmit Lyme disease until they are attached for at least 36 to 48 hours, so your risk increases the longer a tick is attached to your body. After spending time outdoors, always check your skin carefully for ticks. One can take several precautions to avoid tick bites. Wear light colored clothing that covers most of your skin since the dark ticks are easier to see against a light background. For added protection, dress in long sleeves, tuck your pants into your socks, wear leggings or tights under your skirt, and don't wear open-toed shoes. An insect repellent containing DEET and a permethrin-containing clothing repellent offer the best overall protection. Or, to avoid these necessary precautions, change your vacation plans and go west!

Max Liebermann: From Realism to Impressionism

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ors are applied to a pastel background, as in "Beer Garden in Brannenburg" (1893), where the use of green is admirable.

The three pictures of the "Jewish Quarter in Amsterdam" (1905) constitute the most vibrant paintings of the exhibit. Also completed in the Impressionist spirit, they depict overcrowded streets with people shopping for fruit and vegetables and conversing, as well as clothes hanging from windows; the atmosphere is incredibly well communicated to the spectator. Bright colors catch the eye as if they had just been applied, adding to the charm of the paintings. But

what's really fascinating about them is that you have to stand about a meter away from them to really appreciate the spectacle; otherwise the colors blend, and the forms become indistinguishable. One would only be able to see brushstrokes. Another highlight of this exhibit is the collection of Liebermann's self-portraits, painted at different stages throughout his life. Aside from painting the bourgeoisie and other notorious people of the

time, such as Einstein, Liebermann also completed a series of self-portraits and has consequently become a noted portraitist. In the manner of Rembrandt, Liebermann's self-portraits mark his development and evolution. "Self-portrait with Brush and Palette" (1913) marks the first of the series. The painting depicts a man, in his mid-fifties, serious and determined at the same time. In "Self-portrait in a Straw Hat" (1929), the artist is

obviously aging. His silhouette is now thinner, more fragile, whereas his eyes reveal some fatigue.



Liebermann's last self-portrait, "Self-portrait in Smock with Hat, Brush and Palette" (1934), was painted a year before his death and is actually the last painting of the exhibit. This leaves viewers with the deep, sharp and memorable look of the exceptional painter, one of the most renowned Jewish German painters of all times.

Summer at Stern: Honors Program Offers Two Unique Courses

BY SARA LEFKOVITZ

In keeping with its yearly tradition of affording students the opportunity to take classes during the summer weeks, the S. Daniel Abraham Honors Program at Stern College for Women is in the midst of organizing two uniquely interactive courses. The first,



Metropolitan Museum of Museum

titled "Art in New York City," will feature an investigation of the visual arts through visits to the city's most important museums, galleries, and collections. "Marine Biology," a revival of a past summer course, will take students to Walpole, Maine to study a myriad of organisms in their natural environments.

"Art in New York City" is the first art history course of its kind to be given by the college. Though other art curriculums have been structured outside of the classroom setting, none have focused specifically on the painting, sculpture, and decorative arts of New York. This distinctive pairing of subject and surrounding is what sets "Art in New York City" apart from previous course offerings like architectural history, which meets regularly during the year, and "Stern in Florence," a summer art program abroad.

"One of the great advantages of studying and teaching art and art history in New York is that we have some of the greatest collections of art right in our backyard," explained Dr. Jacob Wisse, associate professor of Art History and the instructor of the upcoming course. "Art in New York City" is designed to exploit that advantage to the fullest. While



Guggenheim Museum

it's always possible to bring students to museums and galleries during the fall and spring semesters, the busy schedules of students make regular and fully attended visits difficult. So the summer seems like the perfect time to bring students face to face

with works of art. There is a great reward in exposing and seeking out the local wonders in our midst."

These "local wonders" are housed in a variety of museums, commercial galleries, and smaller private and public collections that will be visited by participating students over the course's three-week duration in July. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Guggenheim, The Frick Collection, The Cloisters, as well as the Studio Museum in Harlem and the university's own museum downtown, are among the eclectic and sizeable group of destinations, supplying the class with geographically and

historically wide-ranging source material and media. In addition to improving students' art analytical and interpretation skills, "Art in New York City" is aimed at familiarizing the women with the history of collecting, displaying, and curating works of art, and with the contemporary issues regarding these topics.

Compiled and arranged by theme, the course's itinerary includes sessions such as "Ethnic and National Identity," "The Encyclopedic Museum," and "Private Taste," which combine trips to related institutions with follow-up discussions and debates. Students are required to write critical analyses based on class meetings and readings, and will complete papers drawn from their research in museum archives.

The organizers of the course are anticipating a group between 10 and 15 participants. "Since this is the first time a course like this has been offered, we're waiting to see what the response is like, with the great hope that it will be enthusiastic, establishing a precedent for more 'in the field' art history courses in the future," said Wisse. "It is my firm belief that visual art has a

fundamental relevance with respect to every subject or area of learning; and that it has the distinct power to move and inspire the human imagination. Coming face to face with the art of New York in a focused, lucid way, together

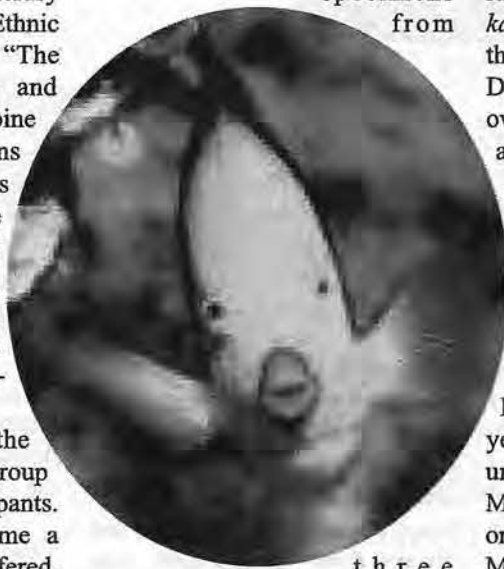
with a group of similarly minded students, has the potential to deepen and amplify someone's understanding and appreciation of life."

"Marine Biology" similarly seeks to provide students with an interactive and dynamic educa-

tional experience. First offered in June of 2004, the course enjoyed a great deal of success and was subsequently revived for the upcoming summer. As such, the program's objectives and itinerary will remain largely the same.

Divided into two segments, the course will begin on the Beren Campus, where students will cover the preliminary material in preparation for the "field trip" component. By learning the relevant aspects of physical biology, such as marine ecosystems and oceanography, participants will become acquainted with the life forms they will later encounter. Students will supplement their classroom education with a visit to the New York Aquarium to gain a glimpse into the captive state of their future creatures of study, a step-up from the two-dimensional illustrations found in their textbooks.

The field trip, located in Walpole, Maine, is what Dr. Joseph DeSantis, assistant professor of Biology at SCW, calls the "gem" of the course. For one week students will engage in an intensive biological investigation, experiencing the full scope of the research process firsthand. They will begin by collecting specimens



from three principal habitats, the mudflat, the rocky coast and the tidal river, which collectively harbor every life form ranging from plankton to starfish. Students will then have the chance to study their scientific finds in a wet lab and design experiments to further their understanding of the creatures' properties and behavior. They have until the end of the summer to make sense of what they have seen and produce a paper describing their results.

The women of SCW will utilize the resources and services of the Darling Marine Center, a division of the University of Maine, which will serve as the base of the trip and the hub of biological inquiry. Specialists in the field will guide students along every step of the way, accompanying them on their coastal outings and assisting them with their respective projects. Though Dr. DeSantis will lead the course and play an advisory role, he hopes that the students will maximize the unique opportunity on hand to directly learn from the experts.

"One of the things students

can gain is an exposure to the outdoors, which most of them haven't had," explained DeSantis. "For the students that have had that type of exposure, they haven't approached nature with experts alongside them. They ask questions but never get them answered. Well, now the students will be able to study nature and have experts around to answer them."

"I think this course gives students an idea of what the other side of biology is all about," DeSantis continued. "There is so much focus on the health sciences, but the major part of biology is about the study of life forms in ecosystems. This trip really produces a certain depth to our curriculum which we otherwise wouldn't have."

Although the accommodations have not yet been finalized, if things go as planned, the Marine Biology participants will be lodged at a university facility provided for their sole use and located only a short distance from the Center. On the previous trip, a rabbi from neighboring Portland *kashered* the kitchen, allowing the students, under the tutelage of Dean Ethel Orlian, to cook their own meals. Dean Orlian will be also be in attendance this time around, reassuming her position as overseer of the entire food and housing operation while simultaneously chaperoning the students to their various destinations.

"Our experience at the Darling Marine Center two years ago allowed students the unique opportunity to study Marine Biology in a first rate laboratory off the scenic coast of Maine," reflected Dean Orlian. "The excitement of studying life forms that we found in tidal rivers, mud flats and drudged up from the ocean floors was incomparable. We look forward to once again spending a week of discovery together with a group of wonderful students."

The enthusiasm for "Marine Biology" is apparently shared by the student body, as enrollment for the upcoming trip has already reached full capacity. According to Aviva Needle, a presidential fellow assisting with the practical logistics of the course, there is a waiting list of nearly 20 students who were unable to be accommodated due to limited resources and transportation constraints. She is hoping for an equally eager response for the "Art in New York City" course,

which she has also helped to organize.

"Summertime gives students the freedom to explore areas they may feel they don't have time for during the school year," Needle remarked. "A science or business major, for example, can dedicate three weeks to the art history course; an English or education



major may want to have more science experience, so she'll take the marine biology course. At the same time, credit is awarded. It is especially hard to participate in such programs as an Orthodox Jewish woman; these courses are catered to Stern students."

Stern is offering four other summer honors classes in conjunction with Yeshiva College. These include two variations of a nanoscience course in Brookhaven National Labs, one for majors and one for non-majors, and two are biblical archeology courses based in Israel.

Dr. Cynthia Wachtell, director of the S. Daniel Abraham Honors Program at SCW, related a similar excitement to Needle's about the upcoming summer educational experiences. "What's amazing about these courses is that students are able to study on location," Wachtell said. "Whether they're digging in the mudflats of Maine, studying nanoscience at Brookhaven Laboratories, helping to unearth remains of the biblical city of Gath, or visiting the Frick Collection, or the Museo del Barrio in New York City, the students are learning outside the classroom and learning in a way that cannot be experienced inside the classroom. I know that these courses are extremely popular selling points for incoming stu-



Darling Marine Center

dents, especially because many traditional experiences are not practicable for observant young women. That's really the beauty of these courses—we create an opportunity which otherwise would not exist for our students."