



# The OBSERVER

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## Student Life Committee Continues to Make Strides on Campus

BY ESTHER BARUH

The Student Life Committee at Stern College for Women (SCW) unveiled several new developments that promise to materially enhance the undergraduate experience on campus. After months of persistent canvassing, the committee finally secured a string of services.

The computer labs in 215 Lexington Avenue will be refurbished with more up-to-date and functional printers. The printing policy has also been revised, allowing for leftover pages from each student's quota to rollover to later months. Many undergraduates had taken issue with the former procedure, as they were limited to 100 pages per month, which could not be extended even if unused.

Tiffany Unterman (SCW '07), chair of the committee, attributed the improvements to the efforts of David Himber, dean of students, and Tom Oleszczuk, manager of academic computing. "This has been on the agenda for years," she said. "Dean Himber and Mr. Oleszczuk really heeded student need and what they wanted."

The Student Life Committee is comprised of a group of students and a body of administrators hailing from different departments within the university. The Offices of Student Affairs, Residence Life, Food Services, and Management Information Systems (MIS) are among those represented. SCW Dean Karen Bacon and Associate Dean Ethel Orlian also serve on

*continued on page 21*

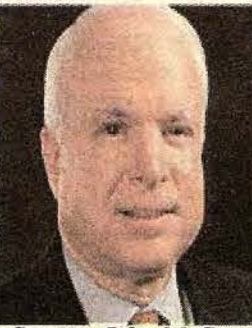
## Hanukkah Dinner and Convocation Honors Stanton and his Donation

BY ALANA RUBENSTEIN

Yeshiva University (YU) held its Eighty-Second Annual Hanukkah Dinner & Convocation on December 10, 2006 at the Waldorf=Astoria. After a lengthy procession, President Richard M. Joel bestowed honorary degrees upon a number of individuals who have served an integral role in making YU what it is today.

These persons include Dr. Felix Leo Glaubach (YUHS '47, YC '50), founder and president of Personal Touch Home Care and a member of the YU Board of Trustees, Ambassador Daniel C. Kurtzer (YC '71), who served as the dean of Yeshiva College (YC) before becoming the U.S. Ambassador to both Israel and Egypt, Arnold S.

Penner, who serves on the Board of Overseers at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and is also a philanthropist and real



Senator John McCain (R-AZ)

estate investor, Solomon Scharfstein, president of KTAV publishing house and author of over 100 textbooks, and Marcy Syms, the founding member of



Ronald P. Stanton

Law degree from the University before addressing the crowd of YU supporters.

After McCain's speech, the crowd proceeded to the ballroom where Ronald P. Stanton and his legacy were celebrated. As President Joel said in his remarks, "It's all about Ronald Stanton." Stanton's 100 million dollar

the YU Sy Syms School of Business Board of Directors and chief executive officer of Syms Corp.

The featured honoree of the evening was Senator John C. McCain, who many at the dinner were speculating could be the next president of the United States. The senior Senator from Arizona received a Doctor of

gift, which he presented to the university earlier this year, is the largest single gift given to Jewish education in North America. The gift was designated as a revolving fund, which will be spent as needed and hopefully replenished by future donors. "Ron's gift is a down payment on our future,"

*continued on page 20*

## SCW Upgrades Academics as Student Concerns Persist

BY DEBORAH ANSTANDIG

Stern College for Women (SCW) will be offering approximately twenty new courses during the upcoming spring semester, largely due to student initiative and collaboration with faculty. Almost all of the departments will undergo some kind of reformation. Recent student appeals were marked by a demand for increased depth in courses, in addition to the usual call for a greater variety and number of offerings.

The Judaic Studies Department has seen the most significant additions with the hiring of new faculty and staff. Cali Orenbuch, who serves as academic assistant to the department's chairman, Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel, will attend to student

concerns and other administrative needs. Rabbi Gamliel Schmal, new to SCW, will teach a course on the philosophy of Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi, while Rabbi Daniel Wolf, a current professor, will become a full-time faculty member.

The Judaic Studies Department will also lay the foundations for a structured morning Tanakh program. After a group of students spearheaded the push for a larger and more advanced Judaic Studies program, in what Rabbi Kanarfogel calls "a joint initiative between students and faculty," the college assented and hired Dr. Mordechai Cohen, professor of Bible, to teach a five-credit course on the Book of Job. Cohen will lecture twice a week, and Elichai Bitter, a student at Rabbi Isaac Elchanan

Theological Seminary (RIETS) and the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, will be present the remaining two days, facilitating discussion and assisting the women in preparing sources for the class. The same group of students was responsible for the creation of a second section of the advanced Gemara track, thus doubling the number of students learning in the beit midrash each morning.

Student demand has also precipitated the growth of the arts at the college. At the request of the three students currently enrolled in a course on chromatic harmony, Professor Daniel Believsky, new to SCW this fall, will teach "Early Modern Theories of Music." SCW alumna Adena Kosak will offer

*continued on page 13*

## Beren Campus Welcomes Prospective Students

BY TIFFY UNTERMAN

On November 19, the Beren Campus opened its doors to welcome hundreds of potential students to explore the benefits of attending Stern College for Women (SCW) and Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB). The day started with greetings in the Schottenstein Cultural Center by President Richard M. Joel, Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel, chairman of the Rebecca Ivory Department of Jewish Studies, and Monique C. Katz Dean, Karen Bacon. Emphasis was placed on the ability the Beren Campus has to offer its students a wide array of experiences and academic opportunities. Rabbi Kanarfogel announced the new Tanakh shiur which integrates both classroom

lectures with beit midrash time that will be taking place four mornings a week this coming semester as an example of student initiative in furthering serious Jewish study alongside a challenging secular course load. President Joel invited student ambassadors to the front of the room to answer questions from students. The questions ranged from how to balance a secular and Judaic course load to details about the academic vigor as well as Shabbat on campus.

After the opening remarks, potential students could choose between a number of different academic presentations from the SCW liberal arts and science departments, SSSB busi-

*continued on page 13*

### I N S I D E



Kramer Speaks Out  
Page 4



Winter Break Trips  
Page 8

December  
2006



Dale and Thomas  
Page 11



Putnam Spelling Bee  
Page 18

Thinking About Your Summer Plans?

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## YESHIVA UNIVERSITY



ADINAH WIEDER  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

For a long time I had been contemplating writing an editorial on the value of being in a single sex learning environment. However, I always quelled the urge because I could never quite figure out the perfect thing to say. I knew that I would have a hard time elucidating what precisely makes the experience of an all female education so rewarding. I kept pushing it off because I felt that since being educated in an all female atmosphere had such a profound impact on my learning experiences, it needed to be addressed in the most eloquent of ways; it had to fall nothing short of a masterpiece.

However, due to recent articles that have been circulating, I felt that I could no longer ignore addressing this pressing issue of separate gender education. I would like to make it clear that I write this editorial not out of a need to defend Stern College for Women (SCW), for SCW requires no attorney since it serves as a sweeping testimonial to the benefits of an all women's education. This article is meant for the women that attend SCW but to them SCW holds no meaning and for the women who read the articles currently in circulation and contemplated for even a nanosecond the validity to them.

For the last 20 years of my life I have had the distinct opportunity of attending all female institutions. Sitting down to write this article has afforded me the occasion to reflect on my past and gaze to my future.

My past contains many years replete with various leadership positions which served to build character and a sense of self. Since the moment that I stepped foot into SCW, I have encountered one opportunity after the next. Every experience has contributed to the woman that I am today. Being in a small all female institution has enabled me to take the initiative, to cultivate, to propose, and to implement new ideas. The prospects for leadership as well as personal growth are endless. The world is at my fingertips; all I have to do is propose an idea and I am given the backing to "run with it." Being in an environment that exists to promote and foster the success of women is an encouraging and empowering feeling. It is these leadership opportunities that enable the development of confidence and the skills necessary to maintain future positions of leadership and influence. From the plans of a new bejt midrash to a new morning

Tanakh track it is apparent that students have the opportunity to inflict change.

When adding the opposite gender to the equation there is a different dynamic that is created. Leadership positions must be divided, very often with men dominating. The atmosphere shifts from one of working together to create the perfect product to an atmosphere of individual competition. It is for these reasons that separate gender institutions are the preferred route in order to ensure success in academia as well as extracurricular pursuits. Previous articles mention how successful Yeshiva University would be if one undergraduate campus was created. This style and approach taken when writing the articles serve to further promulgate the differences between men and women and highlight the very reasons why coeducational classrooms would not be beneficial to women. This factor is ignored in recent articles regarding coeducation. The articles fail to adequately assess how it would negatively impact female learning and growth. This buttresses the view that men very often evaluate benefits for themselves while women evaluate benefits for the team.

Looking to the future, I think of the woman that I want to be. I have numerous goals and aspirations; all of which were strengthened and solidified during my last three and a half years at SCW. After being in a nurturing environment and under the tutelage of women that I respect and admire I know that I have within myself the tools necessary to actualize my hopes and dreams. And that is the benefit of attending SCW. While this is surely not the masterpiece that I had hoped for, it is an impassioned plea for women here to realize the wealth of opportunity within SCW because it is an all women's institution. Women are encouraged to dream big and reach high because now the world is only arm length away.

Have an Issue with this Issue?

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ALANA RUBENSTEIN  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

We live in a scary and diverse world. There are shocking things occurring on a daily basis, both locally and on a more global level. Children are dying as a result of abuse, starvation, and disease. Men are being killed in war, leaving families behind to fend for themselves. Women are being beaten and raped. These atrocities and others are not made up things shown in horror movies and dramas. These are the realities of the times we are living in.

Yes, these topics are not discussed in everyday conversation. They are not pleasant. The woman being beaten by her father is not going to talk about it openly in the middle of the caf. The man suffering from AIDS is not going to bring it up at his office party. This is understandable; no one wants to be labeled or pitied. No one wants to be considered an outsider by his or her peers.

Yet, just because individuals don't want to address these issues in terms of their specifics, does not mean these issues do not exist and should not be discussed, at least in the abstract. People are suffering, unpleasant things do happen, and the only way to raise awareness about these issues is to talk about and publicize them. While things like rape and bodily mutation might still be taboo, they should not be considered too dirty to begin combating. They are not subjects we should shy away from. They are not occurrences we as Jews cannot discuss just because they involve things we do not tend to talk about. Rather, these topics are REAL. They are happening. They must be discussed.

Therefore, I was shocked to hear that many people were upset by an article published in the last issue of The Observer in the Science and Health Section entitled "Clitoridectomy: A Woman's Nightmare." One specific group within our undergraduate community was especially aghast; they could not believe this appeared in a publication distributed on their campus and do not think it should be permitted for a Yeshiva University publication to discuss such things. People have even been saying they will not pick up our paper again.

This appalls me for a number of reasons. First, from a journalistic point of view, the article was not written for shock value. It was carefully edited to be as tasteful as possible without diminishing the atrocious nature of this type of torture. It was written to educate people on something facing over 80 million women worldwide. The information was presented in the context of making this issue known and a priority since it is a serious problem.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, in the broader sense this is an issue of *tikkun olam*. As Jews, we have a responsibility to help our Jewish and non-

Jewish brethren around the world, and clitoridectomy's are afflicted upon women of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian affiliations. If there is something we can do to try and solve this problem than we should do it. If those people offended by this article are not concerned with *tikkun olam* as a priority, which might very well be the case, than I cannot really do much to convince them that this article should most definitely have been discussed in a newspaper, especially in one targeted at people who truly believe they are supposed to be an "or lagoyim" (light unto the nation) and help make the world they live in a better place. But those of you who believe in this mission should take a step back and look at the article in this broader sense outside of the scientific and bodily terms. If people even bothered to really look at and finish the article, it is clear from the article's conclusion that this was the main point of including it in the November edition of The Observer.

Lastly, even if clitoridectomies are an uncomfortable topic, they still need to be discussed. Just because things are unpleasant, shocking, or not 100% congruent with our values as frum Jews does not mean they should not be raised in private and public forums. While clitoridectomies may not be the biggest issue within our community, there are other topics like this we avoid discussing for the same reason. This is one of the reasons why so many frum children and women are afraid to talk about instances of abuse, molestation and rape they have suffered from. They don't open up because no one wants to hear it. It is considered "inappropriate" and something that should be kept private. When big scandals come out years later that victim's fathers, rabbis and confidants have treated them in an unacceptable way, people wonder why no one said anything sooner. Perhaps if these issues were discussed more and considered acceptable public discourse they would be treated as such. These things occur more often than we would like to think they do and the fact that the religious community is willing to pretend they don't occur only makes the victims feel more alone and encourages the people abusing their power to commit such revolting acts since they know their victims will keep quiet or be ignored anyways.

I cannot force anyone to read this paper. If you feel The Observer is not frum enough because it discussed something that affects a significant portion of women around the world that is your prerogative. However, avoiding the uncomfortable does not mean it does not exist or will go away. Not addressing this issue, or other issues like it, only makes it worse. This is the reality of the world we live in and the only way to repair it is through discussion and education, no matter how unpleasant such a dialogue may be.

# OPINIONS

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## Is Fear Based Racism Justifiable?

BY JAIMIE FOGEL

I spent *Pesach* of twelfth grade on both of the U.S. coasts. After a rigorous year of college applications and seminary decisions, my parents felt I needed a break from New York and our age-old holiday traditions. We decided that I would spend the first days with my immediate family on the East Coast and then travel across the country to spend the rest of the holiday with my brother, sister-in-law and her family in California. It would be the first time I traveled on a plane by myself and I was nervous. We ran out of the house the second after *yom tov* ended with little time to spare before my flight was scheduled to take off. While I waited for my row to board, surrounded by massive suitcases, I noticed a suspicious looking man. I cannot know for certain, but he appeared Middle-Eastern, wore a turban, and was carrying a thin briefcase of which he never let go; he paced back and forth, looking nervously around at the other passengers in the terminal. Being that this was only two years after 9/11 and given the fact that I had always feared flying, my eyes were immediately drawn to this peculiar passenger. I tried to stay calm as I kept close vigil on this man and eventually I boarded the plane.

As usual, the plane did not take off on time. I was slightly annoyed, but my annoyance was quickly replaced with fear. Apparently, a passenger with a mysteriously Muslim-sounding name was missing from the plane. The flight attendants kept announcing, "Will (insert long and convoluted name) please report to the front of the plane." After a few repetitions of this ominous announcement, the other passengers started to share my qualms. A 20 minute delay turned into 45 minutes of torture while we all sat there nervously awaiting an explanation that was never given. As I sat there preparing myself for certain death, I could not stop thinking how this situation was a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy for me. Every time I set foot on a plane I feared terrorist activity, and now I was almost relieved that my greatest fear had proven true. Needless to say, after many recitations of the *shema* and almost an hour wait with no explanation other than eerie overhead announcements calling out the name of my assassin, the plane took off and I arrived safely in California six hours later.

I was reminded of this fearful memory this past week

when I read an article about a plane ride that was scheduled to take off in Minneapolis. The flight was detained for several hours after passengers expressed their fears about six Muslim individuals on the plane who they found threateningly suspicious. These six passengers were Imams (Muslim religious leaders) and had just attended a conference of the North American Imams Federation in Minneapolis. They were seen praying in the gate area and some passengers said they were praying "very loudly." Other witnesses reported that they heard the Imams making anti-American remarks and chanted "Allah" as they boarded the plane and additional passengers said they heard the men asking for unnecessary seat belt extensions (seemingly because their bombs were too large to fit in the regular ones). The men were handcuffed and taken off the plane after a passenger passed a note to a flight attendant reporting "six suspicious Arab men on plane," detailing their "crimes" and their seat numbers.

The men were questioned for five hours and claimed they were completely innocent and that they had specifically tried to pray quietly so as not to attract any suspicions. The seat belt extensions, they explained, were needed for their "large bodies" and they also claimed that they have been the victims of much racism, specifically on this airline. They were eventually released with fully refunded tickets and sent back home on the next available flight.

This article, aside from its similarities to my twelfth grade experience, triggered many thoughts about the notion of "feeling safe" in today's world. As Jews, we have always been aware of lurking threats from those who wish to annihilate us, and in turn, we have been trained since childhood to harbor biases towards Arabs for being the emissaries of the destruction of our beloved homeland. It used to be that this fear was particular to Israeli Arabs. But in the wake of publicly declared nuclear campaigns, worldwide terror attacks and Muslim hatred aimed at countries other than Israel, the world has caught on to the minority of a massive race that seeks to destroy the democratic values we have come to cherish.

My personal motto is that I do not judge larger groups of people based on a minority who act inappropriately. This positive attitude has helped me tremendously when it comes to Jews who I do not respect; it can

continued on page 7

## Kramer Going Crazy

BY DEANNA FRAZIN

My favorite television show of all time, hands down, is "Seinfeld." I am, of course, not alone in this feeling. In fact, according to TV Guide, it was voted the #1 show of all time. One of the show's main appeals is the eccentric character of Kramer, played by Michael Richards. His antics can always be counted on for a good belly-aching laugh. However, an event occurred a few weeks ago involving Michael Richards which was no laughing matter.

There is currently much controversy surrounding a horrific episode that occurred at a comedy club Richards performed at in West Hollywood. Supposedly, after being heckled by two African-American audience members during his stand-up act, he let loose a tirade against them. The dialogue is too obscene to repeat verbatim. However, after viewing a tape of the appalling event, it is clear that he used the n-word numerous times and muttered other obscenities as well. My jaw literally dropped when I viewed his disgusting outburst. His tirade could be used as the very textbook definition of racism.

Richards has of course apologized profusely. He apologized on "The Late Show with David Letterman," saying, "I'm not a racist. That's what's so insane about this." The claim is hard to make. If he is not racist, why did the words he used come so naturally to him? If he is not racist, why did he zone in on the hecklers' African-American identities rather than "just swearing" at them? If he is not racist, why did he subject a large audience to a rant lasting more than two minutes and 47 seconds? Although there is no proof predating the incident to indicate that Michael Richards is a racist, the way he reacted that night casts some serious doubts on his character.

One of the best measures of a person is the time-tested method of observing their responses to stressful situations. Over the summer, when Mel Gibson was pulled over for drunk driving and made anti-Semitic comments, he used the same reflexive defense as Richards. "I am not anti-Semitic," he said over and over again. I did not buy this then nor do I buy it now. If someone was truly not prejudiced, racist, anti-Semitic, homophobic or whatever else the case may be, then they would not use certain words and make particular statements in any context whatsoever. The fact that such terrible things can even be formulated in someone's mind

shows serious flaws in their self-compiled worldview.

It is, of course, incredibly rude to heckle someone while they are performing and it definitely breaks the performer's concentration. One has the right to be angry in a situation like this. There is, however, no way to justify what Richards' did and no way to explain his remarks. He easily could have left the stage in silence with his dignity still intact. People are going to have outbursts and get angry sometimes—that's what it is to be human. However, when those outbursts reflect more on the color of a person's skin than the nature of their offense, a line has been crossed. Think about it—Richards could have sworn all he liked at the hecklers and it wouldn't have made the news; only once something like racism or anti-Semitism is mentioned does the whole situation become a media circus. Some may argue that all the attention is ridiculous, embarrassing, and unnecessary, but I disagree. Our harping on these situations is a kind of litmus test. They allow us to measure the temperate of our culture. How intolerable are these actions today? How likely is it that they will continue to be unacceptable in America?

Racism has made its devastating mark on Richards' career the same way it affected Gibson and other celebrities who have underestimated the impact of their words. You can apologize all you want. The question then becomes what are you apologizing for, and why? It seems as though Richards regrets what he has done. However, for him to claim that he is not a racist is a fallacy. If he and others like him are truly sorry they must make an active effort to correct this kind of corrupted thinking. He might consider working with African American groups. Maybe he can meet with African-American leaders and learn more about the history of the n-word and its connotations. Maybe he could do some form of community service in the African-American community.

Either way, it will take a lot of time, a lot of effort, and some much needed education. None of these subjects can even be broached without an acknowledgement of the problem. If Richards, or any other person, finds he is thinking along these lines and doesn't make an effort to purge himself of racist tendencies, then of what value is his apology?

One thing's for sure. The best TV show of all time is never going to be viewed in the same way again.

## Modesty, Violence and Priorities

BY CHANA WIZNITZER

Modesty tailors? The Guardians of Holiness and Education? Modesty certificates?

What an odd concept. A sweet young lady walks into a store and takes her prepackaged skirt, which has been cut and measured to the nth degree, which is now certified modest. (Imagine! A whole new rivalry may now emerge—the modesty *hashgachot!*) Stamped and sealed, the shop having been “approved” and proudly bearing the “modesty certificate,” young women may now happily don their clothing knowing that they are officially “modest.” And similar to the *mashgiach*, there are now “modesty tailors,” individuals who provide tips and personal guidance to women whose dark desires (or simple lack of realization) mislead them into deciding to buy an “immodest” item.

Sound like a futuristic concept of an entirely regulated world? Think again. These ideas are precisely what was brought up at a large conference held November 18<sup>th</sup> in Jerusalem, purportedly to “warn an audience of thousands of male, married yeshiva students that haredi women’s dresses are too short, their wigs are too long, and their sweaters, shirts and blouses are too tight,” according to the Jerusalem Post.

Various leaders and sages were in attendance, including, Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, the leading halakhic authority for haredi Lithuanian Jewry, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Steinmen, a major spiritual leader, Rabbi Michal Yehuda Lefkowitz of the Ponevitch Yeshiva, and Rabbi Natan Tzvi Finkel, head of the Mir Yeshiva. Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of this conference, beyond the fact that no single men were invited, is that no women were asked to attend.

This was a conference on modesty referring entirely to women and yet, no women were allowed to come or were in attendance? Unbelievable.

Some have raised the contention that perhaps this was a kindness on the part of the organizers, as it would have been decidedly embarrassing had women attended only to learn that the garb they were wearing at that very moment in time was considered immodest. Indeed, this might have been quite unkind as such a woman would instantly be a kind of “example” for all the others in the audience.

On the other hand, surely it is not logical to hold an entire conference detailing the problems with women’s dress and neglect to invite women? Could there not have been a special issuance requesting women

to dress extremely modestly, perhaps more than the norm, in order to make sure that none of them were embarrassed? Or surely there could have been a *mechitza* (a division in the audience) in which case no one other than the woman herself would have been aware that the clothing she was wearing was apparently “immodest?”

Indeed, the conference itself does not appear to have addressed specific definitions of what is and is not modesty, although there was some mention of the fact that one must make sure “blouses were 10 centimeters longer than the edge of the skirt along the waist so as to cover [the midriff] during all movements.”

Apparently there was also a suggestion that stores should have certain “modesty certificates,” and those stores without them should be boycotted. There seemed to be another suggestion that modesty tailors should “be posted in each of the large clothing stores serving the haredi community. These women could advise female customers on issues of modesty.”

One haredi principal in Jerusalem, however, pointed out that, “modest clothing depends on how it is worn and who wears it,” rather than the clothing itself.

*continued on page 7*

BY AVIVA BELLMAN

I am engaged in an inner struggle regarding my outlook toward my education. Is college just a means to an end, a torturous journey toward a career, or is it a process, a learning experience, during which I can enjoy and value what I learn? At Stern College for Women (SCW), many students attempt to finish college quickly, making an effort to fulfill core requirements as easily as possible. Sadly, this attitude drains my natural enthusiasm to learn, allowing me to forget that I value my studies because they serve to enlighten me and enhance my scope of knowledge.

This August I joined the SCW community, eager to begin the exciting journey of a college education. Naturally I was a bit nervous; my achievements in college, it seemed, could predict the course of my life! However, meeting the professors allowed my excitement to overshadow my insecurities. At orientation, they introduced their disciplines with such enthusiasm and such joy that it was hard to imagine that studies so beloved could be anxiety producing. Speaking with Professor Richard Nochimson stands out in my mind; his eyes glazed over when he recalled the fond memories of his college years. He described a time of curious sampling of aca-

demical courses, of discovering his interests, and experimenting with his creativity. He suggested that I not worry so much about my future, but enjoy the present. College could be an experience, a fun opportunity to discover complex ideas and brilliance in subjects I never expected to enjoy. I resolved to adopt this outlook.

As orientation thawed into registration, my idealism began to dwindle. I began to hear shouts of panic, grumbles, and dread. I immediately forgot that SCW could be a pleasant, glorious world in which I could choose to study what I love. Instead, I began to mimic the anxiety around me. How could I fulfill my liberal arts requirements as quickly as possible? I’d better make sure that all of the classes I’m signed up for fulfill some requirement. Otherwise, I thought, I’ll be working for nothing.

The reaction to grades lower than A further highlights my frustration with the existing academic approach. Consider the following scene. My professor hands back essay drafts covered in red ink. I glance at my critiqued work, stifling my disappointment at not receiving a perfect mark and instead, I focus on appreciating the opportunity to increase my proficiency at

*continued on page 7*

## POINT-COUNTERPOINT

Should YU Develop an Alumni Organization for Recent Alums?

BY SHOSHANA FRUCHTER  
AND ESTHER GENUTH

Yeshiva University’s (YU) commitment to its students should be continued beyond graduation. Each year YU pumps out more than two thousand quality students who had been afforded, while on campus, a plethora of academic opportunities and leadership training programs. YU is more than a three year college stint for its students. It’s a world. It’s a community. It’s a social circle.

Upon graduating, many alums, particularly recent graduates who are single, find themselves at a loss for that community. Of course they can join their counterparts and former classmates, move to the “other side” of Washington Heights or head south to the Upper West, and make a home for themselves there, but something is lacking.

That something is YU’s place in this picture. Are all of these people just students who at one point benefited from YU and no longer do? Or, as the university likes us to think while we’re still undergraduates, are these people YU’s representatives in the world, the key to the Jewish future? If the answer is the latter, YU should continue to be an integral part of this community of graduate students and young professionals. More specifically, YU should develop programming to organize this significant and valuable population.

With three student councils looking out for the undergraduates on the Beren Campus and at least six on the Wilf

Campus, the Yeshiva College and Stern College for Women student populations are saturated with activities and opportunities to develop themselves and socialize. Plus, students are constantly bombarded with wonderful new opportunities by the Center for the Jewish Future (CJF). College students at YU just don’t have enough hours in the day for their studies, all of these extracurricular activities, and social lives.

At the same time, and in stark hurtful contrast, recent graduates leave the cacophony of activities and step out of the realm of formal Jewish education, often for the first time in their lives, and are welcomed by a deep silence. There are few to no YU events geared to them. When they finally have time for socializing and extracurricular developments, the opportunity to meet like-minded individuals, to join together as members of the same community, is absent.

YU has over-invested in the undergraduate population and should concentrate funds and energy to organize their recent graduates. The CJF should provide them with a platform to continue their development as Jewish leaders and help recent grads find their place in the greater YU community.

While the interest of alumni and the lives they lead following graduation should be a matter of concern for any university, the majority of time and funding should be placed on the current students who attend the institution. Yeshiva University (YU) should consider the students who presently attend the establishment to be the number one priority on a list with multiple areas of focus and attention.

Most importantly, YU is an academic institution and its primary use of resources should be focused in the academic realm. Before expanding the various departments that currently add to student and alumni life, the educational departments need to be developed and perfected to the greatest extent possible. Alumni affairs and communal programming are important and crucial, but only after the main purpose of a university, its educational experience, is fulfilled.

Furthermore, YU already houses a division, The Office of University Alumni Affairs, which handles alumni issues and events. Reunions, barbecues, and lecture series are constantly being offered as opportunities for alumni to reunite. Alumni are able to receive benefits

such as auditing select undergraduate courses, access to the career resource library, and use of the on-campus recreation and dining areas.

Alumni affairs and events has also been handled and sponsored by the various alumni affairs associations that work with and for former YU graduates. YU currently has nine active alumni associations, including those for the undergraduate schools, graduate schools and for alumni living in Israel as well.

Although alumni should represent a priority among the various development projects that YU currently faces, the goal of a premier education must continue to be the main concern of the academic institution.

# A Message From Our President



SHOSHANA FRUCHTER  
TAC PRESIDENT

Contact  
Shoshana  
at  
srfruch1@  
yu.edu

One semester of this academic year is drawing to a close. Wow.

Looking back at the whirl-wind of events that color August, September, October, November and now December's calendar, I'm amazed at what our student body has accomplished.

Last semester "T Cubed" was an algebraic unknown, now it's part and parcel of the Stern College for Women community. Women from all sides of the learning community join together each week in the packed Beit Midrash thanks to the dedicated members of the "T Cubed" committee under the leadership of Torah Activities Council (TAC) Treasurer Atara Lindenbaum. Certain students are drawn to the guest speakers, including a group of students who attend a weekly *shiur* in French established by Rebecca Barnett, TAC vice president. Others are attracted to the atmosphere of the 6<sup>th</sup> floor with each classroom in use due to the lack

of space in the beit midrash. Each week when I see the entire floor bustling, our Torah center overflowing, I get more and more excited for the incoming students who will benefit from our new beit midrash.

*Rosh Chodesh*. Need I say more? The Rosh Chodesh StarGazers Committee, under the leadership of Shoshana Agatstein, TAC vice president, has brought our celebrations of the new month to a new level. Snacks are now snacks with a personal touch and an inspirational note, and are coupled with special Rosh Chodesh prayers, communal and voluminous with song.

The Beit Midrash Committee, led by senior Eva Greenspan, has worked tirelessly and creatively to beautify our three batei midrash. Through signage, emails and gift-giving, committee members have made it clear that the beit midrash is the place for all students to learn Jewish texts.

All of these initiatives were brought to you by your

peers, your classmates and your friends.

With enough planning and effort anything can be. The examples above are proof of that fact.

Next semester is just beyond the horizon but plans are already well in the works. TAC and Stern College for Women Student Council (SCWSC) have been working together on a great project for next term. The goal is to create organized *chessed* in the SCW community. Like all those who want to learn Torah *b'chavruta* (in pairs) know to turn to T-cubed, we want all those who want to do *chessed* to know where to go weekly.

Early on in the semester I met a sophomore named Tara who expressed interest in visiting homebound elderly in the area. How great would it be if Tara knew just where to turn with that wish? Next semester she's prepared to visit neighbors early Thursday afternoons as part of this SCWSC/TAC *chessed* program.

So when planning your

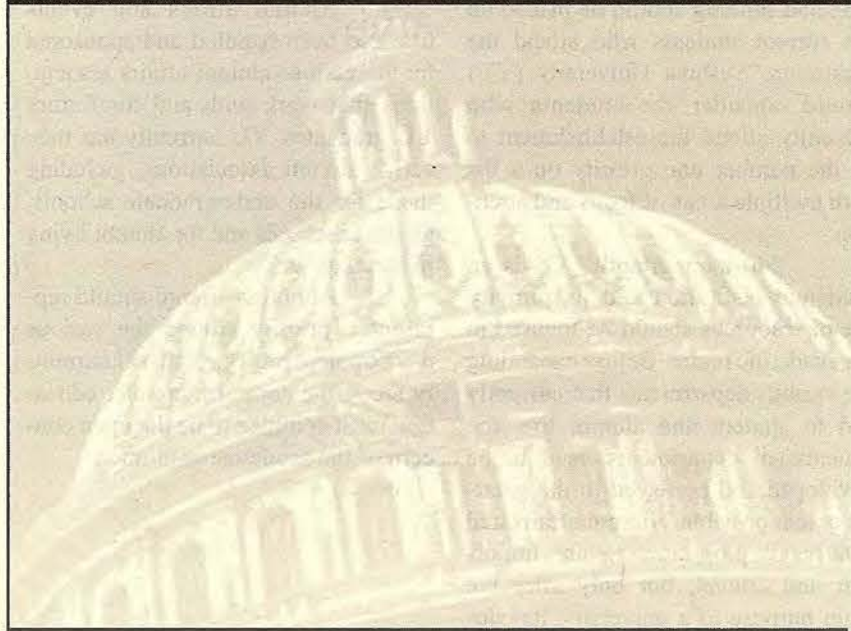
courses for next semester, make sure to book your learning *chavruta* for Tuesday nights at 7:30 for T Cubed and work in time Thursday afternoons for SCW's first-ever weekly *chessed* program.

To those that helped create these programs, your dedication to the betterment of life on campus is inspiring. Keep at it! To those that have yet to join a committee: What do you love? What do you think is missing from our campus life? Either way, the TAC board is looking forward to working with you next semester!

Good luck on finals and see you soon!

Observer 7x10

## Don't learn history ... Make it!



The Orthodox Union's Legislative Fellowship is an exciting one year post-college program for select, motivated college graduates with leadership potential and an interest in serving the Jewish people while gaining hands on, high level political and policymaking experience.

Fellows serve for one year in Washington, DC on the staff of the OU's Institute for Public Affairs, learning political advocacy, issues management and communications skills while helping advance the policies and priorities of Orthodox Judaism in the public square.

Fellows will work side by side with senior OU leadership, Jewish communal leaders, Congressional and Executive Branch staffers and be mentored by OU/IPA professionals.



2007-08 Fellowship applications and stipend details are now available at: [www.ou.org/public\\_affairs](http://www.ou.org/public_affairs)  
Application Deadline: March 6, 2007

## Justifiable Racial Profiling?

*continued from page 4*

be hard to separate a people from their religion, but it is necessary to maintain faith in the larger dogma which I know does not condone that kind of behavior. However, it is quite problematic when a significant minority of an ethnic group practices inhumane, illegal, abhorrent behaviors without being adequately condemned by their fellow Muslims. Acts of terror are committed in the name of a fundamental Allah, and the supposed peaceful, non-terrorist Muslims do very little to try to squelch such minorities from becoming the majority aside from proclaiming their innocence.

I will admit that I have become a frequent racial profiler, but I don't know if there is anything I can do to change that. When I see women in Muslim headaddresses walking into a store, I eye them suspiciously even though I am aware that they are probably innocent shoppers just like me. I think much of the world has also developed this same suspicious attitude for justifiable reasons. It is not a bias born out of hate, the common form against Jews, but out of fear. How many people actually fear that Jews will murder, high-jack planes or blow themselves up in the name of God on a busy

street full of coffee shops and boutiques? This new type of racism, and we must admit that it is such, is born out of a realized fear that a significant minority of Muslims have purposely created. The passengers on the Minneapolis flight overreacted, but can one blame them? If my plane experience had happened this year, after many more terrorist attacks have reinforced this post-9/11 fear of terrorism outside of Israel, I probably would have sent that note to the flight attendant myself. Initially, I thought to mock the passengers for their blatant overreactions. But their behavior is understandable when put into the context of the panicked society we have become.

What is going to become of the notion of "feeling safe" in today's world? My heart-beat used to quicken when a bus would pass me by on the streets of Jerusalem, but who's to say the buses in America are any safer? Personally, I start to develop negative feelings towards a race when they make me scared to walk down a city street, to travel to see family and to pray at my ancestor's gravesites.

So I admit it. I'm a racist. But it's not my fault.

Something may be completely modest, stylistically speaking, but one's air may make it appear extremely sexy.

As one who has never had a clear, serviceable, informative class defining the halakhic obligations of modesty, I cannot entirely object to this conference. For all I know, it could very well be that women are not being modest in accordance to halakha, and an innocent desire to make them aware of this is what prompted this conference.

From a purely logical perspective, then, I must confess my amazement that this is what occupies our time.

Conferences on what women wear- and women receive no invitation? A mandate issued that fathers and husbands must "vigilantly ensure" that their daughters' and wives' clothing are in accord with the roles of modesty? Modesty certificates? Modesty tailors? This puts so much emphasis on the exterior, and what is more is that it puts so much emphasis on hiding it, submerging it behind layers of clothes, attempting to swathe the body in layer upon layer of shapeless bulge.

And I have to wonder- is this really what we as Jews want to spend our time on? This is why we call together a meeting of sages and community leaders? Not to address broad and important topics such as "poverty, allocation of resources, education, some of the new haredi units in the IDF... maybe something related to the current political coalition," to quote the blog Treppenwitz, but to discuss women's choice of attire?

This is the pressing meeting for which we summon the greats?

It's surprising that so much attention goes to the exterior when terrible things, awful things, have been occurring within the haredi world at a time when haredi violence has mounted and become considerably distressing. We are at a time where people seem to think of them-

## Is Modesty Certifiable?

selves as righteous zealots when their actions are anything but. For instance, as recently as October, women in Geula wearing clothing that seemed modest to them were sprayed with bleach mix because others felt their clothing had "shiny or colorful elements" and were thus offended by their garb.

Ynetnews.com posted one woman's righteously indignant response to this. "This is *bitul* Torah (wasting time that could be spent on Torah study)," she said. "Don't they have anything else to do but look at women and determine whether they are modest or not?" It's a good point. Since when do yeshiva students armed with bleach spray bottles wander the streets? And since when do they actively look at women in order to determine which ones are modest?

Since when do yeshiva students "destroy thousands of shekels worth of merchandise with bleach" at a woman's clothing store on Amos Street because they deemed it immodest? Who permitted this? What makes this kind of vandalism allowed? The idea that it's being done to defend the Torah? And who made these people the judges?

Since when do Haredim warn storeowners that unless they close their stores, which have been termed "spiritual hazards," there's a good chance that they will be burned down?

Since when do Orthodox Jewish teenagers allegedly beat up a Pakistani immigrant, as was related by nydailynews.com? "They hit me in the face with brass knuckles four or five times while somebody held my hands," said the victim, Shahid Amber, 24, a gas station attendant. "Then they all beat and kicked me. They were screaming 'Muslim m-f-r. You m-f-g Muslim terrorists. Go back to your country.'"

Since when do Haredim and Orthodox Jews participate in physical violence when they are not happy with a situation, as with regard to the recent Gay Pride Parade which was meant to have been held in Jerusalem? Since when do we throw stones at

people, or burn garbage cans, or engage in any kind of physical violence to prove our point?

I do not want to accuse Haredim and/or Orthodox Jews across the board of committing violent acts. But I think that we have enough to worry about within our own community to warrant some questioning. Why are we worrying about skirts and centimeters, when the true problem is learning how to differentiate between the Torah, its mandates and our love for others? Why are we not hearing speeches about the need for kindness, the need for calm, the need for peaceful protests? Perhaps because these are all isolated incidents.

But these isolated incidents are accumulating and one must wonder, what is being done to stop them?

We need to worry about our interior spirituality, observance and understanding of the Torah and its laws. We need to care more about the respect and dignity of other people, and less about zealousness that permits people to bleach others they do not feel are "modest enough" for them. What we need now is a strong statement issuing a condemnation of all violence and physical zealousness on behalf of the Torah. We need to focus on our inner nature and respect for others, and not about the definitions of how many inches and centimeters our clothing must be.

We need to sort out our priorities.

We need our leaders to assemble over important issues, issues revolving around respect, dignity, humanity, kindness. Not about enforcing men's "vigilance" in the area of their wives' modesty.

We need to focus on ourselves. Men on men. Women on women. Look inside, and see what shall be seen.

Quit worrying about someone else for a while. Worry about yourself, and your own actions. Take responsibility for yourself.

Maybe that way, we'll actually accomplish something.

**LIBRARY SCHEDULE**  
**HEDI STEINBERG LIBRARY**  
**READING**  
**PERIOD/FINALS/INTERSESSION**  
**'06-'07**

	NORTH WING	SECOND FLOOR
<b>DECEMBER:</b>		
12-14	Tues-Thurs. 8:30 a.m.-2:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.-12:00 a.m.
15	Friday 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
16	Sat. Night 8:00 p.m.-2:00 a.m.	C L O S E D
17	Sunday 11:00 a.m.-2:00 a.m.	12:00 p.m.-12:00 a.m.
18-21	Mon-Thurs. 8:30 a.m.-2:00 a.m.	9:00 am.-12a.m.
22	Friday 8:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m.-1:00p.m.
23	Sat. Night 8:00 p.m.-2:00 a.m.	C L O S E D
24	Sunday 9:45 a.m.-2:00 a.m.	12:00 p.m.-12:00 a.m.
25-27	Mon.-Wed. 8:30 a.m.-2:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.-12:00 a.m.
28	Thursday 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.	9:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
29	Friday 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
31	Sunday C L O S E D	C L O S E D
<b>JANUARY</b>		
1	Monday C L O S E D	C L O S E D
2-4	Tues-Thur 9:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.	9:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
5	Friday 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
7	Sunday C L O S E D	C L O S E D
8-11	Mon-Thur 9:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.	9:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
12	Friday 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

GOOD LUCK!

## Enjoying the Academic Journey

*continued from page 4*

expressing myself. I remind myself that my professor is trying to teach me how to convey my ideas more clearly. Had he ignored my mistakes, my professor would have been asserting that my ideas don't matter, that they are not worth being cultivated, sharpened, and clarified. Suddenly, I become aware of the bitter complaints of my peers. They are upset, because they now have another meaningless hurdle to jump over in their attempt to graduate. A few even

called the professor "mean" because he failed to give them back a perfect paper. These students clearly view their education as nothing but a means to a vocation. It is difficult for me to anticipate revising my essay with enthusiasm when my peers view the task as irritating.

If the students at SCW view college exclusively as a means to an end, they will fail to explore their academic horizons, broaden their minds, and enjoy their classes. Furthermore, they will dampen the academic curiosity and excitement of stu-

dents who want to learn. I want to proceed through my years at SCW with my academic philosophy intact. I want to care about what I study, I want to delve into academics and I want to achieve a greater understanding of a slew of subjects, even if this means working a little harder or getting less than perfect grades. I don't want my pursuit of a degree, the ultimate prize I will get from SCW, to take away from my primary focus of enjoying my studies and enhancing my scope of knowledge.

# NEWS

## In an Effort to be More Accessible, President Set to Meet with Women on Beren Campus

BY SHAYNA HOENIG

Upholding his pledge at the October Town Hall meeting to establish a greater connection with the undergraduate women of Yeshiva University (YU), President Richard M. Joel will be holding office hours each semester on the Beren Campus. The first session of meetings will take place on the evening of December 13.

Students will have the opportunity to speak individually with the university president for intervals of approximately 15-20 minutes. The appointment slots will be assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis, though President Joel declared his willingness to elongate his visit if there is additional student demand.

According to Rabbi Josh Joseph, chief of staff for President Joel, a similar program is currently being conducted on the Wilf Campus and has reportedly been very successful. Not only have all of President Joel's time slots been claimed, but there is also a waiting list of Yeshiva College students who are eager to replace any last-minute cancella-

tions. Rabbi Joseph was not certain about the exact status of appointments at Stern College for Women (SCW), but he informed The Observer that a number of women have already requested meetings.

The motivation behind President Joel's decision to establish downtown office hours was twofold. First, it has been a common request among the undergraduate women, who, due to geographic considerations, do not enjoy the same access to the president as the men uptown. Although President Joel does make his usual appearance at the biannual Town Hall meetings, many students have expressed their desire to meet with him in a more personalized fashion. The excitement that has been generated by the women of SCW in response to the announcements about President Joel's planned office hours affirms the high interest level among the student body.

The second catalyst was the president himself. Most deans and presidents of colleges have office hours for students and President Joel felt it was a practice that YU should institute as

well. "President Joel really appreciates being able to spend time with students," said Rabbi Joseph. "It's very important to him as president to not just be dealing with faculty, campus, and administrative issues; he also wanted to be with students."

"I think it's important for President Joel to connect with the women of Stern College on a one-to-one level" said Esther Baruh (SCW '09). "This new initiative will definitely enhance student-administration communications."

The development is exciting for President Joel and the students of SCW alike. "There's a lot of hard work in being president of Yeshiva University" remarked President Joel. "The payoff is in getting to spend time with our students, both for what I learn and for the sheer pleasure in it."

*President Joel will be meeting with students on December 13 from 6-8:30 p.m. Those interested in a meeting should contact Eliana Rudolph at erudolp1@yu.edu.*

## TAC Expands Role with Impressive and Innovative Agenda

BY NAVA BILLET

The Torah Activities Council (TAC) at Stern College for Women (SCW) has assumed an unprecedented degree of activity since the start of the fall semester. Under the auspices of President Shoshana Fruchter (SCW '07), the student-funded organization has launched many new initiatives, both weekly and monthly.

One of the notable new projects of TAC is the creatively titled, "T Cubed," a weekly learning program held in the beit midrash of the 245 Lexington Building on Tuesday nights. There are often source sheets available on topics such as the weekly *parsha*, and issues relating to the current Jewish calendar. Additionally, at the end of the one-on-one learning session, there is usually an optional *shiur* given by an SCW student volunteer.

The weekly gathering has been met with great success from the very first meeting. The numbers range from 100 students at peak times to 40 students during the busy midterm season. The high attendance rate may also reflect the intensive advertising

efforts of TAC board members. TAC board members Vice President Shoshana Agatstein (SCW '07), Vice President Rebecca Barnett (SCW '07), Secretary Erin Cooper (SCW '08) and Treasurer Atara Lindenbaum (SCW '07), and others wear shirts with the now familiar slogan: "Torah on Tuesdays with TAC (T3)! Be there or be squared!"

TAC also runs several shabbatons throughout the year, including the biannual *Reim* YACHAD Shabbaton and the newly biannual TAC-SOY Shabbaton. The impressive turnout at the first TAC-SOY Shabbaton exceeded expectations and participation in the spring will presumably match that of the fall. According to Fruchter, it is through these weekend activities that TAC continues to play an important role in "foster[ing] the growing sense of community at school."

In recent weeks, the organization has been involved in the creation of an interdepartmental forum for the convergence of secular and Judaic disciplines. The project had its kick-off event

*continued on page 21*

## Judaic Studies Department Hires New Academic Assistant

BY CHANIE DINERMAN

Mrs. Cali Orenbuch, a Stern College for Women (SCW) alumna, has been appointed as academic assistant to Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel, chairman of the Rebecca Ivy Department of Jewish Studies. Orenbuch will work in both administrative and counseling capacities.

With the expanding student body and growing numbers of Judaic studies majors, the department has been increasingly challenged to provide courses which are accommodating and appealing to women of various backgrounds and interests. Every full time student at SCW is required to take at least one Judaic studies course each semester and the department has so far met this need by offering 85 classes a semester and employing over 45 full and part time faculty members. Planning and organizing have become a difficult feat for the department's administrative staff, which until now had been comprised solely of Rabbi Kanarfogel.

"Rabbi Kanarfogel is doing so much for the school and [is] involved in so many things," said Ora Genack (SCW '08), a Judaic studies major. "It is [there-

fore] sometimes hard to track him down."

Orenbuch's hiring was intended to relieve Rabbi Kanarfogel of some of his administrative responsibilities, allowing him to allocate more time for individual meetings with students. Orenbuch will take charge of all scheduling, juggling the technical and logistic issues involved in coordinating such an expansive number of classes and faculty. She will also be available to offer guidance about Judaic studies requirements and will evaluate courses from other institutions to better facilitate the transferring of credits.

The new academic assistant related her excitement in "working with the students." As an undergraduate, Orenbuch established a close relationship with Rabbi Kanarfogel for whom she did work study, and maintained her ties with the Jewish studies chairman after graduation. She went on to pursue a master's degree in medieval Jewish history from the Bernard Revel Graduate School for Judaic Studies.

"[Orenbuch] knows how we run and feels very comfortable with what we do," said Rabbi Kanarfogel. "Students

should not feel that they only must speak with the head horse... [and should] feel comfortable to seek her out and take advantage of her being here."

According to SCW Dean Karen Bacon, the appointment of Orenbuch was an "administrative initiative [as] the result of conversations with students" about the need for a larger, more student friendly Judaic studies department. Orenbuch's efforts, explained Dean Bacon, will invariably benefit students as they enjoy greater access to the resources and administrators of the department, as well as a more organized and efficient course schedule.

Orenbuch's appointment represents just one of the many steps recently taken by the administration to keep pace with the growing demands of students, as the university continues to expand. Rabbi Kanarfogel could hardly contain his enthusiasm over the new addition: "It's win, win, win," he said. "It's a great story."

*Mrs. Cali Orenbuch's office is located in Room 405 of 245 Lexington Avenue. She can be reached by phone at 212 340-7718, or by email at corenbuch@yu.edu.*

## Collaborating with Others, CJF Offers a Number of Winter Break Trips

BY CHAYA CITRIN

As finals week comes to a grueling end, a select group of undergraduates will pack their bags and embark on one of three winter break trips sponsored by Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future (CJF). The target destinations are Guatemala, Israel, and the American Jewish communities of the Eastern Seaboard.

For the second year since its inception, the CJF is leading students on winter break trips devoted to the development of leadership skills, reaching out to fellow Jews, and other efforts related to *tikkun olam*. According to Laya Pelzner, the presidential fellow to CJF Director Rabbi Kenneth Brander, the trips are purported "to provide students with the opportunity to grow while servicing the larger Jewish community."

During the 2006 winter intersession, students visiting Israel performed volunteer work for communities devastated by the previous summer's disengagement from Gaza. The CJF also led students on a relief mission to Honduras, where participants helped to build a school-

house and learned about important humanitarian issues. Others took part in a trip to Germany, attempting to "build bridges" with both Jewish and secular German figures.

Continuing its tradition from last year, the CJF will sponsor missions to both Israel and Central America, with slight variations. Twenty two students will participate in the "Lman Achai Israel Leadership Experience," which has been initiated by the Yeshiva University (YU) Israel Club and is being organized in conjunction with the CJF, the Office of Student Affairs, and the S. Daniel Abraham Israel Program in Jerusalem. The CJF is more directly involved in the planning of the mission to Central America, in which 15 students will travel to Guatemala in partnership with the American Jewish World Service (AJWS).

A new addition to the roster, "Jewish Life Coast to Coast," will arrange for 20 undergraduates to visit the Jewish communities of Baltimore, Charleston, New Orleans, Miami, Boca Raton, and Boynton Beach. During the course of the trip, the

*continued on page 13*



# SCW Alumnae, AECOM Students Establish Undergraduate Research Fund

BY SARA LEFKOVITZ

In a gesture of appreciation and philanthropic largesse, a group of Stern College for Women (SCW) alumnae is giving back to the institution that made its pursuit of medicine possible. Recipients of the prestigious Anne Scheiber fellowship and current students at Yeshiva University's Albert Einstein College of Medicine (AECOM), the women have spearheaded the creation of a research fund for the undergraduates of their alma mater.

Titled the Stern-Einstein Research Connection (SERC), the initiative will subsidize summer research internships for undergraduate women at the Jack and Pearl Resnick Campus. The opportunity will be limited to freshmen and sophomores major-

ing in the sciences and will be run in conjunction with the Roth Scholars Program, which offers research experience to upperclassmen on the medical school's premises.

The idea for the fund came as an outgrowth of various meetings between a cadre of four SCW alumnae at AECOM, SCW Dean Karen Bacon, and Dr. Harvey Babich, chair of the biology department at SCW. Meredith Weiss (SCW '03), a third-year medical student at Einstein, first approached Dean Bacon nearly two years ago about the possibility of sponsoring a research competition, as a way of repaying the college for financing her graduate education. Weiss appealed to a few classmates at AECOM for their assistance, and together, with input from Dean Bacon and Dr. Babich, they

replaced the initial suggestion with the current plans to establish a research fund.

"As my first year of medical school went by, there were always meetings about loans and financial debt," Weiss



said, offering her reasons for initiating the fund. "I just felt so thankful that I didn't have to deal with this financial headache. I realized that [the Anne Scheiber scholarship] was such an amazing gift and I wanted to give back."

The Anne Scheiber Fellowship Program awards both

full and partial scholarships of up to \$40,000 per year to SCW students pursuing their medical degrees at AECOM. Weiss received the scholarship in its third year of establishment and has solicited contributions for the new fund from fellow awardees. Ninety percent of the SCW alumnae at Einstein have pledged donations thus far, amounting to a total of nearly \$1500, half of the sum required to cover the salary and housing costs of one student.

According to Joan Apple, Director of Institutional Advancement at SCW, the university may be able to raise the remaining \$1500, so that the fund can begin sponsoring students as early as the summer of 2007. Apple, who oversees all fundraising activities on behalf of SCW, has created an account for SERC contributions, but has not been

personally involved in soliciting for the new program.

Weiss hopes the fund will grow so that it can accommodate more than one student each summer. As such, the college has enlisted the public relations expertise of Marcy Frank, a media relations writer from the university's Department of Communications. Frank has already published a press release on the new SERC program and is attempting to pitch the story to a broader media base, namely through promotion materials. "We'd like to get some buzz going so we can get an endowment, so we're not struggling each year to come up with the money," she explained.

The immediate goal of the internship program is to pro-

*continued on page 23*

## CSI Shares Secrets of Forensic Science

BY HILLY KRIEGER

On November 29, the Sociology and Biology departments and clubs, along with the Stern College for Women Student Council (SCWSC), hosted Dr. Larry Kobilinsky, a renowned crime scene investigator, for dinner and a lecture on the Beren Campus. Dr. Kobilinsky, also an alumnus of Yeshiva University's Marsha Stern Talmudical Academy, addressed a full audience in Koch Auditorium on the subject of "DNA and Crime Scene Investigation: How it's Really Done."



Dr. Larry Kobilinsky

Dr. Kobilinsky is currently a professor of Biology and Immunology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and has maintained a high profile in his field. He has made numerous appearances on Direct and Court TV and has been interviewed by major news networks such as CNN. Dr. Kobilinsky is one of the leading Crime Scene Investigators on the Eastern Seaboard and is the author of two books, "Forensic DNA Analysis" (2006) and "DNA: Forensic and Legal Applications" (2004).

Offering an in-depth analysis of the many facets of crime scene investigation, Dr. Kobilinsky described the steps investigators take to achieve their main goals of securing an area, searching for evidence, and using that evidence in a court of law to bring perpetrators to justice. He cited many cases in which DNA and forensic evidence played a significant role in the investigation, such as the infamous OJ Simpson trial and the Lacy Peterson case.

"Police arrive and des-

ignate the crime scene by taping it off and limiting entry to crucial staff only," said Dr. Kobilinsky. "Following this, police divide the area into geometric patterns so as not to miss any spots, thereby overlooking evidence." He went on to explain that once the victim has been found, the coroner or medical examiner searches to meet three criteria. "Police examine the body and try to determine manner of death, cause of death and time of death," he said. Once these facts are established, the investigators can then look for more detailed evidence as to how the crime

was executed.

Forensic DNA analysis incorporates more than just blood spots and fingerprints. According to Dr. Kobilinsky, specialized police investigators are also trained in geometry and physics; disciplines which help them recreate crime scenes and determine the exact position of the victim and criminal. These factors assist the authorities in determining the mode of entry as well as the events which led up to the crime.

Dr. Kobilinsky drew a distinction between the way crime scene investigation is actually conducted and the way it is depicted on television shows like CSI: Miami. "First of all," he said, "not all crime scene investigators are as handsome or beautiful as those portrayed on CSI. Second, although much of the technology represents actual methods used in real crime scene investigations, many more methods are used than are portrayed

*continued on page 12*

## Leaders Advise SCW Students on Balancing Careers and Families

BY ALLISON LIEBMAN

On December 5, a panel of five Orthodox women convened in the Ivry Center of the Schottenstein Residence Hall for a discussion entitled "Doing Good, Doing Well," an event sponsored by the Office of Career Services (OCS) and the Center for the Jewish Future (CJF). The women spoke about their careers in Jewish education, nonprofit organizations, government, Jewish communal services and social services, to give Stern College for Women (SCW) students an idea of the opportunities available to Orthodox women in the professional world, as well as the challenges they may encounter.

The idea was to "expose students to successful Orthodox women who can serve as mentors," said Naomi Kapp, of the OCS, in her introduction of the panel, and to write off the "assumptions that students make about careers." Kapp described the participants as "viable Orthodox role models... who incorporated Jewish values into the career they entered." The featured speakers included Dr. Anita Septimus, Ms. Linda Levi, Ms. Elaine Witty, Ms. Linda Stock, and Ms. Abi Dauber Sterne.

Septimus, the first to speak, received her M.A. in social work and her Ph.D. in health psychiatry. She recounted her "lifetime journey," which took her as far as France and to her current position as program director of the Family AIDS Center in the Montefiore Medical Center. Although Septimus admitted that "teaching is [her] passion," she said it required too much of a "high energy level field," and thus decided to focus on social work. "Hashem guides each person to reach their potential," she said, a lesson she learned by engaging in

*tikkun olam* in her work with pediatric patients. Septimus gave the audience lasting advice, telling the students to "follow [their] hearts and reach to [their] highest aspirations without sacrificing and neglecting family, children and husbands."

Witty, a SCW and Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law alumna, majored in political science and was SCW Student Council president as an undergraduate student. After receiving her law degree, Witty worked for a private immigration law firm, but eventually quit her job and switched to a public relations firm as a product placement advisor. She is currently an executive director in the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Affairs for Mayor Michael Bloomberg's Human Resources Administration. She advised the women to "listen to [their] inner voice," mimicking the sentiments of Septimus, her aunt. Witty also stressed the need to be self-sufficient and have "transferable skills," skills that could be applied to a variety of disciplines and situations. "Finding [oneself] takes time," concluded Witty, stressing that the women should "make mistakes, enjoy the journey and have no regrets."

Dauber Sterne is the director of Limmud NY, an organization that plans an annual Jewish weekend retreat of over 800 Jews. As director, she is involved with every part of the organization, and "seeks out opportunities to fill gaps in [her] education," she explained. Dauber Sterne started off her career in nonprofit organizations by working for the United Jewish Agency, and was later asked by a college to help pilot Limmud. She stressed the importance of networking and being seen, which can ultimately lead professional development.

Levy, the assistant executive

vice president to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), spoke next. She narrated her journey from America to Israel, where she was director of community service of JDC, and back to America. Her dedication to community service has led her to "play a role in Jewish history in the making around the world," she explained. This passion has allowed Levy to travel around Israel and to 30 other countries to help and restore the Jewish communities within them. Levy told the students to network, get a masters degree, and "manage Jewish identity without compromise."

The final panelist was Stock, a SCW graduate who is now the principal of Yeshivat Noam, an Orthodox Jewish yeshiva elementary school in Bergenfield, New Jersey. Stock explained her love of teaching and how she manages to balance her family and her career. She not only took off time when she had children, but she also switched jobs when she needed to be the breadwinner of her family. She urged students to "follow their heart," "be passionate" and "figure out what...to do before finishing college."

"The panel showed different opportunities for women who want to uphold a career while taking care of a family," said Rachel Gelles (SCW '09). The event opened up the eyes of SCW students to careers that help service the Jewish community while also leaving time to maintain one's Jewish identity and a family.

# FEATURES

## Schneier Center Creates Student Leadership Council

BY YAFFI SPODEK

The Rabbi Arthur Schneier Center for International Affairs of Yeshiva University (YU) has recently appointed 20 undergraduate men and women to be members of a new Student Leadership Council.

Launched in March 2004, the Schneier Center has thrived under the leadership of Dr. Ruth Bevan, who has served as director since its inception. According to its mission statement, the Schneier Center "seeks to promote international understanding and cooperation by providing an educational forum for the exchange of ideas related to diverse critical issues in our increasingly interdependent world."

The Student Leadership Council was established "to get students involved in the Center," explained Dr. Bevan. "The Schneier Center thus gives recognition to students who have distinguished themselves...by including them in the decision-making process of the Schneier

Center Program, by organizing pre-event dinners for Council members with Schneier Center speakers in order to help students broaden their contacts, and by arranging special trips or other activities for other Council members."

The members of the inaugural council were nominated by faculty representatives of YU's undergraduate programs, and each appointment was confirmed by Dr. Bevan and the Academic Council of the Center. These specific students were chosen as council members "because of their commitment to the values expressed in the Schneier Center mission statement as demonstrated by their endeavors to put those values into operation through social and political activism," said Dr. Bevan. "The council members act as an important liaison between the Schneier Center and the general student body."

The goal of the council members is to get other students more involved with the center's affairs. As program coordinator, Menachem Butler works closely with the council and organizes its

activities with Dr. Bevan. The exact role of the council is still being defined, and the selection process of the students for future councils will be decided in the upcoming weeks. "We want this to be a student-driven process," Dr. Bevan remarked. "We certainly want students at large to identify with the Schneier Center and to become involved with it." To realize that goal, the council will hold planning meetings to discuss what students would like to see the council do.

"I'm really proud of the people who were chosen, as well as the leadership of the council," said Avi Posnick (YC '07), a member of the Council. Posnick has been instrumental in helping to develop the Council together with Butler. Additionally, he works with Dr. Bevan and Butler to cultivate new programs and ideas. "Dr. Bevan and Menachem Butler are incredible people," he asserted. "I am glad to be a part of the Council."

The Student Council's first event, in November of this

*continued on page 22*

## Darfur Activism Reaches Israel

BY ABBY ATLAS

After a Bnei Akiva trip to Poland last year, Australian students Seraphya Berrin and Arielle Perlow, both 18 years old, decided to get involved in a social justice effort in light of the Jewish destruction they had seen firsthand. Upon their return to Israel, where the two are spending a year of post-high school Torah study, they decided that a



relevant and meaningful course of action would be to bring the Darfur genocide to Israel's social consciousness.

Berrin became involved with the Darfur efforts in both the United States and Australia prior to his arrival in Israel. Another student, Rachel Kupferman, an 18 year old from Riverdale, New York, became interested in the cause as a high school student at the Samuel H. Wang High School

for Girls where she served on the social justice committee and participated in the Yeshiva University National Model United Nations. When Berrin, Kupferman and Perlow came to Israel, they were shocked to learn that "the Israeli community, for the most part, had no idea what Darfur was or of the atrocities that are taking place there," said Kupferman.

Their work began shortly before the annual Global Day for Darfur, which was held on September 17, 2006. Three days prior to the event, Berrin saw that Israel was not included on the [www.savedarfur.org](http://www.savedarfur.org) website among the tens of countries listed as participants in this international effort. Consequently, he and the others organized a rally to be held on that day. Though small, this rally was just the beginning of the Israeli response to the genocide

*continued on page 22*

## Spice it Up Adds Flavor to Wednesday Nights

BY YAFFI SPODEK

A new program called "Spice it Up" has been introduced in Stern College for Women (SCW), specifically for those women who are part of the Basic Jewish Studies Track. This track, run by Ms. Shoshana Schechter and Rabbi Lawrence Hajioff, is designed to create extra events and give additional guidance to students who are beginners in Judaic studies. "Spice it Up" is the brainchild of Ellie Berger (SCW '07), who initially approached Schechter to see if there would be any interest among Schechter's students for a learning group or for extra help with their homework and classes. Schechter responded in the affirmative, and thus "Spice it Up" became established as a weekly *chabura* (learning discussion), followed by 45 minutes with Berger acting as a teaching assistant (TA), where students can come to talk or get assistance with their assignments.

The *chabura* takes place on Wednesday nights at 6:30 p.m., a convenient time for students to come and enjoy the dinner and snacks provided by the program. "The *chabura* is designed to give beginner and intermediate students an opportu-

nity to discuss and debate ideas in a sophisticated yet informal way," explained Berger. "Source sheets are distributed so that they can gain further exposure to various texts and to help them accrue a broader general knowledge of Torah sources." In addition, English translations are provided so that those with a limited knowledge of Hebrew are able to understand what is being taught.

Although there are many *shiurim* given on campus every night, "what is unique about this program is that it is targeted for the Basic Jewish Studies students," said Berger. Also, in contrast to the other formal types of learning available, the *chabura* style of "Spice it Up" lends itself to a more casual atmosphere that encourages group participation and discussion. "I think it is very valuable for students to have a facilitated dialogue on various issues and the opportunity to express their opinions in the context of a Torah perspective," Berger asserted. Yael Vindiger (SCW '09), a regular attendee of the *chabura*, agreed. "It's nice because people can express their opinions," she said.

Although "Spice it Up" aims to target students from the

Basic Jewish Studies Track, "everyone else is welcomed and encouraged to come as well," emphasized Berger. That is often the case; several students, including Vindiger, who have been attending weekly, are not part of the Basic Judaic Studies Track.

"It's fun and we discuss



topics that apply to our everyday lives," said Jennifer Becker (SCW '09). Becker is also not part of the Basic Judaic Studies program and attended the *chabura* without even realizing that it was geared toward specific students. "The discussions are very lively and animated," she observed.

The discussion topic each week is usually based on an issue that is relevant to that week's Torah portion. One discussion topic was Jews' role in the world and their involvement

in the larger global community, and the possible response to outside influences when faced with the dilemma of running away or interacting. Other weeks, the *chabura* dealt with issues such as business ethics and the concept of unjust revenge, exploring whether or not revenge could ever be justified. When delving into these topics, a special emphasis is placed on reading the texts closely and paying careful attention to what is both written and implied.

"Overall, I think the program has been successful," Berger commented. Although it has only been in existence for four weeks, it already attracts an average of 15 students per session. Berger is optimistic as to the continued success of "Spice it Up." "There has been a lot of positive feedback on behalf of the students so hopefully they will encourage their friends to come too," she said. With finals approaching, she hopes that more students will take advantage of the TA slot that the administration has added from 7:00 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.

Berger also plans to further expand the program beyond the regular *chabura* meetings. "I

hope to run a special session in the coming weeks that will feature a *beit midrash* tour, encompassing a basic introduction to the major *sefarim* (books)...and how to use them," she said.

Shoshana Fruchter, president of Torah Activities Council (TAC) expressed interest in possibly expanding the program to incorporate it into T Cubed, the TAC learning program that takes place on Tuesday nights. "We may be trying to get together," she said, referring to "Spice it Up" and TAC. "It is better that every night people are learning Torah, and not only once a week."

# Dale and Thomas: Popping in Popularity

BY SHANI CHESIR

What has Oprah declared to be "one of my favorite things?" What unites a basketball player, a small farmer, and the average Stern College for Women (SCW) student? Dale and Thomas Popcorn, previously known as Popcorn Indiana, has become an integral aspect of student life at SCW. Each *Rosh Chodesh*, the crowds in the caf are always surrounding the tins of this gourmet popcorn. "I revolve my schedule around the time slots when they are giving out the popcorn," admitted Naama Levin (SSSB '08). The choice of this snack allows room for a variety of tastes while uniting the students as they share this treat together.

The consumption of this popcorn, however, is not merely confined to within the school, when it is offered for free. Many SCW women even choose to trek outside on cold nights in order to buy this delicacy. Its location in Times Square, at 48<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway, is a reasonable distance to walk, yet still far enough to be considered an activity for those hard-working students who need a respite. "Often at 11:00, after I have been studying all night, I need to get some fresh air and change of scenery," expressed Etana Lebor (SCW '08). "While most places are closed at that hour, I can always count on Popcorn Indiana, which is open until 12:00." The punch card that offers a free bag of popcorn after 10 purchases serves as an additional incentive for students to make the special trip to Times Square.

The name "Popcorn Indiana" was changed to "Dale and Thomas", when Isaiah

Thomas, the coach of the New York Knicks, tried the popcorn at an Upper West Side location and immediately wanted to have a share in its production. Thomas had a childhood connection to popcorn; he grew up in a Chicago ghetto and popcorn was a staple food in his diet since it was so cheap. The "Dale" in the name is a reference to Dale Humphrey, the mayor of Popcorn, Indiana, a

Times Square often sells Cookies and Cream, though this flavor is not yet officially listed by the Dale and Thomas Company, since it is still in its trial period.

The workers in the various branches of the stores are known for their kindness and passion for their jobs. "Once I got there and they were closing because the manager was sick," related Gabby Soep (SCW '08). "They felt bad though, so they gave me two vouchers for free popcorn whenever I want!" If you are unsure about what flavor you want, the staff will allow you to taste a free sample of any flavor of your choice. "Sometimes I am in the mood for Peanut Butter & White Chocolate but wish I could have a tiny bit of Twice-As-Nice to satisfy my craving," said Alyssa Rottenstreich (SCW '08). "Fortunately, the cashiers will often offer me a sample of a flavor that they are testing out on customers."

The workers themselves are very proud of their jobs at Dale and Thomas. "I love watching the different types of people who come into the store," said a 4<sup>th</sup> year employee. "Sometimes I can predict what type of popcorn a customer is going to order before they open their mouth!" The staff members are so dedicated to their job that they even have a blog, titled "POPCORN Culture", where employees can write articles about what is going on in the company.

Currently, there are Dale and Thomas stores in Teaneck, New Hyde Park, the Upper West Side, and Philadelphia. There are stores opening soon in Florida, Boston, Michigan, Rhode Island, and New Jersey. The company is based in Englewood, New Jersey, and boasts the first popcorn chef, Ed Doyle, who graduated from the Culinary Institute of America. The continued expansion of the outside of Manhattan is addressing an audience beyond our



small town whose greatest export is corn. Their main street is called Popcorn Road, and the river that runs through the town is called Popcorn River.

At the start of their business, Dale and Thomas only offered a few flavors: Hall of Fame Kettle Corn, Chocolate Chunk N'Caramel, Dale's Caramel, Southwest Cheddar Chipotle, and Sweet and Spicy BBQ. Throughout the years, the offerings have expanded to include Twice-As-Nice Chocolate, Peanut Butter & White Chocolate, Toffee Crunch, Sweet Georgia Pecan, and Cinnamon Crème. The store in

# Beyond 34<sup>th</sup> Street: Places to Study for Finals

BY JACKIE FAST

In previous issues of *The Observer*, "Beyond 34<sup>th</sup> Street" has offered itineraries for pleasant walks around the city; it has featured places to go with friends that are nearby but still off the beaten path for most Stern College for Women (SCW) students and has coupled step-by-step walking instructions with highlights of historical and architectural significance.

This issue's "Beyond 34<sup>th</sup> Street" is somewhat different in that it is not a single itinerary to be completed in one afternoon. Instead, here is a list of some great and quiet places to go to study for finals.

1. New York Public Library of Science, Industry, and Business located at Madison Ave. and 34<sup>th</sup> St. There is no place to study near Brookdale Hall more perfect than this branch of the NYPL. As mentioned in the previous column of "Beyond 34<sup>th</sup> Street," this library, which was recently renovated, houses the collection's main depositories of books pertaining to Science, Industry, and Business. Even if these topics aren't of interest to you, the library is designed to serve 21<sup>st</sup> century needs and contains more than just book barracks. Although the library is closed on both Sunday and Monday, it still merits the position on the top of your list of places to study for its convenience and seating.

Getting There: Walk to the corner of 34<sup>th</sup> St. and Madison Ave, and enter halfway between 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> Streets.

2. Sony Building located at 56<sup>th</sup> St. and Madison Ave. Although many skyscrapers in the city have outdoor public plazas, very few have indoor spaces as friendly as this one. Chairs and tables sit inside a high-ceilinged glass atrium with trees and birds. The calm atmosphere is reminiscent of a quiet city park, and every time that I have come here to study, there have been numerous tables available. The plaza is heated and the street noise is minimal. Public sculptures grace the plaza and if you're in the mood for an excursion, the Dahesh Museum of Art has an entrance inside the plaza itself.

Getting There: Walk up Madison Ave- this indoor public plaza is only about a mile from the Beren Campus. It can be walked in under 20 minutes. If you'd rather take the subway, you can take the 6 Line from

33<sup>rd</sup> St. to 59<sup>th</sup> St. and then walk over to Madison Ave. from Lexington Ave.

3. New York Public Library (NYPL) Central Branch located at 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. and 42<sup>nd</sup> St. Most SCW students have been here before by necessity, if not for pleasure. Even if you don't have a research paper that requires you to find books in the Humanities and Social Sciences branch of the NYPL, it is well worth a visit. Some consider this building to be the finest "free museum" in the city, and the library houses a number of exhibits in addition to a book collection that plunges seven stories under Bryant Park. Learn about



NYPL Central Branch

the history of the library on the exhibit on the second floor, and check out the exhibit of rotating art from the museum's holdings on the third floor directly opposite the reading rooms. Then, amble over to the reading rooms themselves and get to work.

Getting There: The fastest way to get to the library is to walk. From SCW, walk over to 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. and then up to the library. The library is open until 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday, until 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, and from 1-5 p.m. on Sunday.

4. St. Vartan Park located at 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. and 35<sup>th</sup> St. For days with pleasant weather, this is my favorite place to hold a study group with friends. Although most SCW students have never visited St. Vartan Park, it is the closest park to the Beren Campus and really quite an enjoyable place. The park takes up an entire city block and includes a large sports field, a playground, a landscaped garden with grass and trees, and many picnic tables. During the day, the park is occupied but not bustling, and the regulars are pleasant for an atmosphere that is safe and not distracting.

Getting There: The park is a five minute walk from the Beren Campus. Walk across to 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. and then up to 35<sup>th</sup> St.

5. Borders Books located at 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. and 32<sup>nd</sup> St. If it's too cold a day to study at St. Vartan Park, walk three blocks down 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. to Borders Books. This bookstore is the closest large bookstore to SCW and contains an ample amount of armchairs for studying. Even when it's not finals season, seeing that this is a lovely bookstore and very nearby, it's worth a visit.

Getting There: Walk

continued on page 22

continued on page 22

# Genetic Testing: Considering all of the Options

BY ALIZA VISHNIAVSKY

Since its initiation in the 1970s, genetic screening for Ashkenazi genetic disorders has steadily become a mainstream practice for couples planning to marry. Within the Ashkenazi community, a number of severe genetic disorders, some of which result in early death, have been identified. Among the list of nine recessive Jewish diseases recorded at Mount Sinai's Medical Center for Jewish Genetic Diseases, is the well-known Tay-Sachs disease, a degenerative illness with a life expectancy of up to three or four years.

There are a number of factors which account for the prominence of genetic diseases in the Ashkenazi community, or in any other ethnic group as well. Ashkenazim are more susceptible to acquiring a gene for a genetic disease, and later passing it on to their children, because of the nature of the gene pool. Ashkenazim generally marry other Ashkenazim, who consequently come from the same gene pool. The history of the Ashkenazi community contributes to the narrowness of the gene pool. Many times in the course of history, Ashkenazi Jews were subjected to tragic persecution which sometimes resulted in the wiping out of large portions of one community. As a result, the bottleneck effect occurred. Also, after experiencing expulsions from various countries or cities in Europe, small groups of Jews would establish new communities, prompting the founder effect to occur. In both of these cases the gene pool is narrowed, thereby making the pool more concentrated within the genes for the recessive disorders.

Considering all the technological advancements and all the scientific research being done, it is incumbent upon society to utilize the technology that they are provided with to slowly wipe out these diseases. Since the diseases are recessive, if two carriers of the same disease marry,

there is a 25% chance that they will have a child with the disease and a 50% that they will have a child who carries the recessive gene. According to the Center for Jewish Genetic Diseases, a couple can find out through a simple blood test whether or not they are carriers and at risk for having an affected child. Their website states that "ideally, both members of a couple should be screened prior to starting a family." If people exploit all the possibilities when it comes to genetic screening then the numbers of those afflicted with various diseases will seriously diminish and thus a healthier gene pool will be established.

Undergoing genetic testing before marriage is emphasized in the Jewish community because even though the chances that two carriers of the same disorder will want to marry is rare, it does happen, and, therefore, Ashkenazi Jews must be careful. There is much debate today about the way in which to screen for potential recessive genes. Many students choose the "Dor Yesharim" route. This entails an individual undergoing a blood test and then being assigned a number. When one sees fit, the individual calls "Dor Yesharim" with two numbers, their own and the number of a potential spouse and the "couple" is then notified if they are genetically compatible. This process is discrete; the person who is the carrier is not informed of that information. Many proponents of this method feel it is the preferable genetic testing method since it is anonymous. People will not need to worry that they carry the recessive gene for an obscure but deadly disease because they will be unaware of whether or not they do. All they find out is that they are not a good match for another person.

However, there are others in favor of going to a local hospital and undergoing a simple blood test to find out what recessive genes they are carriers for. People that maintain this view

feel that not knowing promulgates this sense of "there is something wrong with you if you are a carrier." Finding out that one is a carrier should not induce mass hysteria because people need to be informed and realize that there is nothing wrong with being a carrier. The only potential problem that a carrier faces is if they marry a person who is a carrier for the same disease they are a carrier for.

Genetic testing only screens for recessive diseases. If someone carries a dominant disease, the chances of having an affected child is much higher, no matter whom he or she marries. Screening programs do not wish to create a population of people who are not fit for marriage due to the knowledge that he or she carries a dominant disease. However, a carrier of a recessive disease can have healthy children with anyone except those who carry the same disorder.

On the Beren Campus there are a number of students organizing various genetic screening programs to come to the campus to test students. "Dor Yesharim" will come as usual. However, this year an alternative to Dor Yesharim will also appear on the Beren Campus. Students will have the opportunity to choose how they wish to go about screening themselves for recessive traits.

# Running to Help Israel

BY JUDITH LUGER

Israel is consistently in the thoughts and prayers of the Yeshiva University (YU) community, which manifests itself in the charity and fundraising YU does on the country's behalf. Yet, as important as the fundraising and money is to Israel, it is also imperative that YU continues to motivate its students to actively participate in charity programs. Thanks to members of the YU Running Club and its president, Jay Schreiber, students who are passionate and want to be active about Israel can be.

Schreiber and the YU Running Club are preparing to participate in the Miami ING Marathon and Half Marathon through the project Team OneFamily. Team OneFamily is the endurance sports training and fundraising program, benefiting the One Family Fund. The One Family Fund has been helping

victims of terror in Israel since the start of the intifada. Their mission is to actively help victims of terror in Israel. It also looks to provide the family network for world Jewry "to express and actuate their natural sense of brotherhood by facilitating direct contact, relationships, and interaction between survivors and world Jewry as individuals, communities, and organizations," according to their mission statement. Not only does the fund provide financial assistance, but they provide human resources as well. The organization aims to connect people in Israel with people all over the world.

This particular program is a great way to get in shape, train with professional certified coaches, and join a group of people who care about the future of Israel. Team OneFamily provides training for 100 mile cycling rides and triathlons. YU shares this belief that tzedakah is not only about the money one is willing to give, but also about the time one is able to put in.

Schreiber has been working tirelessly to organize this event. Since beginning this undertaking Schreiber taken over Lman Achai, the undergraduate Israel tzedakah organization, "This is only one way of bringing Israel and its needs closer to the hearts and minds of the Yeshiva student body. There are countless things that we as students can do to help our brothers and sisters in Israel." Aharon Arazi (YC '07), president of the Israel Club has been instrumental in organizing this event. The team has a range of members, some are on the cross-country team, others are completely inexperienced, and another group of people fall somewhere in between. The project appeals to these different groups for a variety of reasons.

For one person, it may be to achieve the goal of running a full marathon, which is approximately 26.2 miles, and for another it may be to leave the Northeast's brutal winter and to go run in the heat of Miami. No matter what their motivation is, all of the people participating are passionate about helping Israel and are up to the challenge running such a distance presents them with.



The runners have been asked to commit to raising \$3,000 to be given to the One Family Fund. In return, the fund will pay for the flights to Miami, lodging, food, the marathons entrance fee. Most of the Team OneFamily events involved professional trainers and coaches who were hired to help the runners keep on pace to achieve their goal. "Many runners have increased their own donations to cover the costs that the program is providing, to ensure that even more money goes to the families in Israel that need it," said Schreiber.

So far, the efforts of all involved have yielded widespread support, "from the realm of the individual, to the realm of the communal, as the marathon runners include their friends, their families, their synagogues, in the initiative as active observers and cheerleaders," explained Arazi. YU, and specifically members of the Center for the Jewish Future and the Athletic Department, has been instrumental in making this student-run operation into a reality. "The challenge that this event presents impresses people, and their commitment to pushing themselves to achieving those goals is even more admirable," Schreiber explained. "Students with filled schedules manage to squeeze one more thing into the mix, all because of their love for Israel."

One of the greatest parts of this fundraiser is that people not only want to give money to help, but they are also showing their confidence in the success of their friends and family. There have already been numerous donation emails, which is encouraging to the participants. "This fundraiser has symbolic importance," said Arazi. "It demands its participants to be motivated to physically and mentally train for the marathon, while at the same time motivating others to participate in the mitzvah by contributing tzedakah."

Please support your fellow students' efforts by donating to this cause! Go to Jay Schreiber's fundraising page at [www.active.com/doate/TOF\\_YU\\_RC/jayschreiber](http://www.active.com/doate/TOF_YU_RC/jayschreiber).

# CSI Addresses Students

continued from page 9

on CSI. And lastly, crimes are never solved in 60 minutes."

Criminals have actually benefited from such shows, learning to be more circumspect when committing crimes, explained Dr. Kobilinsky. Police have noted that criminals have become more thorough in cleaning the crime scene, thereby making it more difficult for the authorities to catch them. He also noted that many crime scenes are actually ruined by the officers, detectives, and investigators themselves. Many times people are careless

and walk through a crime scene, destroying vital evidence or leaving behind their own DNA.

Forensic evidence has become a key factor in deciding verdicts and has become the most foolproof method of proving a suspect's innocence or guilt. Dr. Kobilinsky himself conducts training courses for judges and attorneys in the area of forensic DNA analysis, which could be crucial in determining the outcome of a case. He described how people have been incarcerated on false charges and have been released years later as a result of new forensic technology. Of

course, the reverse has occurred as well. People have been exonerated and arrested years later after incriminating forensic evidence was discovered.

Students of all majors attended the lecture. "The concept of criminology and the concept of science being used to solve crimes fascinate me," said Fraidy Josovitz (SCW '08). Those in attendance praised Dr. Kobilinsky for shedding light on a field which, despite being highly publicized, still remains relatively obscure.

## CJF Sends Students Across the Globe for Winter Break

*continued from page 8*

participants will reach out to Jewish adolescents and adults through volunteer work and Torah study.

The "Lman Achai Israel Leadership Experience" is largely student run. A group of six undergraduates, three women and three men, are organizing the seven-day trip, which is being partially subsidized by the CJF, the Office of University Life, Torah Activities Council, Student Organization of Yeshiva, Yeshiva Student Union, and outside donors. The agenda of the trip is bipartite, emphasizing both leadership and voluntarism. Students will learn about Israeli-Diaspora relations, devise programming for Israeli schools, and will volunteer in Northern cities, visiting hospitals, planting trees, and painting bomb shelters.

According to CJF Presidential Fellow Avi Narrow-Tilonsky, the Israel Leadership Experience will not end when students return to campus for the spring semester. "Each student signed a social contract indicating which programs they plan to implement when they return to campus," said Narrow-Tilonsky. "They will work in leadership roles to strengthen Israel awareness and Israel programming at YU, and elsewhere."

The humanitarian mission to Central America is an opportunity for undergraduates to become active in helping underprivileged communities. According to its website, the AJWS is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing nonsectarian humanitarian assistance and emergency relief to disadvantaged people worldwide. The AJWS is assisting the CJF with the planning of the trip.

Guatemala was chosen as the mission's destination because it demonstrates a great need for such relief efforts and can safely accommodate the YU participants. Before students arrive, experts from the AJWS will make a site visit to ensure that everything is adequately prepared. In cooperation with the New Hope Foundation, students will contribute to the improvement of a community's educational system by renovating an existing school building. The task will not only involve physical labor, but interaction with the community's residents as well. Students will also learn from Jewish texts about the responsibility of social justice and *tikkun olam*.

The men and women traveling to Guatemala are fundraising collectively and as individuals to help pay the \$1200 approximate participation fee. The CJF is also fundraising to provide partial subsidization.

Pelzner, who is heading the CJF's organizational efforts

with respect to the mission, expressed high hopes for the upcoming trip. "We hope students will gain a greater understanding of the way people live in underprivileged communities and we anticipate that they will come back with a desire to get involved with social justice initiatives both on and off campus," she said.

Last year's participants in the mission to Honduras founded the Society of Social Justice upon their return to YU. Rachel Grunau, president of the society, reflected on the importance of her experience in Honduras. By volunteering in Honduras, Grunau explained, she came to a greater recognition of her status as a global citizen and of the idea that small actions can make a large impact. She anticipates that participants of the upcoming trip to Guatemala will initiate new events on campus to further humanitarian causes or contribute to the society's already existing programs.

"Jewish Life Coast to Coast" is a 12 day tour of old and new, large and small, Jewish communities throughout the southern United States. In contrast to the other two missions, the trip is wholly organized by the CJF, more specifically, by its Department of Community Initiatives, which is responsible for popular programs such as Torah Tours. Aliza Abrams of the CJF, views the trip as "an out of classroom lesson" that will show students what Jewish life is like outside of New York and New Jersey or wherever else they come from. From January 2-14, participants will be leading programming in different communities and will volunteer in New Orleans as the city continues to rebuild after Hurricane Katrina. A follow-up program is in the works, although its specifics have not yet been decided. Abrams anticipates that students will gain a "broader vision of Jewish America" and come to better appreciate "*kol Yisroel areivim zeh la'zeh*," the notion that all Jews are responsible for one another. She also hopes they will become interested in Jewish communal work as they become acquainted with it through their own hands-on volunteer service.

Through the efforts of the CJF, 55 undergraduate men and women will have the opportunity to partake in winter break experiences providing them with, in the words of YU President Richard M. Joel, "lessons without walls."

*continued from front page*

ness programs, the Jewish studies department, and the S. Daniel Abraham Honors Program. Professors and current students were readily available to describe different course options while offering specific information for each potential student's interests. "I think that this was the best aspect of Open House," said Michal Simpsen (SCW '07), a biology major. "This forum affords potential students and their parents the opportunity to engage directly with teachers and current students." In concurrence with this opportunity to learn about the courses and different academic departments on the Beren Campus, potential students were also given the opportunity to learn about choosing a career and its process through a session led by Naomi Kapp, associate director of career services.

Besides for getting a glimpse of the academic opportunities available on campus, students were also shown the array of student activities available at SCW. While parents attended a session on payment and finances for college education, potential students were informed of the

*continued from front page*

"Advanced Jazz" and Traci Tulus, assistant professor of art, will teach "Basic Video Production" at Belfer Hall on the Wilf Campus.

Laura Hurwitz (SCW '07), expressed her satisfaction with the increased number of course offerings. "It is wonderful to benefit from the flexibility the university provides by creating innovative courses at our request," she said.

In fact, the advent of new courses will characterize the majority of academic disciplines. Typically smaller departments, such as history and political science, will broaden the scope of offerings with either completely new or updated topics. "The History of Modern China" is the first Asian history class to be taught at SCW, while previously given courses, such as "Introduction to American Politics," will be expanded to include other dimensions. Perhaps the most interesting development features SCW Dean Karen Bacon, who will co-instruct a discussion-based biology course on "Ethical and Social Issues in Genetics."

Despite the addition of new courses, a number of students have expressed frustration with the current number of academic offerings. The most prevalent grievances have concerned the limited variety of courses, as

## Beren Campus Open House

different student councils and clubs on the Beren Campus. "I am glad the student councils had an opportunity to represent themselves to prospective students," said Shoshana Fruchter, president of the Torah Activities Council. "It gave a personal touch to these perspective students' visit." Fruchter noted that an added benefit of this forum was that she "was able to depict for them the updated Stern that they will be entering."

A large amount of information was conveyed to potential students throughout the day. To help potential students organize all of this, the Center for the Jewish Future ran a session that was titled "What's on your plate?" which allowed students to prioritize their greatest interests. "We ran a program about all the different opportunities at Stern College and Sy Syms and how much could be done here," said Racheli Davis (SCW '07), a QUEST fellow who assisted in the facilitation of this session. "We offered a large selection of the opportunities they would have available here, such as school work, social justice activities, Torah learning, publications and New York events and then

asked them to chose a 'helping' of each thing that they would be interested in getting involved with and how they would balance each activity. I think it made the girls excited about all the opportunities that are available for them here."

Before the day was over, potential students had the opportunity to visit the Israel Fair, where representatives from different *midrashot* (women's seminaries) in Israel were available to speak with potential students and parents. Michael Kranzler, director of Undergraduate Admissions, ran a complimentary session on attending *midrasha* through the S. Daniel Abraham Israel Program.

The number and the diversity of potentials students who attended the Open House was encouraging. "It was great to see girls from all over the States fly in just for one day to learn about Stern College and Sy Syms," noted Liz Shelton, president of Stern College for Women Student Council. "It shows what a great step forward Yeshiva University is taking in their promotion of Stern College and Sy Syms, and Yeshiva University as a whole."

## SCW Course Offerings Undergo Change

*continued from front page*

well as a shortage of class times. Others note that certain departments, such as physics, are far more developed uptown, leaving the students on the Beren Campus at a considerable disadvantage.

Another problem that has been cited is the academic level on which various courses are taught. English Literature majors in Dr. Carol Silver's "Senior Seminar" recently discussed the issue, explaining that because there are so few students studying English, they are compelled to take the majority of their courses with non-majors, which often impacts on the professor's expectations and demands. "Perhaps SCW can create a requirement for all potential English majors to take certain survey courses together to help alleviate the frustration for some students, while assuring that there can be different levels offered for different students," suggested English major Shira Schwartz (SCW '07).

Due to their limited size, smaller academic departments at the college have had difficulty creating courses that differentiate between majors and those just fulfilling requirements. "It's embarrassing and frustrating how some students' apathy and lack of motivation really have the power to overtake and really slow the progression of the course," lamented one sophomore.

English Communications, and more specifically journalism, which is encompassed within the English department, has also been under discussion. Batsheva Lipschitz (SCW '08), an English Communications major with a concentration in journalism, voiced her discontent over the lack of more exciting and diverse offerings. "It doesn't seem like the English Department is interested in developing the major beyond its current size," she said.

Conversely, those students majoring in more popular disciplines, such as psychology, have complained that there are not always enough sections to accommodate the growing number of students in their respective departments. Shoshana Kramer (SCW '07), acknowledged that the college has in fact improved in this respect, "opening multiple sections of certain courses because of the large number of students required to take them."

As the student body and faculty of SCW continue to grow, students have demonstrated initiative in introducing new courses, while demanding that those currently offered meet the highest academic standards possible.

## ISRAEL

## "Hezbollah Exposed" Teaches Advocacy

BY BATSHEVA LIPSCHITZ

Faculty member of the David Project Center for Jewish Leadership, Lawrence Muscant, came to the Beren Campus on Tuesday November 28 to educate Yeshiva University (YU) students about the dangers of anti-Israel sentiments on college campuses. His speech, sponsored by Yeshiva University Public Action Committee (YUPAC), the Israel Club, and Middle East Forum Club, warned the men and women gathered that the current ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinians will be used by the latter as a time to muster their strength and rearm. He urged the audience to take the Arabs' threats against Israel seriously and to take action in standing up in the fight for Israel's right to exist.

"What should make us [Jews] think that having a truce or a ceasefire is going to make them [Arab terrorists] stop rearming themselves and attacking us?" questioned Muscant. He explained that in order to glean an understanding of what is happening now and what will most probably happen in the future, one needs to extrapolate from past events.

Muscant drew parallels to the years following the Oslo Accords in 1993 and Camp David Accords in 2000, as well as the first time Israel pulled out of Gaza and Lebanon.

"In the two years after the signing of the Oslo agreement there were more Israelis killed by Palestinians than in the previous 27 years," stated Muscant. "In the three years after the Camp David offer in 2000 there were more Israelis killed by Palestinians than in the previous 56 or 57 years. When Israel withdrew from Gaza in the first place, they were met with dozens of rockets being launched

at Sderot. When they left southern Lebanon they rearmed themselves and they attacked Israel 30 some-odd times since then."

Muscant explained that the Palestinians have no intention to use this time of ceasefire to establish peace in the region. The Arabs, he said, don't even view this time as an end of hostilities; they call it *hudna*. "*Hudna* does not mean ceasefire in Arabic," clarified Muscant. "It's temporary ceasefire when you're weak. You can call *hudna* and stop fighting until you're strong again and then you're allowed to break this *hudna* and still be justified."

Muscant also pointed



Hezbollah Leader Hassan Nasrallah

out that the conflict occurring now is not an isolated incident. He views the Israeli-Palestinian conflict not as a cycle of violence, but as "a spiral of violence." He explained that a cycle connotes isolated events that have a start and finish, whereas a spiral has one starting point. He believes that the initial start of violence, in which all other conflicts in the region stem from, was the creation of Hezbollah.

Hezbollah was started in 1982, with three goals in mind. The group wanted to eradicate Western imperialism, transform Lebanon into an Islamic state, and completely destroy the Jewish democratic State of Israel. Hassan Nasrallah, leader of Hezbollah, openly states "there is no solution to conflict in this region except with the disappearance of Israel." He reiterated sev-

eral times that the leaders of terrorist organizations, such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad, do not hide their anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic sentiments.

Hezbollah has "been attacking Jews long before July 12 2006 [when they captured Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev]," Muscant said. "This didn't start on July 12 2006; it started a long time ago."

Making a comparison between Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, president of Iran, and Adolph Hitler, Muscant explained that "when Hitler said he was going to take care of the Jews, the international community did nothing. Here's another guy saying 'I want to kill Jews' and the international community is doing nothing."

"We have to take his threats seriously," he reiterated. "They want to spread global Jihad," and their "ideology and goals are with a fundamentalist ideology."

The 34-day war between Hezbollah and Israel this past summer elicited mixed responses from the world on the issue of Israel. At the start of the conflict "the U.S. was obviously supporting Israel," said Muscant. "Even Kofi Annan said they have the right to defend themselves." Only a few days later "world public opinion turned against Israel," Muscant recalled.

The criticisms of how Israel handled the war were a result of "zooming in on Israel and ignoring the context," he elucidated. Muscant made it clear that Israel was the state that was attacked and they only used violence as a means to respond to that aggression. He asserted that the reason Israel is criticized is because people are "holding Israel up to a utopian standard of perfection."

continued on page 15

## Message From Your President

BY RACHEL GOLDSTEIN

Over winter break, the Israel Club is organizing a trip to Israel, called the "Lman Achai Israel Leadership Experience." With the help of the Center for the Jewish Future (CJF), Office of Student Affairs, and others, we were able to bring our vision of an Israel trip into reality, and we are all really excited for what will be taking place. The trip will be from Monday morning January 1 thru Sunday January 7. Participants will be staying in the Northern part of the country the entire duration of the trip.

There are two main aspects of the trip. The first aspect is the leadership aspect. We are having leadership training on campus at the end of the semester in preparation for the trip, including some discussions on what leadership means and the meaning of *shlichut*. We will be talking about Israel-Diaspora relations; examining what this relationship used to look like, how it has changed and what are the challenges this relationship is currently facing. Other topics to be covered include how to run successful programming and an introduction to the programs that the group needs to prepare while on the trip will be given as well. A sampling of these programs includes running various sessions in Israeli schools, interacting with Israeli college students and learning how to build powerful programming in the future, particularly in terms of what will be done once the group returns to campus in January. The hope is to come back next semester and really take an active role both on and off campus in terms of Israel awareness, advocacy, teaching and updating people about what's going on in Israel, as well as spreading what we learned before and on the trip. The goal is to empower and strengthen the

student body about Israel through the experiences of those who went on the trip.

The other aspect of the trip is volunteer work. We will be going up north to volunteer, help, learn about the war that took place this past summer, visit hospitals, and meet with university students in Israel. We will also be having at least one *shiur*/Torah learning program a day, as well as fun activities and some free time.

There are five student leaders (besides myself) who helped put all of this together, and really deserve a huge *yashar koach* (thank you) for all their time and effort. They are: Gila Kanal, Victoria Stone, Aharon Arazi, Dylan Kurlansky, and Yoeli Zipkin. The CJF and Student Affairs staff also deserves a huge *yashar koach* for helping us and guiding us along the way.

As the semester comes to a close, I would like to thank everyone who has come to our events and supported us throughout this time. We are looking forward to next semester, which we hope will be filled with many exciting and inspiring programs. If you have any suggestions or comments, please email Rose018@aol.com. And most importantly, I urge every one of you to get involved on campus and come to as many events as possible. Students and faculty work really hard to bring programming to campus so take advantage and enjoy them!

## THIS MONTH IN ISRAEL

### MIA's Were Critically Wounded

The IDF recently revealed information that both Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev were wounded during the attack in which they were wounded. This is significant because it poses the possibility that at least one of them may no longer be alive.

### Olmert Rejects Baker-Hamilton

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert rejected the suggestion of the American government's Iraq Study Group for Israel to relinquish the Golan Heights to Syria. Olmert does not feel that President Bush would agree with the findings of the report.

### More Dollar for Your Shekel

The shekel reached a six year high against the dollar. It had been rising for seven consecutive days.

### Recognition of Israeli-Arabs

An Israeli-Arab organization named Mossawa released a paper requesting recognition of Israeli-Arabs as a minority in Israel. Other requests made were that Arabic become a recognized national language in the same way French is a recognized language in Canada.

### Kineret is Still at a Low Level but it's Clean

The Kineret (Sea of Galilee), which is a main source of water for Israel, is ten meters less than its optimum height. However, police divers have been sent to clean the bottom of the lake from any litter.

## Senior Foreign Press Coordinator Addresses Media Bias

BY LAURA SHUMAN

Jerusalem-based Senior Foreign Press Coordinator of the Israeli Prime Minister's Office, David Baker, addressed Yeshiva University (YU) students on November 30 at an event sponsored by the YU Israel Club. In a lecture intended to educate the students on media bias against Israel, he told the men and women who gathered on the Beren Campus how they, even as students, can be active in challenging those responsible.

His most idealistic solution was aliyah. "Let there be no mistake," Baker told the crowd. "The best thing you can do is to come with us." Also important, stressed Baker, was the

need for students to be advocates in the media. "International media has an insatiable appetite for news from Israel," he said, "but why shouldn't they take a stand and speak out for Israel?"

According to the press coordinator, the first step one should take in an effort to combat media bias is to contact the Israeli Consulate in New York City. He believes it is imperative for individuals to discuss the current issues with the Israeli Consulate so they can grasp a more comprehensive idea of what Israel's war against terror is really about.

Once armed with information, the best way to react to a bias story is to contact the news editor, by calling them and letting them know their article was bias, he said. Another thing Baker told students they can do to combat the problem of bias in articles is to write their own pieces. He encouraged them to be "vocal locals," individuals who submit articles to both local and national media outlets.

However, Baker stressed the importance of distinguishing between stories that are truly inaccurate and what he described as, "silly" things. "If the New York Times is critical on Israel, you got nothing on them,"

he said. Being active is about "keeping your eyes open," he explained, telling the audience that "if you can't do it, just tell us and bring it to our attention."

The alternative, Baker cautioned, is at most deleterious. "Media bashing is the absolute worst thing you can do," he warned.

Baker, whose job involves explaining the Prime Minister's policies to the international press, presenting Israeli government spokespeople to the public, and consequently serving on the front lines of Israel's media battleground, forewarned students of the difficulties of such an undertaking.

"The task we have ahead of us is an uphill battle", said Baker, alluding

to the post media coverage following the 34 day fighting between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon which ended in August with a ceasefire.

Media bias came to the forefront when a Reuters picture, featuring a Lebanese site apparently bombed by the Israeli army was later found to be distorted. According to Little Green Football, a more right blog, the news service added more smoke to and expanded the picture to make the damage done by Israel seem greater.

In addition, in August, YNet news, one of the most visited Israeli websites and owned by Israeli newspaper Yediot Achronot, reported biases in CNN coverage of the war since it failed to fully portray the damage done by Hezbollah.

Baker showed no leaning to a particular news network, preferring a network that purports to be fair and balanced. "Guess who I enjoy working more with," said Baker. "People who get us on TV. We speak for ourselves. We want to be able to have our spokespeople get behind the mike, talking and explaining."



Senior Foreign Press Coordinator David Baker

## Jerusalem Post Correspondent Addresses YU Students

BY BATSHEVA LIPSCHITZ

Etgar Lefkovits, Jerusalem correspondent for the Jerusalem Post, addressed Yeshiva University students on November 20, in which he clarified the distinction between local and foreign media. He called Avigdor Lieberman a "rising star" in Israeli politics, and labeled him as the "direct antithesis" of Natan Sharansky.

Lieberman is the Minister of Strategic Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister of Israel. He is a right-wing politician and leader of the Yisrael Beytenu Party, which is currently joined with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Kadima Party coalition.

According to a poll published in September by Yedioth Achronoth, a daily Israeli newspaper, other than Benjamin Netanyahu, Lieberman has more support than any other politician to be the next prime minister of Israel. According to Lefkovits, Lieberman is the "potential future leader of the state," though his name is barely known in America.

Sharansky, on the other hand, "is much more admired and well liked outside of Israel than he is in Israel, and that's a sad fact of life," said Lefkovits. He bears little importance in Israeli politics and is perceived as "a thinker and more of a statesman anyway. Sharansky's departure was almost...a non-story."

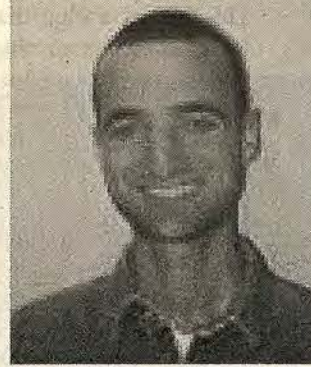
Lefkovits noted that the same thing happened with Shimon Peres; the American media played him up even though he had no real effect on Israeli politics. He attributed this to the great differences that exist between the Israeli national media and international news sources.

Another discrepancy between foreign and local media, according to Lefkovits, is their attitude towards suicide bombings in the region. He noted that oftentimes foreign journalists based in Jerusalem report on these attacks without actually visiting the sites on which they occurred. This leads to a very dry news report, which states that "x amount of people killed, y amount of people wounded, etc."

The correspondent explained that human lives are changed forever because of these events and therefore, "it's equally

critical to visit one of the area hospitals where the wounded have been taken," he said. He remarked that hearing different people's stories of fate "is what makes each and every attack so different," adding that watching people search for loved ones is the scene he always remembers because "the list of wounded is the list of life," he explained.

"I would always feel like I was racing against the forces of human nature," Lefkovits told the audience. "It is human nature to run away from



Jerusalem Post Correspondent Etgar Lefkovits

the carnage, but yet journalists, like police and rescue officials, are doing the exact opposite, we are running to the epicenter of the carnage."

He said that he is always amazed at how quickly the scene is cleaned up. This, Lefkovits noted, "represents determination of Israeli society, even during the toughest of times, not to let the terrorist win."

Since the terrorists don't stop attacking Israel, "we can say that the era of suicide bombings is not yet over," he asserted. He explained that for a long while there was a temporary calm in the violence which was punctured slightly from time to time, but that "the lull in violence completely broke down in June."

The 34 day war began after an attack in which Hamas killed two soldiers and captured one, and soon after, Hezbollah captured two more soldiers. "The war in Lebanon this summer revealed the extent and depth to which other countries in the region, namely Iran and Syria were directly involved in the violence against Israel," observed Lefkovits. "It unmasked to Israel the extent to which Iran and Syria were waging a proxy war against Israel."

Nonetheless, Lefkovits believes that this is not the only

story to report on in Jerusalem since he believes that there are many other issues in the city. "The quintessential Jerusalem story which has gotten very little press in the international media, but has long term ramifications for the future of Jerusalem," he declared, "is what is happening on Jerusalem's Temple Mount."

He detailed a conflict that began in 2004 when Israeli archeologists found a bulge in the Southern Wall of the Temple Mount that was protruding outward. The Israelis wanted to fix it but the Palestinians demanded that Arabs workers repair it since, according to their claims, the Temple Mount holds no religious significance to Judaism. There was an ongoing debate for several months, until it became clear that the issue must be resolved since Ramadan, a time when many Muslims pray by the Temple Mount, was approaching and there was a chance that the southern wall might collapse. The Israelis and Palestinians made an interesting compromise, saying that the Jordanians would be allowed to repair the wall, an agreement which satisfied both sides since Israel viewed the Jordanians as more moderate Arabs. Lefkovits referred to this controversy as the "battle of the bulge," and he maintained that the story was more than just a silly anecdote about the relationship between Israel and the Palestinians. This incident "represents much more than an interesting historical, archeological story," he said. "It actually represents a microcosm of the whole conflict because here you have a situation in which something seemingly simple, such as the repair work of an ancient wall, which could easily have been ironed out between the two sides...took nearly two years and a warning of dire disaster in order to spur the two sides into agreement due to lack of trust and breakdown of trust." He also noted that in this particular situation of "the battle of the bulge," forces of moderation prevailed and victory reigned.

### Aliyah Tip

Once you make aliyah, if you leave Israel for more than two years, there is a required two month waiting period for every year that you were absent until you can receive national health insurance again.

### Hezbollah Exposed

continued on page 15

Muscant further explained that the double standard used on Israel is unjust and hypocritical. He quoted Harvard College Professor Ruth Wisse, who once said that "any criticism of Israeli democracy within the context of the Middle East politics is subject to strict comparative standards, or else it is merely an excuse for de-legitimizing the

Jewish people."

Noting that singling out Israel is anti-Semitism and that Israel hatred is a proxy for anti-Semitism, Muscant urged all the students in the room to take action. Exposing the fact that anti-Semitism is on the rise on college campuses across the country, he stated, "loving Israel is not enough anymore. We need to do something to help protect

Israel and that means speaking up for Israel and making Israel's case. If world public opinion turns against Israel," he warned with a sense of urgency, "we are in big, big trouble."

# SCIENCE AND HEALTH

## Ancient Bee Has Evolutionary Significance

BY RACHEL-ALI ELBAZ

One hundred million years ago, in the Hakawng Valley of northern Myanmar (Burma) there lived a bee. It had some features resembling those of wasps, such as a double spine on the middle tibia and very narrow hind legs. However, it also had branched hairs all over its body and other main features of pollen spreading bees. This bee was a member of the species *Melittosphex bumensis*, and has been extinct for a long time.

Trapped in amber and preserved in a near perfect and lifelike state, this bee has been discovered by researchers at Oregon State University. It is at least 35 million to 45 million years older than any other known bee fossil. The scientists involved in this study believe that this discovery has great evolutionary significance and can help to explain the rapid expansion of flowering plants during that time period.

This recently discovered bee is a treasure trapped in time. The amber that surrounds it is a semi-precious stone that begins as tree sap. Most likely it oozed down and trapped the bee. The amber served as a natural embalming agent and protected the bee throughout the millennia. The fossil reveals individual hairs on undamaged portions of its thorax, legs, abdomen and head. Legs and wings are clearly visible. While it is a very small bee, this supports the theory that the earliest Cretaceous flowers were tiny.

This discovery is the base of a newly named family of insects called Melittosphexidae. Members of this family share some features with both bees and wasps, and support the theory that pollen dependent bees evolved from their meat eating

predecessors, the wasps. Yet, despite some common features, the 100 million year old bee is still more bee than wasp. This discovery is of critical importance because it has revealed to the scientific community the general time frame that bees and wasps began to separate on their unique evolutionary paths.

This bee is a clue that points to the mechanism that



Bee Embalmed in Amber

could have allowed for the rapid expansion and diversity of flowering plants that occurred during that time period. Angiosperms, or flowering plants, depend on a mechanism other than wind to spread their seeds. Prior to this, the world was dominated by gymnosperms, commonly known as conifer trees. Pollination and reseedling of these trees is done by the wind. A change took place between 65.5 and 145.5 million years ago during the Cretaceous period. Angiosperms began to rapidly spread about 100 hundred million years ago, a time, as demonstrated by this newly discovered fossil, which seems to correspond with the evolution of bees.

Flowering plants are an important part of the evolution of life because they can reproduce quickly and develop great genetic diversity. They are spread with ease and quickly move into new habitats. But before the evolution

of bees, flowering plants didn't have a strong and versatile mechanism to spread their pollen. The limited number of flies and beetles that did the job did not travel very far.

The importance of flowering plants lies in the fact that they account for almost all of the food of plants, and therefore, a great deal of the food supply for humans and many animal species. Today there are about 20 thousand species of bees that use pollen to feed their young. Over millions of years they have created and developed numerous physical and behavioral characteristics that make them extremely efficient pollinators.

This study was led by George Poinar, a professor of zoology and an expert in the study of life forms preserved in ancient amber. He points out that many researchers examine and study the species *Archaeopteryx*. This is thought to be the first bird, and was really a sort of bird-reptile. In importance, the first bird is very similar to this discovery of the first bee. Poinar states that these types of creatures are extremely valuable as they show how and when evolution took different directions and went through important changes. The 100 million year old wasp can show us when the mainly meat eating wasps turned into bees that could pollinate plants and serve a completely different and unique biological function.

One thing is certain. The world we live in would not be what it is without the development of the bee. Amber, while just a semi-precious stone for many people, provides us a window to the distant past. This window is not only precious; it is a key to the past and very exciting.

## Hearing Loss and Cochlear Implants

BY CHANIE LADAEW

Sound consists of vibrations of air in the form of waves. The ear, which consists of three parts, the outer, middle and inner ear, picks up these vibrations and translates them into electrical signals that are sent to the brain. In the brain, these signals are translated into important information such as language and music. There are two types of hearing loss. A conductive hearing loss is caused by an interference with the transmission of sound from the outer to the inner ear and a sensorineural hearing loss is caused by some sort of damage to the hearing pathway. Additionally, hearing loss can be a gradual decrease in one's capability to hear or related to genetics. Fortunately, there are devices such as hearing aids and cochlear implants which can improve one's ability to hear.

A cochlear implant is a small electronic device that provides sound directly into the auditory nerve by the use of electrodes surgically implanted into the cochlea of a deaf person. It consists of an outer portion that sits behind the ear and a second portion of metal that is surgically placed under one's head skin. It includes a microphone, which picks up sound, and a processor, which selects and arranges the sounds that were picked up. In addition, there is a transmitter and receiver, which receives signals from the processor and changes them into electric impulses.

A cochlear implant is very different from a hearing aid. Hearing aids intensify sounds. On the other hand, cochlear implants avoid damaged portions of the ear and directly stimulate the auditory nerve and sends signals to the brain. Hearing through the processor is different from normal hearing and takes time to learn or relearn. However, it allows many people to recognize warning signals, understand other sounds, enjoy a conversation and talk on the phone.

Children and adults who are deaf or severely hard-of-hearing can be fitted for cochlear implants. Approximately 22,000 adults and close to 15,000 children have received cochlear implants in America. Most children who receive implants are between two and six years old.

Tzila Seewald (SCW '09) received her right cochlear implant when she was three years old and her left cochlear

implant when she turned 18. She received her second one as a teenager because her parents thought she was doing well with a single cochlear and did not want her to endure another surgical procedure. However, she was then diagnosed with Ushers syndrome, which causes a gradual loss of vision and hearing. In addition, when she was younger,

no one had heard about BI cochlear implants (having two cochlear implants) yet.

Psychologically the brain is divided into two hemispheres, the right and left. The left side of the brain processes language. The right side of the brain controls the nonverbal processing inclination for music and visual recognition. When Seewald

removes her left processor she feels that the sound is reduced and slowly her other ear starts to compensate for the lack of hearing.

When she is in contact with water, Seewald may not use her processor since it is electrically charged with Zinc-Air with 1.45 voltage batteries, which cause a short circuit where water conducts electricity. Advance technology allows her to use three Zinc-Air batteries every two days in each processor also known as "Behind Ears." Previously, the processor looked like a box that was attached with strings around her chest. It used AA batteries which were changed twice a day. Seewald was allowed to change the batteries on shabbos because in case of an emergency it was dangerous for her to be completely deaf.

According to Seewald, having two cochlear implants "tremendously changed my life because I am now able to take part in conversations, talk on the phone and listen to music," she said. Unfortunately, the deaf society believes that being deaf was mandated from G-d and one should not benefit from technology to amend the problem. Additionally, they believe that being deaf is a culture within itself.

Despite the fact that a cochlear implant does not return one's normal hearing, it gives a deaf person a useful representation of sounds, helps them to understand speech, allows them to take part in conversations with the help of lip reading; all of which allow deaf individuals to triumph over their loss of hearing.



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## High Levels of Mercury in Fish Pose Health Risks

BY YUDIT DAVIDOVITS

Mercury exists naturally as a shiny, silver-white metal. When heated, it is a colorless, odorless gas. It can combine with elements to form inorganic salts in the form of crystals, or powders. About 2,700 to 6,000 tons of mercury are released into the atmosphere from the Earth's crust and oceans. Two to three thousand tons are released per year from human activities. Trace amounts of mercury are soluble in water. Once dissolved, bacteria transform it into methylmercury, a more toxic form of mercury. This organometallic substance has a methyl group attached to a mercury atom. Because of its positive charge, it readily binds with anions such as chloride, hydroxide, and nitrate. It also has a high affinity for the thiol (-SH) groups on the amino acid cysteine, covalently bonding with it. Since most proteins contain these thiol groups, mercury binds to all body tissues. This explains its toxicity.

Fish absorb methylmercury as it passes through their gills and when they feed on organisms already contaminated with the toxin. The methylmercury then binds to the proteins in the fish. Methylmercury also accumulates in the environment as it moves up the food chain. Because of this accumulation,

predators, such as tuna, contain the largest amounts of methylmercury.

When contaminated fish are consumed, methylmercury is completely absorbed by the gastrointestinal tract. It combines with the thiol group in free cysteine amino acids and with the amino acid in proteins. This mimics the amino acid methionine. Because of this imitation, methylmercury is transported throughout the body. It is also easily transported across the placenta where it is absorbed by the developing fetus. This exposure can lead to children being born with motor difficulties, sensory problems, and mental retardation.

When methylmercury is consumed at a low dose, the body is able to eliminate it. It does this by producing a thiol rich protein called metallothionein, which is found in kidney tissue. The methylmercury is harmlessly retained in the kidney tissue by binding with the metallothionein. Methylmercury can be properly excreted unless the kidney is unable to produce enough metallothionein to balance out chronic or high doses of the toxin. A failure to eliminate methylmercury can cause renal failure. The first symptom of exposure is usually paresthesia. This causes numbness around the lips, fingers and toes. Progressive symptoms

include difficulty speaking, seeing and hearing, muscle weakness and tiredness, and the inability to concentrate. These neurological problems can lead to unconsciousness and death.

Fish are an important source of protein, vitamins, and minerals. Therefore, it is important to include them in a balanced diet. Specialists suggest that eating a variety of fish and monitoring consumption prevents the risk of contamination. Toxicologists suggest that consumption of fish containing one part per million (ppm) of methylmercury should be limited to seven ounces per week. This suggested level is still 10 times lower than the level that causes dangerous effects. Consumption of fish with lower levels of methylmercury, about 0.5 ppm, should be limited to 14 times a week. Popular fish, such as canned tuna, have less than 0.2 ppm of methylmercury and can be consumed regularly without risk, but fresh tuna presents the greatest health risk because of its high rate of consumption. But young children and pregnant women, who are the most vulnerable to mercury poisoning, should restrict their intake of mercury contaminated fish, regardless of how little methylmercury it contains.

## New Security Use for Bees

BY ESTHER FISCHER

Bomb detection is about to experience a revolution. Bees that can smell explosives may well be The Department of Homeland Security's new weapon in the fight against terrorism. The Stealthy Insect Sensor project, already in its third year, headed by researchers at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, the nation's leading nuclear weapon laboratory, works on training honeybees to detect the smell of explosives.

Research Scientist Tim Haarmann claims that the beauty of this new technique would be that there will be no ambiguity in the results. "When bees detect the presence of explosives, they simply stick their proboscis (the part which the bee uses to feed on nectar) out," he explained. Bees seem

to be able to smell out even a minute trail of explosives and they have the ability to cover a wide area of space, including small nooks, in their search for food. According to Dr. Alan S. Rudolph, program manager for the Defense Sciences Office of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, which is overseeing the experimentation, it appears that bees are at least as sensitive or even more sensitive to smell as dogs and that in tests, bees found the explosive material more than 99 percent of the time. The bees were trained by being exposed to the odor of explosives and afterward being rewarded with sugar-water. They came to associate the smell of explosives with a reward and stuck out their proboscis in anticipation of the food. Until now, bees have been successfully trained to recognize substances such as dynamite and C-4 plastic explosives, as well as the howitzer propellant grains used as explosives in Iraq. Scientists were surprised at how fast the bees were conditioned: it took less than two hours to condi-

tion a hive of bees using the sugar-water reward to detect 2,4-dinitrotoluene (DNT), a residue in TNT and other explosives, in a concentration of merely a few thousands of a part per trillion. The response is fast because as one bee learns a cue it seems to somehow pass on that knowledge to others until the entire hive, and sometimes even adjacent hives, is conditioned.

Haarmann predicts that the use of bees may, in the near future, serve an important role in defense and homeland security.

Bees may be put in a handheld shoe-box sized device for use by security guards in airports, roadside security checkpoints, and even in robot bomb disposal equipment. A new radio transmitter is being developed, the size of a grain of salt, which could allow individual bees to be tracked as they follow a trail to a source of explosives.

However, the use of bees has limitations. They are unable to work at night, in storms or in cold weather. From a practical standpoint it would be impossible to release a swarm of bees to sniff luggage at an airport. Furthermore, it is not certain to what extent the bees may get distracted by other smells such as flower or honey while they search for explosives.

Overall, bees provide an inexpensive and easy training alternative to the dogs most security systems use. Since 1998, the Pentagon has spent \$25 million on researching traits of animals that could be utilized for security purposes. Despite the risk of what the Pentagon has dubbed "the giggle factor," bees may be replacing dogs as future bomb detectors.

## Waterbirths: A Natural Birthing Experience

BY GILA KANAL

The miracle of childbirth is often misunderstood. People often talk of childbirth as a natural, beautiful, and simple process. Many a time people overlook the various complexities that are involved in childbirth; the danger that childbirth presents to the mother as well as the physical impact that childbirth has on the female body. It is almost completely forgotten that a few centuries ago most women did not make it out of this "simple and natural" process alive. Thanks to modern medical proce-

dures we have been able to forget that incredibly crucial fact.

Research into the anatomy of a woman's body reveals that women were created with the ability to carry a fetus to full term. The number of women undergoing cesarean sections appears to be on the rise. The question to ask is why so many women are opting for the intensive surgery rather than giving birth naturally, something that their bodies are equipped to handle. A woman's body should be able to house, protect, and nur-

## Tingles in Your Toes

BY GRACE CHARLES

For the most part, regular jogging has a healthy impact on people's bodies. However, there is one problem that troubles people who go on routine jogs. Every now and then their feet go numb. Sometimes it is both feet, other times it is only one. The episode can happen at the start of the jog, or after fifteen minutes. It can occur at any time regardless of what physical activity the jogger is engaged in. Athlete's training for marathons are often advised to take off their shoes and massage their feet when this numb feeling overtakes them. You could do this, but it is not very convenient or reasonable to stop in the middle of exercising, take off your shoes, and give yourself a foot massage. What is really going on here? And more importantly, is this tingling dangerous?

There are a few items that often are attributed to causing foot numbness. The most common cause is compression of the neuropathy from tight or improper fitting shoes. The forefoot of your shoes should be flexible; this is especially true with the pair of shoes you use for running. You may need to lace your shoes differently as well. They should not be laced so tightly that you feel even the slightest pinch



in your foot when you put them on. If your shoes are new, they may need a few weeks to be broken in.

Also, there could be another problem called Exertional Compartment Syndrome, which is related to the swelling of a group of muscles



during physical activity that can irritate nerves in the same area. The term neuroma refers to the irritation and swelling of a nerve. In the case of numb feet, the

nerve commonly affected is a small nerve that connects the third and fourth toes, counting from the big toe. Someone with this syndrome will complain of pain in the sole of the foot, beginning with numbness or tenderness just behind the third and fourth toes. At a later stage, pain, numbness, burning and tingling sensations can radiate around the foot. The pain in such instances may appear and leave spontaneously, regardless if you continue or quit the activity that brought it on in the first place. For those with neuroma, doctors often recommend sports insoles with added silicone padding beneath the fore foot area. In addition to this, one needs to be sure to have appropriate running shoes.

This nerve is specifically prone to damage from wearing high heels. Stuffing the toes in too small an area will squeeze the toes and put pressure on the nerve. Neuroma is also exacerbated by the condition of over-pronation. Over-pronation refers to a condition in which your arches flatten when you stand up. This disturbs your natural way of walking and increases the stress placed upon the nerve. This is a complex problem, and one who has flat or fallen arches should see a podiatrist. Problems with

continued on page 23

continued on page 23

# Arts and Culture

## Holiday Windows Transcend Cultural Boundries

BY YAEL WOLYNETZ

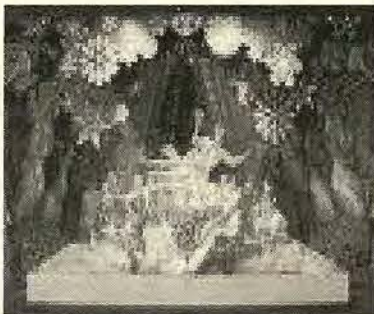
Thanksgiving marks the beginning of the holiday season. Companies, department stores and television shows alike shift their focus, playing into the holiday marketing scheme. While most of these organizations attempt to be politically correct and do not single out any particular holiday verbatim, the excess of red and green, as well as tree motifs, indicate a definite bias towards the Christmas holiday.

Of course, the Christmas season takes on new meaning in New York City as both native New Yorkers and tourists wait with baited breathe as the department stores unveil their legendary holiday windows. Seeing these windows becomes an event in it of itself, a competition between the creative geniuses employed by each of the department stores.

Macy's, the largest department store in the United States, is home to some of the most well known holiday displays. They are typically the first department store to unveil their spectacular window displays. Every year, they dedicate a set of windows to sequentially depict the legendary Christmas story, "Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> St," which is of course appropriate considering

much of the story takes place in Macy's. One of the windows even depicts the famous Thanksgiving Day Parade that Macy's sponsors on a yearly basis.

Bergdorf Goodman had a modern stylistic approach to their window décor, incorporating merchandise from their store into holiday scenes. Using the



Macy's Holiday Window

designs of high-end fashion designers, such as Roberto Cavalli, Marc Jacobs, Dolce and Gabbana to name a few, these dresses are modeled on mannequins who are shown participating in various holiday activities. For example, one of the mannequins is depicted getting ready for a holiday party, while another is shown building a Christmas decorated gingerbread house. A lot of the scenes are open to interpretation by each observer, and some might even be considered risqué. One scene

entitled "Invite" displays a woman clad in a beautiful white fur coat knocking on a door, with a polar bear opening the door for her. While the scene is aesthetically pleasing with the crisp combination of the white fur of the woman's jacket and the polar bear's own fur, it is not easily understood.

When asked about her impressions of the windows, a passerby excitedly responded, "These are my favorite of all the department stores. They are clearly the work of an artistic genius." She added that for her they represented real art. The artist is illustrating rather than telling a story.

For their window decor this year, Bloomingdale's chose to get into the holiday spirit by choosing a liberal "Let's Celebrate" theme. In their central window, the theme is explained: "Today people all over the world are celebrating. We invite you to celebrate in your own style."

The rest of the windows display the folktales, customs and traditions of various cultures of countries worldwide including Greece, Italy, Sweden, Russia, the Netherlands, Ireland and Great Britain. Each display focuses on the distinguishing

*continued on page 21*

## "The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" Spells Originality

BY DEANNA FRAZIN

It is time to take a trip into the past, to a time when what was in your lunch box was a top priority. Go back to the days when getting a new trapper keeper was the highlight of your month and when participating in a spelling bee was either your greatest fear or your biggest triumph. Broadway's smash musical, "The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee," has this ability to transfer you to such a time as it takes its audience back to elementary school. Both original and funny, the show is set up like an actual spelling bee, following seven children vying for the crowning glory of winning a county spelling bee.

"The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" is successful in eliciting a sense of nostalgia through and through, all the way down to the theatre's decorations. Designed to look like an elementary school, old metal lockers stand in front of the restrooms and mock posters filled with school spirited cheesy slogans plaster the walls. There are even pretend ads with fictional upcoming events and lunch menus, eliciting the feeling that if the theater had to close down, a new school could immediately be erected in its place.

The set up of the theater is unconventional in itself. Straying from the traditional theater format, which has balconies and wings; this theater seems quite small as it has no balcony or upper level seating area. It is appropriately called "Circle in the Square Theatre" due to its partially round design. Combined, these elements create an intimate feeling between the audience and actor, and give the audience a sense that they are attending a spelling bee in a genuine school auditorium.

The show itself is anything but a typical Broadway show, mainly because there is a lot of audience participation. Four audience members are called to the stage and get to be in the show. Therefore, it is advisable to dress nicely because this may be your shot for your 15 minutes of fame! The expression on their faces when the cast breaks into song and makes up dialogue about them was an unexpected highlight. The show involves some improvisation, breaking away from the more traditional stiff and formal Broadway show. The people in the audience are also serenaded to by the characters throughout the performance, which adds

additional comic relief and originality to the musical.

The variety of characters only adds to the show's charm. Ranging from an extremely liberal politically active girl, to a ditzy skater boy, the characters were very eccentric and humorous. The actors, themselves adults, successfully capture the innocence and idiosyncratic nature of the children they are supposed to be playing. Many of the characters are imbued with lisps, braces, or pig-tails, making them seem all the more childlike.

In addition, the show is infused with many comedic scenes and lines. One of the funniest lines in the show occurs when a student has to spell the word "phylacteries" and asks to have the word put in a sentence. The prompter replies, "Johnny take off those phylacteries we are Episcopalian." One may think of a spelling bee as something lame and dorky, but due to a well written script and great acting, the show was a non stop laugh out loud treat.

Yet, although the show thrives in its actors and ambiance, it severely lacks in its songs, which are neither memorable nor deep. In fact, some of the songs, particularly "My, Friend the Dictionary," sound as though the lyrics are actually written by children. The performers, who all excel in acting, seem to literally fall flat when the characters attempt to sing them. One almost got a sense that the show could work just as well, if not better, had it not been created as a musical.

Overall, the show is one of a kind. "The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" is well worth seeing for its original plot, innovative theater design, and talented actors. If you're looking for a t-e-r-r-i-f-i-c time, "The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" is the show to see.

The "25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" is playing at the Circle in the Square Theatre at 1633 Broadway. Tickets are \$95.00 but student rush tickets can be purchased for \$25.00. The schedule is Tuesday at 7:00 p.m., Wednesday-Friday at 8:00 p.m., Saturday at 2:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m. and Sunday at 3:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m. For tickets call 212-239-6200 or 800-432-7250

## Loving "Love:" A New Twist to The Beatles

BY SARAH GUIGUI

Beatlemania isn't quite over yet. Beatles' former producer George Martin and his son Giles have taken on an audacious remastering of the band's famous tracks and compiled them in an album entitled "Love." The CD, which was originally intended for the Cirque du Soleil's new show, tops the sales in several countries. Not to worry, this record is not another addition to the long list of "Best Of" albums. Rather, "Love" gives the world a new unprecedented approach to the Beatles' music.

George Martin used various recordings of songs and mixed them together. Some unexpected combinations reveal the brilliance of this 80 year-old man, who is also known as the fifth Beatle. The idea of mixing The Beatles with The Beatles is a true success because of the homogeneity of the final product; as Paul McCartney puts it, "You're not trying to fit Pavarotti into a Beatles song; you're fitting the Beatles back into the Beatles."

Still, despite the simplicity of this idea, "Love" is intended for mature Beatles fans. If you've never heard songs such as "Glass Onion," "The Word,"

"Blue Jay Way," and "Julia" this record is probably not right for you as you might prefer the "1 Album" which was released a couple of years ago. The true novelty of this album is that the band's more instrumental songs, such as "Eleanor Rigby," have been redesigned in a way to make them even more instrumental than they are in their original versions.



Love Album

What makes this album even more attractive is that McCartney and Ringo Starr, the last two living Beatles, were not implicated at all in the process of making "Love." The Martins actually had to convince the remaining band members, along with Yoko Ono, wife of the late John Lennon and Olivia Harrison, wife of deceased Beatle George Harrison that the album was worth releasing. Even

though they all trusted George Martin's taste, because, as Starr said, "George knows all of our music," the group was still fascinated by the end result "We were all amazed at how well it worked," McCartney said.

Many people have been insistent that the "fab four's" music remain unaltered. A true Beatles fan would be compelled to agree with this idea. Yet, listening to the newest album will completely change ones mind on this subject given how close all the tracks are to the sound of the original tunes. "I love that we are re-enhancing the Beatles' music [...] you've got the others if you want them [...] this is a new experience," Starr said.

Should you take \$18.00 and buy this CD? If you're a purist you'll be ten times happier with some good old vinyls. If you're 20 and want to check out what are your parents are whining about, buy the "1 Album." But, if you have all 13 LP's on your i-Pod and you know every song by heart, "Love" is a must have.

## Award Winning Author Addresses SCW Students

BY Yael Zwanziger

The Morris Epstein Forum of the Arts brought noted writer Dara Horn to the Beren Campus on November 27 to discuss the Jewish themes in her most recent novel, "World to Come" (Norton 2006). The lecture was attended by a diverse demographic, containing not only students, but a large amount of alumnae and general fans of the author. Horn was asked to speak not just because of her impressive literary contribution, but because at only 29 years old, she can also serve as an impressive female role model to the students of Stern College for Women.

Despite her young age, she has accomplished many great things thus far in her life. Horn earned a PhD in comparative literature from Harvard University, has published two novels, regularly lectures at Sarah Lawrence College, and is a mother of a 16-month-old child. She is a winner of the National Jewish Book Award, and has won various other book awards as well.

Though she admitted to being an awkward speaker, Horn redeemed herself by infusing her lecture with some good-natured self-deprecating humor. It was fun to watch her conquer her obvious nervousness, and manage to speak in an engaging way.

At one point during her speech, she recalled that when she happens to be on a panel, more often than not, a person would ask her what makes someone a Jewish author. She gave the audience a preview of her usual response saying, "A modern Jewish author is by definition someone who while on a panel is inevitably asked if he considers

himself a Jewish author. That is a modern Jewish author."

On a more serious note, Horn explained that Jewish authors used to be those authors who would write in Yiddish, a Jewish language. Those writers chose to address a Jewish audience and chose to be Jewish authors despite the fact that it was not always a glamorous job. Now that Jewish authors in America write in an intrinsically Christian language their job of trying the Jewish reader to his roots is much more difficult.

In "World to Come," Horn attempted to re-animate the old Yiddish culture to a modern audience. The premise of the book is that during a Jewish singles mixer in a gallery, a Chagall painting is stolen, leading to the inevitable quest for the robber. The novel is based on a true story; a Chagall painting was stolen from the Jewish Museum during a singles cocktail hour in 2001.

Interspersed with this modern tale, Horn tells of a time and place when Yiddish writers such as "Der Nister" were alive and celebrated. Towards the end of her novel, Horn noted that she discussed an imaginary place in which those who were dead and those who were not yet born meet, mixing "regret with possibility." This image of a timeless continuum among the Jewish people is especially poignant for a people that are always frightened of being the last generation. The fear of not being remembered and of having no readership in a generation is also a common fear amongst Jewish authors.



Novelist Dara Horn

## The Men Behind "Buy the Book"

BY THE OBSERVER STAFF

"Buy the Book", an original play written by Chai Hecht (YC '07), was performed this semester by the Yeshiva College Dramatic Society (YCDS). The Observer had the opportunity to sit down with Hecht, as well as the production's stage manager Avi Soroka and its two lead actors John Flemming (YC '08) and Tuvia Cooper (YC '08), to discuss the play, the theater, and creativity at Yeshiva University (YU).

*The Observer:* "Buy the Book" is described as a 'theological comedy.' In one sentence, what's the play about?

*Soroka:* Is there such a thing as blindfaith?

*Hecht:* And is belief arbitrary?

*Flemming:* Sitting and thinking why do I believe, in God or in anything, just really thinking why. How many people do that?

*The Observer:* How is doing an original show different than a revival?

*Cooper:* It seems more professional. Unless you're in a revival, actors always work on originals and we got to take the same approach.

*Flemming:* Doing a play that's been done before is, at best, trying to reinvent a character. I think that when the play is over, I'll be able to look back and tell myself that I've created something. *Soroka:* [This experience has] made me aware of the importance of telling a clear story. When you work with an old script that's not really a concern of yours, you worry if the actors are telling the story, but you know the script is. With an original, you have to worry if it's the script that is missing things. These characters will be who

they are because of the actors who originally played them.

*Cooper:* No copyright issues either.

*The Observer:* For the writer, how is the final production different than your original vision?

*Hecht:* Many scenes appear on-stage exactly as I imagined them. At the same time, watching the rehearsals, discussing constantly with Avi and Lin [Snider], the show developed three-dimensionality for me that wasn't there before.

*The Observer:* Avi, you graduated from YU and have since worked as a professional stage manager, yet, you are still devoted to YCDS. What is it about the society that makes those involved love it so much?

*Soroka:* This society changed my life. I want it to do the same for others. As the YCDS stage manager I can create a connection with these guys. In some small way I hope I've touched their lives.

*Cooper:* You're in the theater for so long over the course of the semester and these are the only people who understand just how much work you put in. They're family. Flemming is my brother, [David] Mikofsky [who plays Monk] is the crazy uncle...

*Flemming:* [Theater] isn't about finding a family, but it's what happens.

*Soroka:* Not always. Actors get to the point where all they do is learn their lines and go home. We can't do that in YCDS. We have to start from scratch and we have to develop a trust in each other. That's why YCDS functions.

*Hecht:* The demand for trust actually engenders it.

*Cooper:* No matter how long you're in YCDS, you leave more mature

*Flemming:* For a lot of people, it's a first crack at responsibility.

*Cooper:* And commitment. *Soroka:* It lets us understand that we are far from who we should be.

*Cooper:* And from who we can be. I feel like this is the end of an episode of "Captain Planet." The power is yours.

*The Observer:* Let's talk about creativity at YU. Is it there [any], and how can we foster it?

*Hecht:* They let you choose your own courses mostly, so that's cool.

*Cooper:* In the theater it is. Other than that, it's out there but it's hard to find. Like academic advising, where is that building?

*Hecht:* Does YU value creativity, art? Probably. But at the cost of what? What will they give up for art? In the theater, we sacrifice a lot to foster creativity.

*Soroka:* We do foster it. We foster the hell out of it, but nobody comes.

*Flemming:* It's there and it's not. They whine about how nothing happens here, how no one really cares about the school. I never get it. But maybe that's because I'm in the theater all the time with 10 other guys who are giving their all to create something. People are too concerned with the easiest possible way to get through YU, but being creative takes work.

*Soroka:* I find that the arts are not found in many religious homes. There's this idea that art is for girls, it's *shuts* (nonsense)...

*Cooper:* On the other hand, YU provides an opportunity you might not get in another school where Friday night is the most important night of any production.

*The Observer:* How do you prepare for a role and how do you

continued on page 23

## Battle of the Bands Returns to Center Stage

BY MICHELLE SCHIFFMAN

This year's Battle of the Bands was a tremendous success due to an outstanding run of performances that got the crowd roaring in a packed hall, complete with wrist bands, security guards, a half time performance, and screaming fans. The event, which took place in the Beren Campus' Schottenstein Cultural Center, was a step up from last year's production, which left a half filled auditorium on the Wilf Campus.

Scott Sheps (SSSB '08) and Avi Shteingart (YC '07), who hosted the evening, made a

humorous duo, keeping the audience entertained throughout the night with personal stories, trivia questions, random shout outs, all of which peaked in a semi boy band half time performance warranting mention. Though it was all in jest, five boys dancing in sync with

each other to the likes of N'Sync music, an up beat version of *Modeh Ani*, and the YMCA was a hilarious addition to the show.

Captivating the crowd with their rendition of "Tzadik Katamar Yiphrach" Except Saturday was awarded first place

in this year's competition, featuring Erez Cohen as the lead vocalist and guitarist, Elan Kugel on the drums, Jeremy Linder playing the keyboard, David Steiner

playing bass, and Peter Goodrich as the lead guitarist. Cohen electrified the crowd with his powerful, yet pleasant, voice, standing out as having a great time on stage. It is hard to believe that he was not born with a microphone in his hand. The audience, who

graced the band with a standing ovation by the end of the performance, clearly appreciated the band's enthusiasm and talent.

Second place went to Yaacov Chesed. Members of the band include Jake Polansky, Michael Moskowitz, David Solomon, and Ari Freidman.

Polansky, the lead vocalist, brought chills up the spines of many with his melodious voice. Energies flowed between the band and the crowd through its strong presence on stage and seemingly flawless performance. Choice song of the night had to

go to Yaakov Chesed, who performed a song entitled "Shalom." The song was warming, complete with lyrics of peace and accompanied by Polansky's appropriately soft voice.

Panic at the Chasana, was the last band to perform and earned third place in this year's battle. They left the crowd in their own panic, wanting more of their music before the night ended. In an entertaining, yet eye brow raising performance, vocalist Joseph Goldglantz (YC '08), Yoni Raab, Amitai Glaser (YC '09), Eitan Stavsky (YC '08), and Avi Freidman began the perform-

continued on page 21



# FASHION

## Great Looks for Great Prices

BY RACHEL SHPAYHER

Twenty years ago Tara Jarmon created a new design label under her own name. In 1997, Sophie Albou, designer for Paul & Joe, started her own collection and in 1999 Luella Bartley showed her first collection at a friend's apartment in Great Britain. Newcomer Behnaz Sarafpour launched her label in 2001.

The common factor between these four designers is that all of them, aside from having the incredible ability of making people look good, are now creating designs that cost less than designer clothes have previously cost. They have been added to the roster of designers enlisted by Target to produce their signature wear at lower prices.

Target started GO International, a new way in which the company could excite customers by bringing affordable fashions to their stores that were created by top designers from around the world. However,

Target's creative team was not the only one thinking in these terms. Soon after, H&M employed Karl Lagerfeld, the designer for Chanel, to create an exclusive line of ready to wear clothing. After their success with



Tara Jarmon fashions at Target

Lagerfeld, Stella McCartney and Sweden's fascinating duo Viktor and Rolf signed on to design for H&M as well.

It's not just the stores that are benefiting from this collaboration; the designers are benefiting as well. When Isaac Mizrahi and Mossimo joined Target, both of their labels were not far from folding. With the help of Target, both designers have managed to stay afloat and

were able to bring in more money than anyone anticipated. Mizrahi did so well that he was able to re-establish his more expensive label with great success. Although Mizrahi was able to start fresh with his old label, he has not left Target and is one of their top sellers.

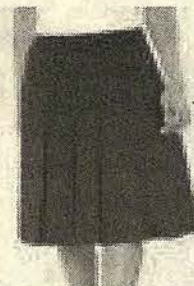


Stella McCartney for H&M

It's not just cheap prices that bring in flocks of people, but the great clothing designs also help in making these less expensive lines successful. However, in comparison to the designers' real labels, the clothing lacks luxurious fabrics. For example, this season Sarafpour came out with a leopard jacket that can only be described as cheap looking. Yet, if this same

jacket was designed under her couture label, it would exude luxury.

Despite the fact that there is an occasional fabric dilemma, almost every piece in the designers' collections is a



Isaac Mizrahi fashions at Target

must have. Magazines include them in their editorial spreads, and celebrities such as Rachel Bilson of the OC and Kristen Bell of Veronica Mars have been spotted wearing them. Even without the support of Hollywood though, the designs which make up these collections would sell themselves on their own merit.

With the winter season for buying fashions coming to an end and the spring season rapid-

ly approaching, look forward to more designers making their fashions available at reduced prices. As Vera Wang starts being available at Kohl's, and Proenza Schouler signs on for Target, one can look great at a reasonable price. Any fashionista will tell you, its great fun walking around wearing the designs of a renowned designer knowing they put together a chic outfit without breaking the bank.



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## Hanukkah Dinner Recognizes Philanthropy

*continued from front page*

said the President.

A video presentation entitled "Ronald P. Stanton: An Appreciation," was shown to the crowd, highlighting Stanton's dedication to Jewish education and philanthropy. A variety of YU personnel, businessmen and women, and students all gave thanks to Stanton on film. Then, in keeping with the Hanukkah theme, President Joel proceeded to name members of the YU family who have some connection to Stanton "points of light."

Edith Lubetski, head librarian of the Heidi Steinberg Library, named for Stanton's mother, Victor Schwartz, the recently appointed dean of students at YC, and Presidential Fellows Eli Hagler and Ez Shaffren, who serve as the Ronald P. Stanton Fellows, were among those singled out for recognition.

Before the programs end, Stanton's personal accomplishments were also given recognition. President Joel asked Stanton's three children, his daughter-in-law, and two

grandchildren to join him on stage where he presented them with gifts. When asked what the best thing about her father was, Hedi Stanton, the sole daughter of Ronald Stanton replied, "That he gave 100 million dollars to YU."

The Observer Staff  
Would Like to Wish the  
Entire Student  
Body a Happy  
Chanukkah and Good  
Luck With Finals!

## Student Life Continues to Enact Changes

*continued from front page*

the committee.

"The committee [was] started many years ago," explained Zelda Braun, associate dean of students. "There was a strong feeling that there had to be a vehicle that would enable students to have a voice to effect change in daily occurrences that directly affect them."

Committee members are given jurisdiction over a wide range of campus issues, such as those pertaining to library hours, cafeteria food choices, study room availability, the academic calendar, and computer services. Students can address their concerns to the committee and introduce their own ideas for adjustments or improvements.

"[This is] a venue for administrators to connect to students," said Unterman. "There are big things that we change that students notice, such as shuttle schedule changes. There are also little changes ... that you don't notice. For example, something that came up in the first agenda of the year was ... should the midtown shuttle pick up from the alternate entrance [of 245 Lexington]."

These types of concerns may seem trivial, but executing them efficiently and effectively is necessary for the wellbeing of the school, stressed Unterman. She offered the example of the exercise room in Brookdale Residence Hall. The Student Life Committee worked with the Facilities and Housekeeping Department to create a schedule that would accommodate both the students and the cleaning crew. The setup of the eating area in Kushner Dining Hall is another matter under discussion. "At peak time it's very hard for students to get between the tables," Unterman pointed out. "We're looking into ideas into how we can maximize that space."

The resolution of certain issues often involves multiple university departments and therefore requires much coordination among the various committee delegates. One recent cooperative effort between the staffs of library services and MIS produced the installation of new computers in the reserve library at SCW. Students can log onto these computers with their academic accounts, allowing them to use reference materials as they work, rather than photocopying what they need and taking it out of the library. "Students should be aware of that and take advantage of it," urged Unterman.

Another noteworthy achievement of the Student Life Committee was the extension of cafeteria hours to include Sundays. "This was a big hurdle because the university actually loses money by doing that,"

admitted Unterman. "But they thought it was an important step for SCW students to extend their life on campus, which shows a great attitude on the administration's part." Now the committee is working on lengthening Thursday cafeteria hours, "so that any student who wants to stay here all week should be able to do so," she said.

"Our biggest achievement was putting on the agenda building a bigger beit midrash," Unterman stated unequivocally. The current facility, located on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of 245 Lexington Avenue, can seat a maximum of 50 people. Plans for a new beit midrash were initiated years ago by a group of women who were dissatisfied with its size. Students initially turned to The Observer as a forum for voicing their grievances, publishing numerous articles which brought the issue to the fore. The complaints eventually reached the Student Life Committee.

"They took our request so seriously that they're changing it," Unterman remarked. At the most recent meeting, a special subcommittee of students met with Associate Vice President for Administrative Services Jeffrey Rosengarten, Jewish Studies Chairman Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel, and Dean Bacon who invited an architect to discuss design details. The new beit midrash will boast a seating capacity of 150.

Unterman acknowledged the dedication of the administration to the students and to acting on their behalf. "They really do care and really do play to our interests," she said. "I don't think that's appreciated enough. The administrators really do try to help us ... that's their job and they really take it seriously. We need to appreciate any effort that they make."

The administration sees things with long-range vision and concentrates on how to improve the university in the long run. This helps keep things consistent, explained Unterman, but sometimes people are needed to understand matters in the short term, and "this is where we come in," she said.

The Committee is working to establish an even greater presence on the Beren Campus. Its members are constantly soliciting input from undergraduates, most recently through surveys to assess student opinion regarding the academic calendar for 2007-2008. Students can also apply for positions on the committee.

"It really is a team effort," concluded Unterman. "It's a great show of camaraderie."

To contact the Student Life Committee, write to [scwstudentlife@gmail.com](mailto:scwstudentlife@gmail.com).

*continued from page 8*  
on September 20 during *selichot*, when English Professor Jay Ladin and Judaic Studies Chairman Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel facilitated discussion of a *piyut* in the 36<sup>th</sup> St. back lounge. A second event took place on November 29, featuring Dr. Ladin, who gave a session on "A Close Reading of *Tehillim* (Psalms)," in which he led an informal discussion on the poetic nature of David's Psalm 30. Deborah Anstandig (SCW '07), the coordinator of the event, hopes "to see a [monthly] series on close reading in Jewish texts" added to the SCW calendar. Anstandig explains that she "appreciates the idea of looking at a text critically, [as the *meforshim* (commentaries) do]."

Along with efforts to promote the university mantra of Torah-U-Maddah, TAC is working to bring similar programs to international students. Louise Soussan (SCW '07) has spearheaded efforts to arrange a *shiur*, given by Esther Cohen of Crown Heights, for French-speaking stu-

## Tac Initiatives Permeate Campus

dents in their native dialect. In the sessions held thus far, Cohen covered topics related to *Rosh Chodesh* and daily prayer. "I think it could work," said Soussan optimistically in regard to the continuance of the program. "We want to try to have it on a weekly basis."

Not only has TAC sought to enhance the intellectual Torah community at SCW, but it has also labored to create a spiritual community of prayer by regularizing organized *Rosh Chodesh* davening. On the first of the Jewish month, a gathering of women convenes before the start of morning classes for a joint singing of *Hallel*. The *tefillah* is followed by a festive breakfast and a *Rosh Chodesh* gift, bearing the motto of the month, sponsored by the Star Gazer's Committee.

"I am very excited about the *Rosh Chodesh* programming," said Jamie Fogel (SCW '08), a member of the *Rosh Chodesh* Committee. "I think that community *Hallel* in the morning gives women at Stern a unique

opportunity to come together in song... [It] is a great chance to bond with peers in an alternative way."

Fruchter attributes much of the TAC's successful programming to the dedication of two parties: the administration and the students of SCW. "The university is an amazing partner and extremely helpful in planning events... [and] concretizing goals," she said. As for the hard working students, she claims, "everyone owns a project. Whether or not something will get done depends on a feeling of ownership and responsibility to that goal... [TAC allows] people that are passionate about those goals to take charge and be the owners!" By engaging the undergraduate women in a collaborative effort to build a stronger community on campus, the committee has already raised the bar of student leadership and promises to set a precedent that will be difficult to follow.

## Decorative Windows Around the City

*continued from page 18*

aspect of that particular country's mode of celebration. In a sense, following the sequence of window displays is almost like getting a brief history lesson, but instead of a boring lecture, one is looking at displays which are pleasing to the eye.

The first window represents the United States, with the typical Christmas scene, including Santa Claus and his sleigh. Following their theme of multicultural celebrations, the next window is dedicated to the Chanukah holiday, and the dis-

play reads, "The festival of lights celebrated by the Jewish people that lasts eight days and nights." Depicting the religiously symbolic Chanukah artifacts, a large blue and white sparkling menorah and a constantly spinning dreidel the display explained, "they are celebrating the Macabees' victory over their captors and also the miracle of the oil which kept the temple lamps burning for eight days."

At first glance, one of the window displays could be mistaken for another menorah, but as the explanation reads, a seven branched candelabra is also

the symbol for the African holiday of Kwanzaa.

When asked about her impressions of the Bloomingdale's display, a passerby commented, "It is nice to see a Jewish representation in the window displays. Most of the department store's themes are so obviously Christmas oriented that you would think the world forgot about Chanukah," she added with a chuckle.

## BATTLE OF THE BANDS

*continued from page 19*

ance on a very dramatic and romantic note. Goldglantz, who introduced the song by describing his ideal women with the words of *aishet chayil* proceeded to sing a satirical song about the life of a Stern College for Women student. The song was received with both laughs and dropped jaws.

The performances had two sets of judges. Officially, Avi Melzer and the previous winners of the Battle of the Bands were in charge of judging the performers and did so based on their instrumentals, energy, lyrics, and

overall performance. Yet, the more important judges of the night were the people in the



Third Place Winners "Panic at the Chasana"

crowd who were more than pleased with this year's winner.

Get another chance to

hear the winners of the night, "Except Saturday" live. They will be opening at the Yeshiva University Chanukah Concert on December 14. If you are interested in seeing more of the band you can visit their website at [www.exceptsaturday.com](http://www.exceptsaturday.com)

## Darfur Awareness Spreads Worldwide

*continued from page 10*

of almost a half a million Sudanese people in Darfur and the displacement of more than two million people there.

Two short months later, the team set out to organize another rally to be held on November 20, 2006 in Kikar Tzion, a square in the center of downtown Jerusalem. In the press release advertising this rally, Berrin, Kupferman, Perlow and Yedidya Schwartz, another student studying overseas for the year, called their organization *HAeD*, (literally translated as "the witness") an acronym standing for "*Hatzilu et Amei Darfur*," (Save the Nation of Darfur). The rally was created on a larger scale than the previous effort and attracted both Anglos and Israelis. Berrin and Perlow, as founders of *HAeD*, were among those who spoke at the rally, a program which also included a number of rabbis and professors. Additionally, there was a presentation made by Eytan Schwartz, winner of the TV show "The Ambassador," which is Israel's equivalent of "The Apprentice."

The crowd of approximately 500 included "people across all spectra of Israeli society, from super-left to super-right," noted Berrin. Furthermore, the extensive media-coverage of the rally included newspapers and websites from across the political range, religious and nonreligious alike. "People are starting to take notice," commented Perlow, who says that she and the other organizers were "very pleased" by the turnout.

Despite the successful outcome of the rally, Berrin acknowledged that "there is much work that still needs to be done." He and the others are in the midst of planning a fund-rais-

ing campaign for the almost 250 Darfur refugees currently residing in Israel. Also, *HAeD*, which is comprised of roughly 300 people, mostly Anglo students studying in Israel, has committed itself to helping Schwartz's organization, Committee for Advancement of Refugees from Darfur (CARD), through volunteerism and fundraising. Together with CARD, *HAeD* hopes to provide education and clothing for the Darfur refugees.

When asked by Ori Raphael of the Jerusalem Post why it is that Israelis should focus on a conflict far away when Israel has its own issues to deal with, Berrin responded that, as Jews, "we have to help others and 'be a light unto the nations.'" In a personal interview, Berrin, quoting Elie Wiesel, inquired, "how can we reproach the indifference of non-Jews to Jewish suffering if we remain indifferent to another people's plight?" Kupferman shared those sentiments, saying that as a member of a family of Holocaust survivors, "turning a shoulder to this issue was not an option."

In addition to the success that these efforts will hopefully have in the global fight against the oppression of the people of Darfur, the efforts of *HAeD* are valuable for another reason. The effort allows Jews from all walks of life to unite behind a single cause. While the members of *HAeD* rallied in Jerusalem, many Yeshiva University students rallied in Central Park on the same day. This involvement is essential to all Jews to guarantee that we as survivors of genocide through the ages do not "default on our oath of 'never again,'" said Berrin.

## Pop into Dale and Thomas for Popcorn

SCW, as Dale and Thomas popcorn has quickly become a family food. "I like that there are several *pareve* flavors," said Arly Avner (SCW '08). "It is very convenient that I can go to the Teaneck location before *Shabbos* and buy popcorn as a gift to bring to families that invite me over for lunch." Abby Feldman (SCW '08), who lives in New Hyde Park, close to one of the stores, exclaimed: "I live in the middle of nowhere, but Dale and Thomas popcorn brings my friends to me!"

The Dale and Thomas business has also expanded beyond just selling popcorn; they now offer a variety of products such as chocolate popcorn lollipops, decorative popcorn truffles in nice boxes, and even drinks. "The popcorn lollipops are right by the cash register- they seem to call out your name," observed Becca Pachino (SCW '08). "This is a one serving treat, so I can avoid feeling bad about finishing a whole bag of popcorn by myself!"

Are you too lazy to leave the comfort of your home?

Do you live far from one of the stores? No problem since you can order through a catalogue or off their website- [www.daleandthomaspopcorn.com](http://www.daleandthomaspopcorn.com). Through these venues, one can order regular bags of popcorn, or one can choose from the many variety or gift packs. All of the products are certified OU, so there is no need to worry about sifting through pages of tempting treats in order to find only a couple that are permissible to eat.

At the risk of sounding corny, if you haven't yet experienced Dale and Thomas pop into the store and see for yourself what all the hype is about!

## Schneier Center Appoints Student Leaders

*continued from page 10*

year, was a dinner and round table discussion with Etgar Lefkovits, a correspondent for the Jerusalem Post. It was followed by his lecture on "Covering the Middle East as an Israeli Journalist: Reflections of a Jerusalem Correspondent," which was open to the rest of the YU community.

Posnick feels that the Council members and other YU students have been provided with a valuable learning opportunity. "I hope the Council members learn from the various speakers and really get a chance to make a difference," he said. "Speakers from many different fields will be coming in and the students can really learn a lot and speak to the people from the fields they hope to go into."

"As the first Director of the Center, I stepped into uncharted territory and have had the unique opportunity, therefore, to set its institutional and programming direction," said Dr. Bevan, explaining her duties as director of the Schneier Center. In her role, she communicates regularly with Rabbi Arthur Schneier and meets annually with the Schneier Center Board, which includes Vice President Morton Lowengrub and Rabbi Schneier. Dr. Bevan is also responsible for keeping the Center within their annual budget, and she therefore presents an Annual Report, consisting of a budget accounting for the year's expenses, at the yearly board meeting. She also meets periodically with President Richard Joel, who, she says, "has ultimate oversight on the center." In addition to being director of the Center, Dr. Bevan is a political science professor who teaches at both the Wilf and Beren Campuses.

Another function of the

Center, as declared in its mission statement, is "concerned with a broad spectrum of global issues, ranging from political problems of war and peace, human rights and welfare, to world problems of public health, the environment, and international regulations of law, the Schneier Center sponsors public lectures by notable world personalities, as well as educational programs for college and university students." To that end, it has certainly been effective thus far.

In the past, the Center has co-hosted lectures by speakers such as Samantha Powers, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, and Israel's Chief Rabbi Israel Lau. They also sponsored a symposium on "The Political Face of Religious Fundamentalists," with several speakers specializing in Christian, Jewish, and Muslim fundamentalism. Around those major events have also been various speakers from China, Israel, France, and the United States.

This year, the Center has hosted Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer, a YU graduate and former dean, who has served as the U.S. Ambassador to Egypt and Israel. They are also sponsoring a bioethics symposium scheduled for May 8, 2007 that is being organized by Dr. Sylvia Smoller, the Center's Albert Einstein College of Medicine (AECOM) representative. The theme of the symposium will be the "Culture of Science: Research and Ethics," featuring Allegra Goodman, Dr. Allen M. Spiegel, dean of AECOM, and Dr. Lawrence J Rhoades of the Office of Research Integrity of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources.

Each year, the Center awards three summer research grants to YU faculty whose projects are selected competitively

for funding, as well as one graduate student summer research fellowship and five undergraduate student research internships. On December 6, 2006, the Center held its second annual Research Night, where the students presented posters describing their work, and the faculty fellows presented their own research projects.

In addition, the Center's first book is presently being published. Entitled "Diplomatic Rescuers of the Holocaust," it is written by Mordechai Paldiel of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. More new initiatives are being planned for the future as well, among them student internships in Israel, and a "monograph series of publications...one of which will on the 'Political Face of Religious Fundamentalism' symposium," Dr. Bevan elaborated. The Center is also planning on creating a newsletter, the first of which will hopefully come out in January 2007. Another future objective of the Center is to host a major academic conference at YU, something which will likely take a year to organize.

The mission statement concludes that "consonant with its vision of a world defined by tolerance for difference, the Rabbi Arthur Schneier Center for International Affairs of Yeshiva University sets the standard for open dialogue, peacefully conducted." Posnick is confident that the Council will also live up to that standard and act as a representative of the student body to the Center. "I look forward to an educational and fun year," he said.

## Beyond 34th Street

*continued from page 11*

over to 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave, and down to 32<sup>nd</sup> St. This walk should take less than five minutes.

6. Jefferson Market Library located at 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. and 10<sup>th</sup> St. As much as I love the Central Branch of the NYPL, it hardly competes with this branch library in Greenwich Village. Originally built as a courthouse in 1874, the building was designed by Calvert Vaux, who also contributed to landscaping Central Park. The building has a spiral staircase up the clock tower and gorgeous stained-glass windows. The triangular block

upon which the library was built also includes a back garden which is very pleasant at any point in the year.



Jefferson Market Library

Getting There: You can walk to the library by walking down 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. to 10<sup>th</sup> St., and then walking across to 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. The closest subway ride to the Jefferson Market Library is along the V line. Pick up a V train at Herald Square and take it downtown two stops to 14<sup>th</sup> St. Then, walk downtown four blocks.

## Waterbirth: Better for Baby?

*continued from page 17*

ture a fetus for nine months. The body should also be able to withstand the rigors of labor despite the fact that it is a strain on the woman's body.

In order to eliminate the number of women opting for cesarean sections and numerous drugs to help them through the birthing process, women have looked to the waterbirth method as a viable alternative. Women have turned to the element of water as a possible method of easing the birthing process.

A waterbirth is known as the gentle option for births and has been found to be one of the most soothing ways to deliver a child. When a baby is born, one of the first things the doctors, nurses, and parents wait for is that first cry. Why do babies cry when they are born?

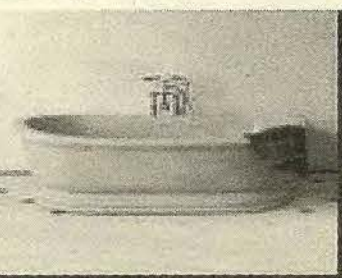
There are many reasons given to answer this question, but the main reason is that when the fetus is in utero its lungs are



inhalation. The first inhalation is not a usual inhalation. The lungs are still collapsed and it takes a tremendous effort for the collapsed lungs to expand. This effort results in the cry that we hear when the baby is born.

In the uterus the fetus is enclosed in a liquid environment. The transition from the liquid that the fetus is used to from inside the womb to air upon the fetus's entrance into the universe is very traumatic on the baby. The cry is still crucial, but the goal is that it be a cry of strength rather than a cry of pain. Waterbirths assist the infant in the difficult and crucial transition while allowing the mother to give birth in a comfortable environment as well.

Many women will also report that the contractions and labor pains are much less painful in water and the warmth of the environment, along with the soothing feeling of the water around them, allowed for a calmer birth experience.



The numerable health benefits that a waterbirth provides to the infant as well as the comfort benefits that the waterbirth affords the woman can hopefully alleviate some of the many non necessary cesarean sections and allow women to perform a task which they are well equipped to handle a bit more comfortably.

## The Sneaker Solution

*continued from page 17*

the feet can affect all parts of the body.

There is also a spine-related condition that causes numb feet. This is of much greater concern because it is related to a disc problem. Individuals who are concerned about this condition should see their general internist for treatment. More information can be found at [www.spine-health.com](http://www.spine-health.com). This site also provides a list of doctors who are board certified in spinal care.

Most people with foot numbness probably don't have any larger health problems. One probably just needs to get a decent pair of running shoes and make sure they are laced up correctly. A simple search on

Google brings up a lot of advice about how to choose an appropriate pair of shoes. It is vital that your feet have enough space while at the same time ensuring the shoes are not too large. If you have foot numbness, you may want to leave off your high heels for a while. Please, take a little time to ensure that your shoes are the right ones for you.

## Scientific Research Foundation Established for Students

*continued from page 9*

vide students with first-time research experience to which they would not ordinarily have access. Most research opportunities are limited to undergraduates who have completed their junior year, including the university's own Roth Scholars Program. However, unless applicants lay claim to prior research experience, they have difficulty in obtaining internships. Seeking to redress this catch-22, SERC will be geared towards freshmen and sophomores, allowing them to gain preliminary exposure to the world of scientific research, and thus giving them a competitive advantage in applying for other internship programs.

"We're really trying to look out for the best interest of our students," remarked Dr. Babich. "We see a weakness with the younger students where they're noncompetitive at the end of their junior year and we are trying to correct that."

Though the program is still in its planning stages, Dr. Babich offered a rough outline of the anticipated application process. Interested students will be required to submit an essay, along with a current resume, detailing their career aspirations

and preferred type of research. They will then be interviewed by SCW alumnae at AECOM who will be responsible for selecting the scholarship recipient.

The long-term objective of the fund fits into Weiss's larger vision of promoting women in the sciences. "In the general sense, as the fund grows, the Science Department will become more developed within the university world at large," she added. "But I also hope it will encourage women at Stern to seek out other areas of science, besides for medicine and doing research, to broaden their horizons in this kind of sense."

"Hopefully over the years, more graduates will contribute to help women in science," asserted Dean Bacon. "The importance of this is beyond the money and the individual student who is supported; it's the concept. Meredith has served as a model for others to follow, to give back to the college that has helped them to realize their ambitions."

Weiss attributed much of her success in medical school to the preparation she received at SCW. "I felt encouraged and supported to pursue medicine; I felt confident with my education,"

she said.

The research fund will presumably empower current students at SCW to do the same. By women, for women, the program holds great promise for future partnerships between alumnae and undergraduates. "We hope that all of our students, no matter what they do, look back at college as a formative experience," concluded Dean Bacon. "Everything they do for us makes us a stronger and better place for the next generation of women."

## Interview with YCDS

*continued from page 19*

unwind from it?

**Soroka:** Part of acting is understanding who you are and then locking yourself away for two hours. But until you know who you are you can't do it.  
**Flemming:** I think you have to identify with the character, see where he wants to go, where he came from, what he likes, and what sets him off.

**Cooper:** I think in all three shows I've been in, I've established some aspect of the character that I can go to because it's natural to me, and I really understand it. To walk out of it can be scary. Once you get in there, it's hard to get out.

**Soroka:** I would lie down on the floor and breathe slowly until I truly felt separated from that character.

**The Observer:** With the retirement of long time director Dr. Anthony Beukas, YCDS has gone through some major changes in the past year. What are your hopes/expectations for next semester?

**Flemming:** Soroka to come back.  
**Cooper:** "Buy the Book II: The Return of Chester."  
**Soroka:** Doc was the rock, the one everyone could turn to when they needed something, anything.  
**Flemming:** Doc was the banner

that every YCDS guy rallied around. Three doctorates, 40 years of experience, a [was a] very flamboyant character.

**Cooper:** He was like the owl in the tootsie pop commercials: you didn't always understand what he meant, but you knew to listen.

**Flemming:** There needs to be someone who sits there, night after night and guides us, someone with expectations that need to be lived up to.

**Hecht:** The guys in YCDS often don't have a good conception of just how much they're capable of. Doc would not settle for underachievement in himself or his students. Practically, we need a lot of money. The theater is in desperate need of repairs.

**The Observer:** Your new director, Lin Snider, has some pretty big shoes to fill. How is she doing?

**Hecht:** Lin's great. She thinks on many levels and she's incredibly sensitive and attuned to human strength and frailty, which makes her a fascinating director to watch and to work with.  
**Soroka:** She is amazing. She dances at her seat every night during warm up. She's part of the group.

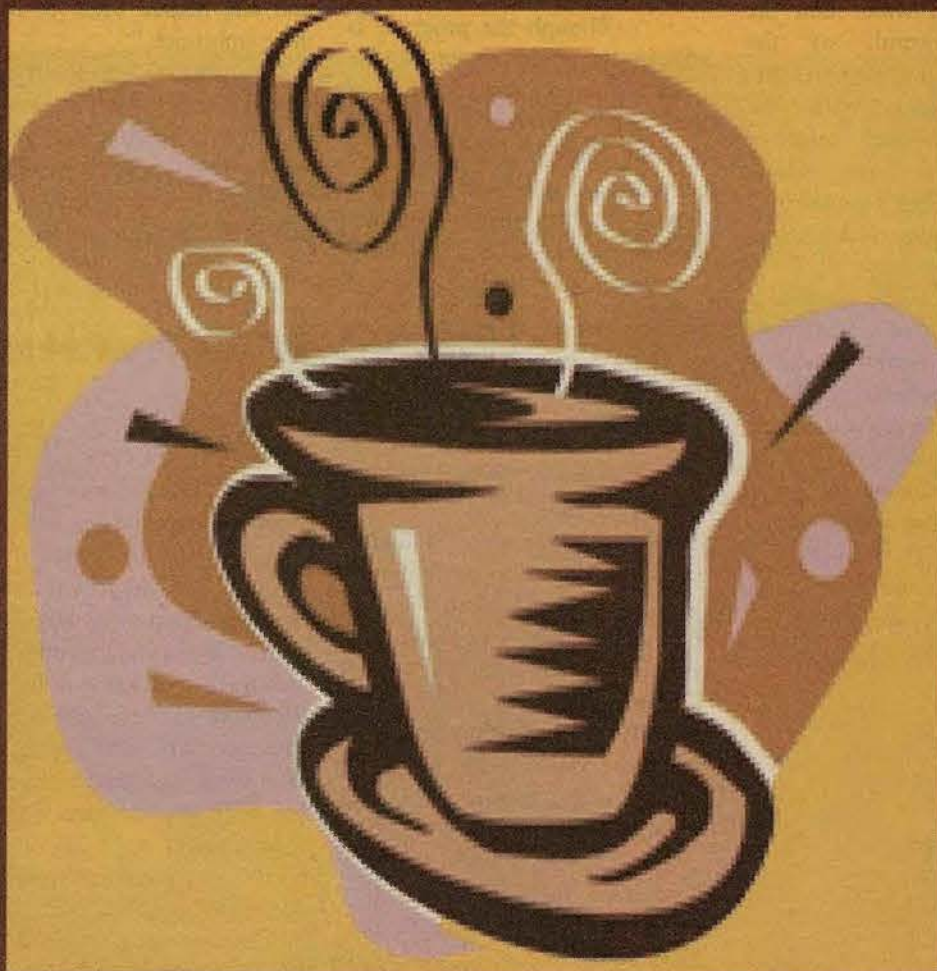
**Hecht:** I think Lin has really fallen in love with YCDS because it is such a unique place in the theater world.

**The Observer:** What do you hope the audience walks away with at the end of the night?

**Soroka:** They've spent their whole lives being told who they are. A good show makes people think. About what? I don't think it matters as long as it makes them think.

Need A Place To Study?

Join SCWSC in a quiet  
and relaxing study zone



WHEN: December 18th-27th 9PM-2AM

WHERE: Kushner Dining Hall and Le  
Bistro

Coffee and refreshments to keep you  
awake