



The Yeshiva University

OBSERVER

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David Glaser Wins Academy Award in Music

By Tova Stulman



David Glaser teaches *Sense of Music* "the composer that has arrived at his or her own voice," and awards "outstanding artistic achievement." Only four composers have been honored as recipients this year, with Professor Glaser being

You may not have seen him on the red carpet rubbing shoulders with Scorsese or Freeman, but one of Stern College's professors recently won an Academy Award. David Glaser, a popular professor of music at Stern, recently received one of the annual awards doled out by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Academy Award in music. Although it is a lesser-known award than, for instance, one for best director, it does not diminish the prestige and honor that comes with such a distinction. The official press release states that this award is given to

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SCW Combats Plagiarism with New Technology

By Rebecca Rosenberg

In a meeting Wednesday February 8th, SCW's administration and faculty adopted a new resolution to combat plagiarism, requiring all faculty to use a database titled Turnitin by September of 2005. This proposal is part of a long term goal to create a student body sensitive to issues of academic integrity. Turnitin is a massive database that includes 4.5 billion Internet pages, millions of published books and journals from ProQuest, and over 10 million student papers submitted across the country.

"I think Turnitin is a valuable teaching tool and I think it is also a powerful deterrent,"

said Professor Lauryl Hatvary of the English department, an enthusiast of the service.

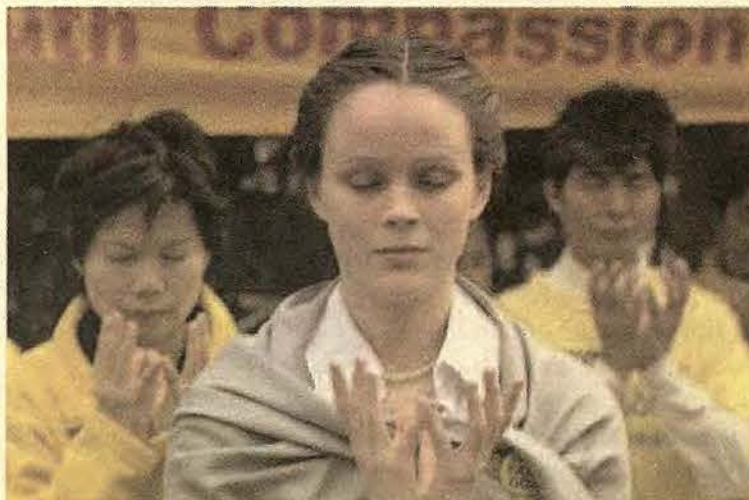
The plan is for professors or students (who will both have logins) to scan all major term papers into this system to check for plagiarism and the accuracy of attributions. The papers then become part of the database, and within minutes, Turnitin returns the paper with a percentage match to similar documents and color codes the text of the paper with its source. Even a correctly attributed paper is likely to have as high as an 80 percent match because the system does not distinguish between attributed and non-attributed sources. This makes it a helpful tool in teaching students ways to attribute proper-

ly, according to Hatvary.

In addition, Turnitin offers computer-based services for grading papers, assigning homework and encouraging student interactivity on assignments. This service is available to YC yet not mandatory, and is used at Cordozo as well as all universities in the United Kingdom, and many U.S. colleges such as Hofstra, University of California at Los Angeles, and University of California at Irvine.

According to the administration, the goal is that the service, used in conjunction with professors' instruction, will dramatically reduce the number of students who plagiarize. "Through an educational process hopefully students will understand better how to attrib-

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Falun Gong members engage in peaceful meditation

Falun Gong Members Protest on NYC Streets

By Chani Ozarowski

We like to think of Stern College as a worldly institution, in sync with international occurrences and active in standing up for Jewish values. We care about Rwanda and animal rights and of course the study of Torah. Consider the pasuk, "lo taamad al dam reiecha" (do not stand by idly while your brother's blood is being spilled), and think about the last time you walked by Penn Station or rushed through Times

Square passing demonstrators in meditative poses. What was your reaction to their often overlooked reenactments of torture? It's about time we get the word out about the persecution against Falun Gong practitioners.

But what exactly is this movement and why are its followers being persecuted? What do the demonstrators hope to accomplish, and what should our role be?

Falun Gong, also known as

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Samantha Power Addresses SCW Students on Human Rights

By Adinah Wieder

Samantha Power spoke at the Beren Campus Tuesday, March 1 discussing US intervention in international genocide in today's age of terror. Power attracted over 200 listeners, and emphasized the question of historical and future responses to global atrocities. Arguing that the US, other world powers, and mid-level nations should have a greater role in preventing further global atrocities, Power asked, "Why did those who had power and made verbal and strategic commitments stand by?"

Power's address was the culminating lecture in a series of speeches designed to assemble world-renowned intellectuals to discuss their political research and philosophies. Last June, Dean Karen Bacon solicited suggestions from the faculty on ideas for the lecture series that was to take place this year. Professor Bryan Daves, part of Stern's



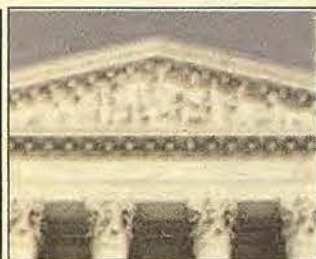
Samantha Power addressing SCW Students

Political Science department, suggested that the lecture series commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Holocaust. He remarked that he was prompted by the idea of "how difficult and particularly problematic it has been to prevent genocide. We want to expand the meaning of the indication of 'never again' to mean 'never again' for anyone in any place and at any time." Bacon accepted Daves' proposal and began coordinating the series.

Daves wrote a letter of invitation to Power explaining the theme of the lecture series, the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Holocaust, and she readily agreed to attend. Arranging for a speaker of this caliber was no small feat; it took Daves almost the entire fall semester to coordinate. Once the other potential lecturers heard that Power had consented to speak, they shortly followed

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CHECK OUT
OUR PURIM
INSERT



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The Museum of Natural History
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Esther Flaschner-Berko
Editor-in-Chief

Rav Yoel Bin Nun of Yeshivat Har Etzion and Yeshivat Ein Tzurim fathered a unique approach to the *Megillah*, reading certain aspects of its topsy-turvy tale as a bitter satire. Bin Nun seizes on certain questionable features of the *Megillah*, namely its noticeable lack of divine reference, its complete disregard of historical milieu, and the overarching secular dynamic it proudly displays. Bin Nun, and other scholars who subscribe to his method, use these difficulties to espouse a cynical satirical reading of the text.

This version of the *Megillah* takes note of the fact that while *Achashverosh* and *Haman's* decree against the Jews ravaged Persia, a whole segment of the Jewish population was trying to take root in Israel. Enabled by Cyrus's decree to return to Jerusalem, these Jews left their Persian exile and attempted to build the Second Temple. Overwhelmed by hardship, and weakened by their small numbers, the group encountered tremendous difficulties while their Jewish neighbors in Persia flourished and attended the king's feasts.

Taken in this light, the *Megillah* becomes a bitter satire condemning Persian Jewry for their contentment in Persia. *Mishkan*-like allusions, from the "tchelet" and "argaman" at *Achashverosh's* party, to Esther approaching the king after days of fasting and prayer in a *kohen gadol* like manner, abound in a nuanced reading of the text. Satirical elements denounce Persian Jewry for their highly secular indifference towards their counterparts in Israel. While the Jews of Persia sat complacently in *Achashverosh's* "temple," other Jews risked hardship to attempt a real building of a true Temple in Jerusalem.

Funny how little things change in a few thousand years. The facts on the ground in Purim 2005 differ only slightly from the first Purim. Complacency dwells complacently, finding welcome sanctuary in the arms of American Jewry.

Complacency. It takes the

form of the all-too-familiar idyllic scene of Shabbos lunches, discussing Israeli policy "stupidities" over steaming chulent beans. Complacency thrives in dreams and goals, like ultimate desires to buy a house and live in the Five Towns or Teaneck. But then what?

This past Shabbos, we were privileged to have Dennis Prager visit Yeshiva University as part of the Israel Club Shabbaton. Prager challenged his audience to define their mission as Orthodox Jews; it had taken him most of his life to ascertain his definition. What does observant Judaism stand for? What does it seek to bring to this world?

The answer is obviously incredibly complex, encompassing wide arrays of theological and philosophical arguments. But I have my contribution to our mission: the anti-complacent view. Our mission is to move, to respond, to be jarred, and to effect. Jews are deemed "holchim" (walkers) in rabbinical literature, a stark opposition to the "omdim" (standing) angels. Angels stay complacently static, or to quote Rabbi Abraham Twerski, "Angels don't leave footprints." But Jews move; we move up and down, and we never reach a plateau. We keep climbing.

A Jew's mission is decidedly anti-complacent. We must better, change, and respond. When an observant person succeeds in an endeavor, the traditional congratulatory remark is typically, "May you go from strength (*chayil*) to strength." Jews never promote resting on one's laurels after initial victory. Instead, they encourage and demand more.

This message decidedly resonates in all aspects of the holiday of Purim. When read as a satire, the story becomes a social critique against complacency. Even within the story, the Jews respond to the decree against them by enacting pleas to God and assuming mourning behavior, while Esther's attempts at complacency and indifference are harshly rebuked by Mordechai. Even the present customs of Purim, particularly the bizarre promotion of drunkenness, can be viewed as attempts to jar the complacent Jew from his status quo state of being.

Still, complacency has its allure, and promotes an ostensibly calmer lifestyle. If ignorance is bliss, than complacency must be euphoria. I, for one, hope you never experience it. Happy Purim.



Rebecca Rosenberg
Editor-in-Chief

Plagiarism is a serious problem at SCW, as it is at many other universities across America. In the context of academia, the most prevalent forms of plagiarism are reusing other students' papers, copying and pasting paragraphs from the Internet into a student essay, and attributing sources improperly. The students of my generation seem to be particularly indifferent to this form of intellectual dishonesty.

In recent years a New York Times front-page reporter, Jayson Blair, fabricated dozens of stories, and USA Today dismissed a reporter for the same offense. It seems the incidence of plagiarism and related offenses is increasing. The temptation to plagiarize may be greater in our era because of the availability of information online; students may fail to recognize plagiarism as theft because of its intangibility; or perhaps students plagiarize because they lack the confidence to think critically. Also, students are anxious about applying to graduate school, where the difference between a 3.75 GPA and a 3.8 GPA can determine acceptance.

SCW is a college that prides itself on the high ethical and moral standards of its women; however, in the matter of plagiarism, we are no different from students at other universities, and according to some faculty members we are worse. After speaking with a few dozen peers, I've concluded that many SCW students have been asked for their old papers by friends and acquaintances. In my presence, fellow students have admitted without shame or contrition to submitting a roommate's paper from the previous year or purchasing

an essay online. As co-editor of the Observer, I once discovered that a section editor had submitted a plagiarized story with her name placed prominently at the top.

These occurrences are deeply saddening, not only because, as a Jewish college, we should honor academic integrity as a Torah value. These occurrences have embedded themselves in the consciousness of our generation. Many students avoid plagiarism more out of fear of punishment than from a sense of ethical propriety. For many of us who do not plagiarize, this common form of theft cheapens our own academic experience. I do not know the statistics for Stern, but, according to one national survey, more than one-third of college students have plagiarized a paper.

Increasingly, professors approach their students with suspicion and, instead of feeling pride when a student turns in an excellent paper, question its authenticity and head straight to the Internet to investigate. When one student spends hours on a paper—thinking through the ideas, slaving over revision after revision—and another simply submits a friend's paper from the previous year, it is difficult for the ethical students to see the value in their effort. They receive the same grades, the same recognition from the professor, as the plagiarist. As this scenario plays itself out, over and over again, many students start to lose perspective; they forget the reasons for originality and thoroughness.

I applaud the administration and faculty for their impressive efforts in combating plagiarism. They have created a long term plan to address the root of the problem. But, without delay, we need to address the symptoms through uniformly applied penalties and a zero tolerance policy in their application. The administration and faculty owe students an opportunity to study in an environment with a fair and even playing field where they feel a sense of pride in their original ideas and hard work.

The Observer wishes
the entire Yeshiva
Community a Chag
Purim Sameach.

The Yeshiva University

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The Thursday Afternoon Attitude

Thursday afternoons are always recognizable not only for their luggage strewn classrooms, but also for their drudging classroom attitude. There is a certain end-of-the-week feeling that prevails, and therefore a "I-am-too-tired-to-do-anything-productive-in-class-today" mindset results, which completely destroys a usually strong class dynamic. All too frequently students must be practically forced to participate in a Thursday afternoon class, and usually prefer to leave the talking to those students who have had to prep themselves with a good dose of coffee. Sometimes however, no one has had any coffee besides for the professor, and there is a distinct lack of student input. There are many classes such as literature and political science that are geared around the students' contributions and since they only typically meet twice a week, there is definitely a loss when nearly everyone complains about being too tired at the end of the week to speak her thoughts.

The Observer believes that one of the best parts of Stern's classes is the range of voices and opinions that come from such a broad range of students - everyone brings her diverse experiences and knowledge to the classroom. It is this valuable involvement that keeps a class energetic and interesting. However, when half of overall class time is spent with the frame of mind that one is prepared to simply sit back, take notes and never raise her hand, or not show up at all, then not only is that student missing out, but so is the entire class. Devaluing Thursday because it is the last day of the school week is ludicrous, and essentially halves the college experience. We only suggest that we try to make an effort to remember that we all enrich each other with our unique understanding, and that we are all here to learn - and not just on Tuesdays.

Please Switch Your Cell Phones to Silent Mode

It's impossible to sit in class and concentrate on a lecture or an exam when constantly interrupted by the incessant vibration of cell phones. How is a student supposed to concentrate if throughout an entire test there is an annoying "brrrrr" coming out of the backpack on the floor, while someone else's coat pocket ominously vibrates? It would be another matter if the owner of the phone at least turned it off once they heard the noise. But many don't. They just sit complacently and sometimes allow it to continue for two or three phone calls. Is it really too much for people to silence their cell phones?

First students had to contend with the unremitting ringing of the cell phones in class. Aside from being a real nuisance, rings of Mozart's 40th symphony or the latest pop song are incredibly rude and inconsiderate when they interrupt a lecture. Cell phone ringing ruins the professor's train of thought and disturbs the flow of the class. Students probably thought the cell vibrate mode was a more polite alternative, but they were sorely mistaken. When a cell phone rings aloud in class, the professor addresses the student and handles the situation. However, vibrating cell phones only disturb those seated in the vicinity of the delinquent phone, and go largely unnoticed by the professor. We can understand if someone is awaiting an emergency phone call and needs to be subtly notified so she can leave the classroom and answer. What amaze us are the women who sit with their vibrating cell phones, allowing them to vibrate incessantly during class without a response. What, exactly, is the point of this system?

Do yourself and the people around you a favor, and put your phone on silent mode during class. If your cell doesn't have a silent mode, you should consider (and this is a novel concept) actually shutting it off.

POINT-COUNTERPOINT

By Shoshana Fruchter and Esther Genuth

Food for Thought?

Although there is no actual sign on the classroom door which reads, "No Eating," it is still terribly inappropriate to chomp away at your diet's discretion during college lectures. Refraining from eating during class shows the college professors, many of whom are experts in their fields, proper respect.

A typical 9 a.m. class scene: a girl rushes into class two minutes late with her newly purchased food, and slowly unties the "I love NY" bag - slowly, so as to avoid extra noise (by the way, that never works, it just prolongs the interruption) - instead of waking up a mere fifteen minutes earlier to eat breakfast. Eating is important but so is not eating during class. When conflicts arise between such core values as food, class and sleep, step up to the plate, be responsible, and wake up earlier to eat before class!

Additionally, eating during class disturbs other students who are not eating. The question, "Ooo, what flavors are there today?" rings in my ears constantly, asked to the girl who just took her mid-lecture break and ran down to the caf - rather, took the elevator - to buy frozen yogurt. And if it isn't the yogurt doing the disturbing, it is the crunch of carrots or the fragrant aroma of a full fish meal. Recently, a professor at SCW requested that his students refrain from eating during class since, "loud chewing often makes it difficult for students to hear me," the professor explained. "What?" came the unexpected shout from one woman; she had been unable to hear him - because she herself had been crunching on crisp lettuce.

Some students complain that their schedules force them to eat during class. Official meals have become passé to these fast-lane cruisers. While it's true that some people's schedules are imbalanced: jam packed with classes on two days of the week, and close to empty on the other days, there is still always *some* time to eat. For each day on the SCW schedule sheet there is at least one time slot shaded gray. That shaded area is a friendly reminder to those busy students that this is your time to eat lunch. Now, thanks to the dual-caf system on the Beren Campus, purchasing food at convenient times is easier.

Aside from the extraverted distraction, the diners are cheating themselves out of a lecture complete with good notes, focused attention and a respectable academic environment. Please respect your teachers, your friends and yourselves: Don't eat during class.

While eating in class may seem inappropriate, Yeshiva University students often find it necessary to do so. With many hours of classes, most students do not have time to leisurely eat their meals. A dual curriculum, by its very nature, requires many students to be in class for much of the day. Additionally, it is common for a student with a major that includes laboratory work to attend classes from the morning until the late evening, without much time for lunch.

Another contributing factor to a student's busy schedule is that most classes are offered in limited time slots. When a course is offered less frequently, a student must often forfeit a lunch hour so that she will be able to attend the class. In order to fulfill requirements for one's major and for SCW's core, it is often necessary to schedule classes back to back, thus limiting the amount of time necessary to eat properly.

Eating properly and in a timely manner is essential to maintain a healthy lifestyle. A sufficient amount of food must be eaten so that one can concentrate in class and give full attention to one's studies. Forbidding eating during class could encourage unhealthy eating habits. "On my first day at Stern I was determined not to eat during class, but I soon realized that I had gone a whole day without eating," recounted one SCW sophomore. "I knew I would have to compromise."

The expectation that students attend class on time and with their stomachs "full" is unreasonable considering the busy schedules of many students and the crowded cafeteria and elevators. The cafeteria of the 245 Lexington building, as many have experienced during peak hours, is swarming with students. Furthermore, if a student is able to make it through the cafeteria lines quickly in between classes, she still must wait for a non-crowded elevator.

Eating, if not done disruptively, does not greatly disturb the classroom setting. If students are sensitive about selecting appropriate foods and eating in a manner that isn't distracting, there shouldn't be a concern. While a classroom without eating is ideal, due to the circumstances presented it is an impractical and unrealistic demand.

A Message From Your President



Molly Fink
SCWSC President

We as shomrei mitzvos open our eyes each day to say *Modeh Ani* and we see the world from the unique Torah perspective that we most wisely volunteered for (*na'asch ve'nishmah*) and that we are bound to do.

Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan, known as the Chofetz Chaim, the writer of the *Mishne Brurah*, *Ahavas Chesed*, *Likutai Halachos*, *Machaneh Yosef*, commentaries on *Orach Chaim* and more, devoted special concentration to the laws of *loshon hora* (evil speech).

There is presently in our Yeshiva University family true discomfort that I have seen expressed in many different ways on account of an article published in the YU student newspaper, *The Commentator*, which was less than flattering to the students of Stern College.

I disagree with everything that was in the article published in *The Commentator*. The Torah focuses on the strengths and unique qualities of both genders; it does not denounce women in any form. I have no direct response because the article's

entire content was, in my opinion, outside of Torah Judaism. However, I do recommend that everyone in our Yeshiva University family consider some of the Mitzvos that guide us on the principle of respecting your fellow man.

If you have the opportunity please look at: Vayikrah 19:16 - Pesachim 118a - Vayikrah 19:14 - Dvorim 8:11 - Vayikrah 22:32 - Vayikrah 19:12 - Shmos 23:2 - Bamidbar 17:5 - Vayikrah 25:17 - Bava Metzia 58b - Vayikrah 19:17 - Erchin 16b - Bava Metzia 59a - Rambam Da'ios 5:3 - Devorim 10:20 - Shmos 23:7 - Devorim 28:9 - Shabbos 133b - Mishlei 18:21.

My sincere wish for each and all of us is *Shalom Bayis*.

A quick reminder, student council elections are coming up in the first two weeks of April! Please be on the lookout for posted signs and emails discussing the specifics. As always if you have any questions, comments, etc. you can reach me at NAMS182@AOL.COM. I have a twenty four hour policy, which means if I do not respond within twenty four hours I did not receive your message. Good luck on midterms!

Molly Fink

*All references and citations come from these written works:

- A) *Chofetz Chaim - A Lesson a Day* by Finkelman and Berkowitz - published by Artscroll
- B) *The Mitzvot* by Abraham Chill - published by Keter.
- C) *Guard Your Tongue* by Pliskin - printed by Moriah Offset.

Artiforria!

By Lauren Goldglantz



LAUREN GOLDGLANTZ

Chaucer. Shakespeare. Wordsworth. (your name here)

Submit your masterpieces for the
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For Fun or Folly? Media Distorts Judaism

By Tova Stulman

Recently, the hit show "The O.C." aired its second annual episode featuring "Chrimukah," the oh-so-cute and aptly named hybrid holiday of Hanukkah and Christmas, that interweaves elements of both holidays into one all-inclusive celebration. Created by the hapless protagonist Seth Cohen, who also happens to be the offspring of a Protestant mother and Jewish father, Chrimukah is only one of the many recent examples of Judaism portrayed, but also perverted, by the media. The media has always been at best a questionable venue for learning, but nevertheless, there is no denying that it also has the very real power to influence and educate millions of people on a variety of issues.

"I think it's a shame," says Dani Schrieber, a senior at Yeshiva College, "that Jews of this world will get either a watered down or caricatured version of what contemporary Halakhic Judaism is about." Many people may scoff at this suggestion, calling all the somewhat skewed exposure Judaism has gotten in the media recently just some good harmless fun. In many instances, they may indeed be right. Yet I, for one, am not so comfortable with the fact that Seth Cohen gets to be the authority for millions of diehard fans who take what he says as gospel (pardon the religious nature of that phrase). From now on, will the religiously uneducated Jews and non-Jews forever associate the beautiful tradition of men wearing yarmulkes with a "yarmuclaus," a fusion of a yarmulka and Santa's red hat?

The danger of misconstruing actual facts about Judaism and Jewish themes in the process is palpable. For instance, a hugely popular episode of "Friends" had Ross desperately try to teach his Christmas-obsessed son about the meaning and history behind Hanukkah, but the means through which he achieved this end was to dress up like a "holiday armadillo," which, needless to say, has absolutely nothing to do with the Festival of Lights. Most likely, many of the people

who orchestrate these shows, even if they may have surnames like Schwarz and David, do not celebrate these holidays; if they do, it probably is not done to the letter of the law. If they insist on putting Jewish holidays on air, it might be nice for them to actually get it right.

Jews have long had an influence in Hollywood, but it is only in recent years that a variety of extremely popular shows have had leading or main characters as Jews, and a maelstrom of movies with Jewish situations and characters. Before the 1990's, Jews were often relegated to the sidelines as the quirky sidekicks, experiencing muted religious identities. Not so anymore. And, lest this come as a surprise to anyone, nearly all of the current or recent Jewish characters are exaggerated versions of how Hollywood's almost exclusively liberal and unaffiliated Jews perceive Jews as a whole. Almost all your favorite Jewish characters on these shows are neurotic, paranoid, obsessive and extraordinarily quirky. Jerry Seinfeld? Check. Ross and Monica Gellar from Friends? Check, check. Grace Adler, one of the title characters on the hit show "Will and Grace"? Check. And who could forget Fran Fine, the infamously nasal-voiced star of "The Nanny," who didn't let an episode pass without exploiting some aspect of Jewish stereotypical themes? From the nagging Jewish mother who exhorted her to marry, and marry rich, to the *schnorrer* relatives and obsession with Barbara Streisand and Loehmann's sales, Fine basked in the glow of her Jewish persona, and made millions doing so. The traits that made her, and continue to make other Jewish characters so exaggeratedly Jewish, are also the traits that garner a huge amount of laughs for the shows, vaulting them to the heights of mainstream popularity. Let it be noted that the show "Will and Grace" has firmly established the latter's desire to marry a Jewish doctor, just another exploitation from the plethora of stereotypes existing about Jewish women. Many of the zany mishaps of Grace Adler have to do with her all-encompassing desire to find

and wed a Jewish doctor- and when she finally finds one, he comes riding up on a white horse, the culmination of her lifelong fantasy.

As a religious student with some religiously unaffiliated acquaintances, I can safely say Jewish women already endure enough typecasting without it being exploited by televised "heroines," who only serve to perpetuate these inaccurate notions.

Admittedly, most stereotypes stem from some measure or kernel of truth, and it is easy for some Jews to identify with many of the characteristics and situations they see on the shows. That's not the problem. Even I laugh at many of the jokes, but I also walk away knowing they are just jokes; rarely do I have a Jewish peer who behaves like any of these characters in real life. The problem begins when people who have little interaction with Jews, perceive Jews as merely a sum total of these stereotypes. Ari Spodek, another senior at YC, states that "TV shows end up portraying most Jews in one light, and one light only, and many people unfortunately rely on these stereotypes and don't form their own notions of how Jews realistically behave."

I am not too scared; the Jewish people have survived worse than a few tasteless sitcom episodes. With the recent releases and popularity of movies like "Meet the Fockers" (which endlessly plays with the representation of two typically liberal Floridian Jews in touch with their inner emotions and feelings and pepper their language with Yiddish phrases,) and "The O.C.," which is watched by millions of mostly impressionable teenage fans, it is important to keep in mind that we, as Jews that firmly identify with our religion, should not be pigeonholed into these stereotypes. Many of us may have neurotic tendencies or obsessive qualities, but we are also so much more: We are intelligent, ambitious and rational members of a religion that gives us strong morals and valued traditions, things we should never want to cash in on.

Business Column: SSSB Students Lack Interest in GMAT and MBA Programs

By Lauren Goldglantz

As I was wandering around the career placement office waiting to speak with an advisor about my plans after graduation, I was surprised to find very little information about furthering an education in business. I've known for years that I want to go to graduate school and get my masters in business administration, otherwise known as an MBA. I figured that once at college, I'd be provided with all I need to know about MBA programs as well as the GMATs, the entrance exam required for the graduate program. The walls at the career placement office are filled with literature and postings advertising various career and education opportunities in business, including information about the CPA for accountants, and the LSATs for students going to law school. However, I found absolutely nothing about MBA programs or the GMATs, though this was the office of an undergraduate business college.

I went to speak to Ruth Forman, the assistant to the dean of Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB) on the Beren Campus. I asked her about graduate school and when I should take my GMATs. She was pleased I had asked about it and said, "In the four years I've worked here, no one has come to me to ask about the GMATs." She would like to see more students interested in furthering their education in business, she said. It seems that at SSSB, if students go to graduate school, they most likely end up at law school. Perhaps, many students don't ask about MBAs because graduate schools require prior work experience for two to three years. Even so, students should be interested in finding out about taking their GMATs. Apparently, the best time to take them is while still in school - I would never have known this, had I not asked.

Naomi Kapp, associate director at the Office of Placement and Career Services on the Beren Campus said that in her experience only about two percent of students ask about the GMATs and MBA programs. When I asked what students who graduate from Sy Syms usually do, she said many who are not in finance or accounting work for their family business or attend law school. Finance and accounting majors usually find good jobs at top firms coming out of SSSB, a fact for which the school is widely known.

I recently spoke to Sally Narain, the associate director at the Office of Placement and Career Services on the Wilf Campus. She agreed with Kapp, asserting that the majority of SSSB students are not planning to earn MBAs. Narain estimated that about two percent of students ask about MBA programs, and the vast majority knows almost nothing about it. Maybe, if

there was more information offered, more students would consider it as an option. The students that would be interested in an MBA would be management or marketing majors. Interestingly enough, Narain told me that the students who do ask about a MBA are mostly economics majors. I asked if Sy Syms has ever held a workshop to discuss the GMATs and MBA programs - she said they hadn't for fear no one would show up.

Professor Diane Persky, who teaches management and marketing on both campuses, had much to say about MBA programs. She says she "doesn't encourage students to get an MBA, and it is a waste of time and money." Students learn a lot of theories but are not given any practical advice and it delays a person's career without being useful, she explained. Persky has an MBA in advertising and said that it didn't help her at all in her career. "All you have is a lot of letters after your name," she explained. I was extremely surprised to hear her say this, and it actually made me reconsider my own plans for earning an MBA in the future.

Contrary to what Persky had told me, many other administrators claim that companies are known to pay the tuition costs of their employees who want to earn an MBA. Most companies prefer that their employees work for a few years, and then many offer to pay tuition costs for night school. I have looked at many job requirements through websites such as monstertrak.com as well as vault.com. It seems that companies encourage employees to have or acquire an MBA because it makes them more valuable to the company. They are willing to pay more for these employees to have this kind of education, and some say that such employees offer useful insight, helping the company to grow. It is also much harder to find a job in today's economy, so one would assume that Sy Syms would encourage students to further their education.

I have spoken to many students at Sy Syms about their plans for graduate school. Most have said that they don't think an MBA would do anything for them. Many believe that all you need is the right connections, and you'll get a great job. However, when I asked them if they would consider taking their GMATs and getting their MBA, most admitted that they didn't know enough about it to actually consider it. All we really need, it seems, is for there to be an interest in furthering an education in business. It is understandable that some people don't ask about MBA programs because they know they need to work for a few years before applying, but shouldn't there at least be some kind of administrative encouragement for studying for the GMATs? Perhaps, if SSSB hosted an instructional workshop and offered more information on it, more students would show an interest.

The Observer apologizes to Jacob Leiberman, director of food services. An article in the last issue failed to acknowledge Leiberman's hard work and dedication in organizing the NYPD Holiday Brunch.

Senior Awards Memorialize Past SCW Leaders

By Adina Borg

Commencement heralds a new era for graduating seniors, but it also gives them time to reflect on past years, in the form of four awards given at a private ceremony apart from the graduation ceremony. Nominated by student leaders and voted on by peers, the awards were established to honor individuals who have made a difference in SCW as well as memorialize important leaders of the college.

Perhaps most poignant of all the awards is the Ramie Kertzner Memorial Award for "strong commitment to chesed and Jewish identity" and the Lisa Wachtenheim Memorial Award for "character and service rendered to the university." Sadly, both Kertzner and Wachtenheim passed away while still students in SCW.

Dean Zelda Braun recalled Ramie as being a "wonderful friend, with a strong Jewish identity." Ramie was involved in volunteer work for both the Jewish and general communities and is remembered for her determination and honesty. Immediately after her death as a senior in 1996, Ramie's friends and family established the award for a student who characterizes the beliefs and ideals for which Ramie lived.

Wachtenheim's death left the whole YU community devastated. Rabbi Flaum, rabbi of the

"White Shul" in Far Rockaway, was Lisa's teacher and *meshgiach* in Stern College at the time. He remembered Lisa as "the personification of everything good Stern has to offer. She was a meticulous *baalat chesed*, and left an indelible impression on all who knew her."

Flaum suggested that the award be established in her name for "character and service rendered to the college" as a way of keeping Lisa's memory alive. "The way you carry on a soul is by emulating the best it stood for," remarked Flaum. "By awarding those who personify all she stood for, her soul will have eternity of existence." This guiding principle behind these awards transforms the graduation ceremony into a celebration of not only the current graduating class, but of the inspirational and generous role models who could only be there to celebrate with them in spirit.

The Professor Nathaniel L. Remes award commemorates Professor Remes, a chemistry professor in SCW from 1966 to 1977. The award was established by university faculty and students after his death in 1988.

Dean Ethel Orlian fondly recalled Remes as an extremely capable, caring professor who was fully involved in all of his students' academic and personal interests. "He had a rather intense, serious look," Orlian remembers. "He was always busy: busy being creative, busy building up the department, and

even busy with issues outside the department to support programs which would help students bolster their knowledge." An anecdote singular to Remes was found in his file of university documents. In a letter to the current dean, Remes asked permission to attend an important chemistry conference. He would miss two recitations, which he stipulated he wanted to postpone, and added he would attend the conference at his own cost. The award was established to commemorate "character, personality, and service rendered to the college," reflecting Remes's own unique brand of care and devotion to his fellow faculty members and students.

The Ghity Stern award was originally established while Ghity Lindenbaum Stern, wife of the late Max Stern, was still alive. After her death in 2002, the award has become even more meaningful, honoring students exceptional in service to the Jewish community, a pursuit that Ghity Stern practiced alongside her husband. Dr. Herbert C. Dobrinsky, vice-president for university affairs, described Ghity Stern as a "grand lady," a person who was "beautiful from within and without, a real *ayshet hayil*." The caring and sense of community Ghity Stern possessed were inborn, passed down from her father, Rabbi Moshe Avigdor Amiel, a former chief rabbi of Antwerp and Tel Aviv.

Students With Disabilities: Does the Beren Campus Meet Their Needs?

By Orlee Levin

Attempting to hear a lecturing professor while sitting in the back of a packed classroom and trying to see slides are just some of the classroom challenges that students with disabilities face. Additionally, students with disabilities must contend with the difficulties of accessing the facilities in Stern College and Sy Syms School of Business for specific aid. These are just a couple of the many daunting issues that students with disabilities must handle each day.

The American Disabilities Act passed in 1990 states that no student with disabilities should confront discrimination in an educational institution. Disabilities are defined as a disadvantage or deficiency, especially a physical or mental impairment that interferes with or prevents normal achievement in a particular area. The act not only applies to physical disabilities, but to learning disabilities as well.

Learning disabilities are characterized as a discrepancy between expectation for achievement and actual achievement of an individual. Learning disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder are very different. "Learning Disabilities can only be diagnosed by a psychologist, who makes the diagnosis on the basis of a comprehensive evaluation," explains Dr. Chaim Nissel, associate dean of students. "ADHD however is usually diagnosed by a psychiatrist and can be helped with medication."

Once a particular learning disability is determined, SCW attempts to do their utmost to meet student's needs. Each orientation packet handed out at the beginning of the year contains a form about accommodations for students with documented learning disabilities. The form includes sections such as, "Which tests were administered as part of a psycho-educational evaluation; The nature of the learning disability; An explanation as to how the learning disability affects learning and test taking capabilities; Specific recommendations for how to handle testing or any other accommodation and why each accommodation is needed." The form is intended to make students aware of the services available to them so that those with disabilities will be able to succeed.

"We want each student to maximize potential to achieve collegiate success," explains Dean Zelda Braun, associate dean of students. The Office of Student Affairs therefore offers each learning disabled student a note signed by the Office of Student Affairs stating the specific disability and what is necessary to accommodate the individual student. Once the student has the proper documentation, professors must allow extra time on examinations, as well as other privileges.

Some students with learning disabilities feel that the university does not provide sufficient aid. There is a need for more textbooks on tape for students with visual impairments.

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American Academy of Art Honors SCW Professor

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one of them; coincidentally, two of his good friends are also recipients this year. The award comes with a generous prize of fifteen thousand dollars, of which seventy five hundred must be used towards a future recording. "However," says Glaser, "seventy five hundred is not nearly enough to record a CD." Yet the honor that comes with such an award, he went on to say, can easily convince organizations dedicated to the preservation and production of music to donate money towards a recording.

What distinguishes this award from other various honors in the music world is the fact that it is done through nomination, rather than applying for an award directly. In fact, Glaser is no stranger to such a process. He had applied for several such awards, with little success, before he received the letter informing him of the nomination for the Academy Award. He put

the letter aside before he realized that this was not another standard Dear Jane letter. "For every fifteen to twenty thanks but no thanks, something like this come along," he notes, shaking his head in disbelief at the near miss of such an opportunity. Upon receiving the official nomination, composers are urged to send in two original music pieces they consider their best work. A jury consisting of eight current members of the Academy deliberates, and within a matter of weeks the recipients are announced. Since it is a category separate from any of the ones that are presented during the actual Academy Awards, the official ceremony for the musical awards is to take place on May 18.

The musical compositions Glaser has created, that have so impressed a variety of professional composers and musical connoisseurs, are almost exclusively chamber music, which Glaser prefers to orchestral music. "Chamber music,"

remarks Glaser, "is much harder to be performed by a large ensemble than by a string quartet. It allows for a more subtle and intimate tone than music that is performed by a large number of musicians; it is much more nuanced."

Glaser arrived at Yeshiva University eight years ago. He first taught at the uptown Wilf Campus, then simultaneously at both the Wilf and Beren campuses. Currently, he teaches only at Stern, where he says he has seen a surge in enrollment in music classes in recent years. During any given semester there are around seven courses offered, ranging from Sense of Music, a general knowledge course, to Baroque and Classical Music, a more in-depth look at individual composers. Perhaps this growth is due to Glaser's unique teaching style that encourages active listening and participation, rather than lecturing from a textbook. "There's no point in trying to cram in fifteen hundred years' worth of material in fif-

teen weeks, explained Glaser. "I teach according to the Socratic method- the more response, the better able I am to gauge if the students truly understand what is being taught." Additionally, Glaser often invites composers to speak to his classes.

When asked what his goals are for the music department at Stern, Glaser thoughtfully replied that he would like to find a way to get more non-musically inclined students to take music courses, as well as expand the selection of courses into different areas. "I think it's important to take advantage of being in New York City," Glaser remarks. "Next semester, I plan to invite working musicians to come and give informal concerts in the lounges of the dormitories."

Glaser's interest in music as a teenager did not automatically translate into a career for him; he had planned to pursue either painting or psychology, which he admits is a pair of odd choices. However, at the age of seven-

teen, he encountered a musical score that he found puzzling. A piece entitled "Pierrot Lunaire," roughly meaning Moonstruck Pierrot, a character in Commedia dell'arte, an improvisational Italian musical composition, "did not conform to conventional musical standards," and although he found it quite unsettling, it inspired him to pursue music as a career. Glaser attended Hunter College and Queens College before going onto Columbia University, where he received his DMA, or doctorate in music, and studied under such famous composers as Mario Davidovsky, George Edwards, Martin Boykan, and Jack Beeson for a total of eight years.

The Academy Award will allow Glaser to raise his profile in the music world, and "allow people to see me in a different way, because I've received this validation," he explains. To his students, however, no official validation is necessary.

Falun Gong Exposes China's Oppressive Policies

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Falun Dafa, is a meditative and spiritual movement that has recently gained popularity throughout the world, particularly in Asia. It is, according to the volunteer newspaper Falun Gong Today, a "new interpretation of the ancient Chinese practice of Qi Gong," which is closely related to Tai Chi (offered in Stern's physical education department). Followers ascertain that it was popularized in 1992 by Mr. Li Hongzhi as a peaceful method to acquire inner balance as well as emotional and spiritual healing. This explanation is corroborated by the Encyclopedia Britannica which states, "its adherents exercise ritually to obtain mental and spiritual renewal." The philosophy believes in developing the three basic traits of truthfulness, compassion and tolerance. It does not revolve around any particular deity, but rather strives to instill these traits in its practitioners' everyday lives. Though recent in development, the movement already involves millions of practitioners around the globe.

However, since July of 1999, the lives of Falun Gong practitioners have been far from peaceful. Jiang Zemin, the leader of the Chinese Communist Party at the time, felt that this widespread practice posed a threat to his rule. Falun Gong Today reports, "He saw in Falun Gong and its popularity a challenge to his moral and cultural authority — the practice was rooted in people's hearts and history, unlike communist doctrine." In reaction, Zemin established the "6-10 Office" as a base from which to launch a massive campaign to persecute practitioners. Though initially criticized by other members of China's Communist Party, Zemin's campaign was able to demonize Falun Dafa through brainwashing and propaganda, and his policy resulted in the widespread arrests, torture and killing of its followers. Though it is unbelievable that such systematic persecution exists in today's world, there remain thousands upon thousands of people held in forced labor camps, tortured with unthinkable methods, and dehumanized by Zemin's "security" forces.

But Zemin's forces have not stopped in China. Using tools including media propaganda and brainwashing in schools, Zemin's campaign has recently spread across the world, including to the United States. A volunteer-created leaflet about the persecution notes that on June 23rd, 2003, ten men in New York City started beating a Falun Gong practitioner, threatening him with death. One of numerous websites functioning to report the persecution, "FalunInfo.net," reported that as recently as February 6th of this year, numerous individuals throughout the U.S., Canada and

Europe received threatening phone calls with recorded messages from China's Communist regime. Some American councilmen have reported receiving anti-Falun Gong propaganda as well. With such occurrences, surely the American government and, all the more so, the Chinese public, has done something to improve the situation?

The fact is that to a large extent, many of the improvements are the result of the strong stance Falun Gong practitioners have kept throughout the years of persecution. While we see demonstrators and may ask what benefit silently holding signs in New York City can have, it has positively affected the situation on a number of levels.

The demonstrations began in the first month of the persecution, July 1999. At first, they solely consisted of practitioners standing in front of New York's Chinese Consulate, holding signs and

tions have even occurred in Sydney, Australia.

According to Yvonne, the goals of such demonstrations are three-fold. The first is similar to the early efforts, simply to educate people about Falun Gong's true nature and combat the negative image the Chinese government has encouraged. This is especially true of the efforts in America, where many Chinese citizens who do not practice Falun Dafa come to visit. Yvonne and other demonstrators hope that such people will read their pamphlets and be exposed to the truth, so that when they return to China, they will be another

broadcast the ideas behind their movement to the public. However, the writer used the word "hijacked," an adjective that suggests terrorists taking over a plane rather than a persecuted spiritual group defending itself against an authoritarian government. While the Times coverage may be confusing, many other news services choose not to focus on the issue at all.

But while factual education has often remained limited to the words of Falun Gong members themselves, there are other goals in the demonstrations. The second goal is to make an impact on a political level. The most direct tactic used to accomplish this is standing in front of the New York Consulate on 42nd and 12th Avenue every single day of the year, no matter the weather. It was actually very cold and snowing the day the Observer spoke with Yvonne,

mitted to the United Nations Human Rights Commission requesting assistance with legal initiatives against Jiang." As more of the atrocities become public knowledge, perpetrators are being held more accountable for their actions by countries worldwide and will hopefully be forced to stop altogether. Despite the lack of press coverage, the United States government has already passed two unanimous motions regarding the persecutions: one urging China to stop them and one banning the harassment of Falun Gong practitioners on U.S. soil.

Additionally, the U.S. State Department's 2004 Country Report on Human Rights repeatedly acknowledges and criticizes the atrocities that are committed by the Chinese Government, particularly toward Falun Gong. It affirms, "tens of thousands of practitioners remained incarcerated in prisons, extrajudicial reeducation-through-labor camps, and psychiatric facilities." The report blames hundreds of deaths on "torture, abuse, and neglect" during the course of the persecution. It notes that the Chinese government has also attempted to deny nongovernmental organizations to "monitor human rights conditions," an effort hurting endeavors to stop the persecution.

But even when practical efforts are not fully successful, demonstrators like Yvonne have one more goal, one that we, the rally-attending, Israel-supporting students of Yeshiva University, can probably relate to most: showing solidarity with their brothers and sisters in trouble. Though telling others of the atrocities suffered is punishable in Chinese law by arrest and even death, survivors continue to write down their stories and photograph their wounds to spread the word. Yvonne herself said that even giving reports to inquisitive passers-by (such as our own Observer reporters) is a risk, as anyone could be a messenger of "the other side." Despite this, protesters continue to support each other and the families of victims by standing together and spreading the word. The accounts and photographs, states Yvonne, are things "we definitely treasure."

Readers are encouraged to take a stand to stop atrocities to which our own people have said "never again." Letters can be written to your local congressman (contact information attainable from www.congress.org) or the President, at the White House 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW Washington DC 20500. More details can be found in leaflets and newspapers distributed by demonstrators, and words of support always make a difference.



Top: Falun Gong protestors reenact tortures
Bottom: Falun Gong members practice meditation



leaflets to inform them about Falun Gong's true, positive nature. Since then, the effort has expanded into a worldwide movement to publicize the horrors committed and encourage people to stop them.

The Observer had the opportunity to visit the Chinese Consulate and speak about the protests and their effects with a young woman who was demonstrating outside. Yvonne, (her full name is omitted out of sensitivity to personal security), explained that today, demonstrations can be found "wherever there are [Falun Gong] followers" and in "any place where there is a [Chinese] embassy." This includes such major U.S. cities as Washington D.C. as well as countries around the world such as Canada, Japan, and Indonesia. The Agence France Press reported last month that demonstra-

force fighting against the government's schemes.

In America, this method of publicizing is especially important, since the facts are confusing to unfamiliar non-practitioners who rely on the traditional news sources for information. For instance, The New York Times has written about the issue in the years since 1999, but has notably avoided taking definite sides on the subject. For instance, a July 2001 issue reported 14 deaths of Falun Gong followers in Chinese labor camps. The writer stated that the Chinese government attributed it to a mass suicide, while United States Falun Gong followers maintained that suicide is forbidden in the beliefs of Falun Gong and the 14 were actually tortured to death. In 2003 The Times reported on a Falun Gong takeover of a Chinese government television station to

and there were still a number of loyal practitioners, braving the cold for the sake of their endangered brethren. "It is a continuous appeal," remarked Yvonne, noting that making a difference on a government level is a particularly gradual process. Nonetheless, a dent has, in fact, already been made.

Falun Gong Today reports their major political accomplishments: Between 2001 and 2003, a number of American lawsuits were filed by district courts against visiting members of the Chinese government, including Jiang Zemin himself. Though initially, in September 2003, it was ruled that American courts must grant immunity for people like Zemin, there is now an effort appealing to the International Criminal Court "investigating the establishment of an ad-hoc tribunal. Letters were also sub-

SCW Promotes Culture of Academic Integrity

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ute," said SCW Dean Karen Bacon. "Then, ultimately when everybody understands, the vetting service will just serve for students as a deterrent not to become sloppy or not to do, under extreme pressure, things that are unethical."

The system is not a cure to the problem according to many faculty members such as philosophy professor David Shatz. "...We might be sending the message that our interest is in catching students rather than in getting them to see the Halakhic and ethical offensiveness of what they are doing," he said, paraphrasing a point brought up by his colleague at the faculty meeting.

The resolution and implementation of this service comes in response to what some faculty and administration feel is a growing problem of plagiarism among SCW students and the academic world at large. In fact, according to statistics available on the Turnitin website, "In recent national surveys, over one-third of all students have admitted to cheating on assignments by plagiarizing material from the Internet. Almost three-fourths of all students surveyed say that at least 'some' of their fellow students cheat."

There are no statistics available from Stern as to the number of students caught plagiarizing, but many faculty believe that the number is growing. Bacon believes that part of the problem arises from the availability of Internet resources. "With the Internet and the ability to cut and paste, students are doing all kinds of things that are making it easier for them to create the paper but also make it easier to

be careless and violate the rules of academic integrity," she explained. She believes that in this respect, much of the problem stems from students who do not know the rules of attribution.

The reason for students' ignorance on this topic partly arises from the former SCW policy toward AP exemptions, according to Hatvary. Students who scored a four or five on their AP English exam in high school do not have to take English Composition 1100, a policy consistent with many American universities. The assumption was that in the AP course, students were taught to write lengthy research papers thereby learning attribution rules. In reality, SCW discovered that most students exempted from the course had not acquired these skills in high school. "As soon as we found out, we did something," said Hatvary. "We just didn't know." To address this problem, SCW, as of September 2004, requires students exempted from Comp 1100 to take a four-week seminar at the Writing Center, a course which devotes a significant amount of time to teaching citation rules.

In terms of the project's long term goal, the faculty and administration want to develop a moral culture at Stern that urges the student body to take violations of academic integrity seriously. "The discussions that led to the proposal all had to do with a wide campaign to change the culture at Stern, to educate students as to the meaning and importance of academic integrity," said Professor Jay Ladin of the English department. In this vein, Ladin and Hatvary are rewriting the SCW pamphlet on

academic integrity to encourage greater awareness. In addition, they hope that Turnitin will force professors and students to have a hard conversation about these issues, a conversation that is difficult to conduct. "We worry that it will mess things up by talking about the bad things...that we'll imply to our students that we don't trust them," Ladin explained, describing some faculty's hesitation. "All of us at the faculty meeting feel very strongly that trust and a real affectionation is the basis for our relations to our students."

According to Ladin, this moral culture of academic integrity has been established at Princeton University and Reed College, places where he's taught previously. "Those institutions have very strongly and seriously articulated the moral responsibilities of students in relation to their academic work," he said. This, he believes, is still lacking at Stern College. However, through the adoption of Turnitin and rewriting the SCW pamphlet on academic integrity, among other efforts, the administration and faculty hope to work toward articulating this kind of moral value.

Ladin compared this objective to the way Stern has conveyed the value of the dress code. "I would be stunned if there was a Stern student not aware of the dress code," he said. "You look around, you see examples of it, you see awareness of it. If you're not conforming to the dress code you look around and are aware you're out." Ladin would like students who do not follow the honor code to feel a similar social pressure.

Ladin added that he believes achieving this atmosphere will

not pose a challenge at Stern given the nature of the establishment. "I think that the fact that Stern is a religious institution is a tremendous benefit in addressing these problems because the vast majority of Stern students have a very strong sense of morality," he explained.

At schools like Princeton and Reed there is a clearly delineated policy for plagiarism. If a student is accused, an investigation is opened by a joint student and faculty committee. The accused student is required to prove his innocence before this committee or otherwise face suspension, loss of scholarships or expulsion depending on whether this is the first offense.

In Stern there is not a uniform procedure or policy for students caught plagiarizing, though the academic integrity pamphlet does offer punishment guidelines. Some administration and faculty prefer this more flexible approach. "I think it will remain with the faculty member to decide on the ultimate penalty because there are different levels of violation," Bacon said. "Sometimes students just have a perfectly done paper, and they slip in one place." When an entire paper is plagiarized, Bacon said most faculty are inclined to give the student an F.

Ladin also believes it is important that faculty maintain this freedom. "It's generally felt that having a rigid mandatory sentencing policy will be counterproductive, he explained. "It is the responsibility of the professor to diagnose what that instance of plagiarism needs."

On the other hand, some faculty disagree with Bacon and Ladin, and think that punishments should be applied more

uniformly. "I think a uniform set of penalties should be developed by the faculty and administration, and the instructor's choice should be limited," Shatz said. "There can be different penalties for different cases, but these distinctions should be spelled out."

Senior Michelle Sadoff believes part of the problem comes from favoritism and a uniform policy might help combat this. "There is a lot of favoritism based on *hocker* status," she said. "Their families are close to the administration, they're close to the administration and sometimes for financial reasons. I mean if everyone received an F for plagiarism, people wouldn't plagiarize so much."

Shatz also believes it is important to have serious penalties especially in light of the institution's religious status. "The fact that plagiarism violates Torah values in addition to general standards of integrity powerfully reinforces the ideal that we must impose strong measures," he said. "We certainly should not be more lenient in our response than other colleges are."

Ultimately, the faculty and administration want to focus on facilitating a strong relationship between faculty and students and not punishment. "If they're [students] under extreme pressure for whatever reason and can't meet a deadline, come forward and talk to the instructor," said Bacon. "Just don't violate what is a relationship between a student and faculty member that the material you're submitting is honestly your own."

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Pulitzer Prize Winner Lectures at SCW

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suite. Jack Snyder, the Robert and Renée Belfer Professor of International Relations at Columbia University, one of the top international relations scholars in the country, along with Kenneth Roth, the executive director of Human Rights Watch, consented to debate the issue of human rights and sovereignty at Stern College.

On February 23 at 8:00 pm, the first lecture in the series took place. The debate between Roth and Snyder consisted of a 20-minute presentation by each, and then Snyder and Roth each had the opportunity for a five-minute rebuttal. Roth explained that although one can be an advocate of human rights, one can also be pro-sovereignty. He described Human Rights Watch as not being a solely pacifist organization, since there are times when the organization advocates for war, providing that it is just.

Roth offered some criteria that enables one to decide if a war is warranted, and when it is just to place human rights before sovereignty. For instance, if there is an imminent threat of mass slaughter, then one has the ability to engage in war on condition that intentions are purely for a humanitarian cause. The people engaging in war must also ensure that they are abiding by international law. Furthermore, they must consider the outcome of the war. Will the repercussions of the war negatively influence the world at large? Roth cited the example of fighting a war with Chechnya, which would very likely cause a nuclear war. In cases as extreme as Chechnya, it obviously would be ill planned to declare war.

Additionally, Roth discussed the institution of an international criminal tribunal. According to his philosophy, the U.S. owes it to the victims of terror to punish the terrorists for their crimes. Roth hopes that punishing terrorists will serve as a deterrent for future acts of terrorism, and views it as the only way to end the genocide in Darfur, Sudan.

Snyder, however, claimed that there is evidence to prove

that International Criminal Tribunals are ineffective. Upon examining the Rwandan tribunal, it clearly displays the inefficacy of the International Criminal Courts. The same ethnic groups continue to battle in East Congo. The ICC provides a "learned political lesson, not a legal lesson" remarked Snyder. For example, the Serbs believe that The Hague is merely the Westerners imposing Western rule upon them, but they do not consider it to be their law. Sometimes granting the party amnesty is the best solution. Snyder concluded that a better protocol needs to be constructed, in addition to the ICC, to guarantee that genocide does not occur in the future.

Upon the conclusion of the debate, the floor was open to students to engage the debaters with questions. Daves commented on students' questions: "[Snyder and Roth] are busy guys and they are not easily impressed...the quality of questions was excellent...they were probing and challenging and displayed high level thinking."

The efforts of the faculty to enhance the learning experience here at SCW are apparent and truly laudable. Student Eliana Baer notes she is "thankful to Stern's intense effort to broaden the horizons of the student body." In accordance with this high standard, the second lecturer of the series was Samantha Power, a graduate of Yale University and Harvard Law School. She is the winner of both the 2003 Pulitzer Prize and National Book Critics Circle Award for General Nonfiction for her book, "A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide." From 1993-1996 she covered the wars in the former Yugoslavia as a reporter for the Boston Globe, US News and World Report and the Economist. Power was also the founding Executive Director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy (1998-2002) in the JFK School of Government at Harvard.

Aside for students from Beren and Wilf campuses, many

non-collegiate attendees attended Power's lecture. Most were pleased with the impressive speaker. Audience member Michael Saro had read the details concerning the lecture in the New York Times Magazine before attending. "It must be such an honor for your university to host such an important individual," he remarked. SCW student Gali Portnoy stated, "This is an important milestone for Stern to host such an important speaker, it shows us Stern's commitment to human rights."

Prior to the lecture, a special dinner was held for the students of Professor Daves' Human Rights and Sovereignty class, as well as the board members. After the dinner Dr. Luders mentioned, "It was quite enjoyable. I was not at Power's table but I had a delightful supper with several students and my new colleague Prof. Evan Resnick, who teaches International Relations."

After Daves introduced Power, she posed a question for the audience to keep in mind throughout the lecture: Can the US respond to genocide in an age of terror, assuming that the age of terror began on 9/11? Has 9/11 brought a net good or bad in prevention of genocide? Power stated that in order for genocide to be taken seriously it must be declared a priority. "American policymakers have a toolbox at their disposal, yet it remained shut in the 20th century," she said. Power explained that there has been a gap between being able to convert the knowledge that people hold regarding the atrocities being committed, and mobilizing people to take action. For three and a half years, Clinton allowed the slaughter of Bosnians until it became too costly to be a bystander. There were but a few instances in the 1990's in which the world saw a humanitarian intervention, such as Australian involvement in East Timor in 1999. One common theory, according to Power, is "stability of the graveyard," meaning that genocide is a better option than civil war. Therefore, Power suggested, usually no nation becomes involved in intervention

measures until "the cost of staying out is greater than staying in."

The crux of the lecture discussed all the different methods the US can employ to stop genocide. Power used the parable of a toolbox filled with the tools of asset freezing and sanctioning. The US, she stressed, needs to open that toolbox and utilize its contents.

While researching in Zimbabwe, Power was told by President Robert Mugabe that he wishes Al Qaeda would set themselves up in Zimbabwe in order to draw some attention to the mass slaughters taking place. The US seems to only intervene in a country if its own enemies, such as Al Qaeda, are controlling the situation. This emphasizes the need of foreign aid in countries plagued by genocide. Additionally, the bystander problem is not one that is limited to the US and other world powers. The middle-tiered countries have the ability to aid countries in need, yet they repeatedly stand witness to the genocide.

"America's innocence is shattered," said Power of September 11, 2001. If something this catastrophic could occur on American soil then there must be a flaw in the global system, she explained. Currently, the US needs to assess the change in foreign policy that has occurred in our country since September 11th 2001. America formerly acted in regard to oil, but now needs to act on freedom. There is an increased interest in aiding other countries as opposed to being preoccupied with self-aggrandizement. In the aftermath of September 11, American global awareness has increased. However, this increased awareness has not translated into mobilization. Currently there are more than two million people affected by the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, Sudan. The US needs to reconcile the system so that there is greater accountability of the abusing parties. Policies do not emerge one by one; there is a linkage, a grouping of policies. Power suggested the assessment of policies "a la carte." The US, Power commented, has

the ability to step forward, and it is about time that they do.

Power's speech was met with resounding applause and the floor was then open for questions. Each question was given thoughtful consideration and answered in a respectable manner, regardless of the tone of the question. By the sound of the applause in the room, there was no doubt that the evening had been a complete success. "She is brilliant," said Molly Fink, President of SCW Student Council, "she straddled between Democrat and Republican and she really stood for core values, not just an ideal."

Aside from her dynamic speech, Power's availability following her lecture was quite impressive to all. After entertaining questions, she mingled with students and faculty and conducted a book signing. Marcia Robbins-Wilf said, "She was excellent, informative, fabulous, well spoken, and enthusiastic." Her sincerity and concern about the subject matter she discussed clearly inspired students. Cindy Bernstein found her to be "empowering, she gives us a sense of motivation and awareness for events going on in the world. She also gives us the feeling that we as students really can make a difference."

Events such as these require an exorbitant amount of planning time and financial support. Credit is due to Daves for his tireless efforts on behalf of the university. Luders noted, "Professor Daves has dedicated himself to the improvement of the Political Science Department in a manner that is truly above and beyond the call of duty; he has contributed to the vibrancy of public affairs discussions on campus".

This is only the beginning of many more exciting events to come. Two or three Stern alumnae involved in public affairs, government, and international relations research will be coming to speak. Be sure to look out for the upcoming lecturers in the Women in Public and International Affairs Speaker Series.

A Panel Discussion: Religious Issues Facing the State of Israel

continued from back page

morale, viewed negatively in *halakhic* literature.

Rabbi Lamm partially challenged Rabbi Blau's position, declaring that the government has the status of *melech b'goyim* (a non-Jewish monarchy) and not the status of *melech b'yisrael*. Nonetheless, the concept of *dina d'malchuta dina* (the obligation to obey the law of the land) still applies and therefore the soldiers would be obligated to listen to some commands of the government. Soldiers must therefore obey only those laws which do not run counter to Torah guidelines, as well as non-discriminatory laws. Since the current government has declared

that every soldier must carry out the orders- from the most secular to the most observant- there would be no reason for a soldier to disobey orders on the grounds of there being any type of discrimination.

Addressing the concern that a soldier may be afraid to disobey the demands of his or her rabbi, Rabbi Lamm noted that rabbis are generally experts in *halakha* and should only be making decisions concerning military politics if they are experts in that area as well. It would be incorrect for rabbis to use the opinions of individual generals opposed to disengagement as support for their demands on soldiers to disobey orders, especially since the

majority of army generals stand behind the government's decision. It would also be wrong to destroy what has come to be a unifying force in a country plagued by divisiveness. Rabbi Charlap was also of the opinion that no soldier should refuse orders- but any soldier who decides to do so must accept all of the repercussions of such behavior.

Bringing up an interesting point concerning the issue of giving Israeli territory to non-Jews, Rabbi Lamm pointed out an incident in Kings I where King Solomon offers a number of cities in the Galilee (territory that is clearly within the boundaries of ancient Israel) to the gentile Chiram, the king of Tzor.

Although Chiram turns down the offer, none of the commentators seem to object to King Solomon's initial offer to transfer Jewish territory to a gentile king.

Reacting to Lamm's statement, Rabbi Charlap pointed out the possibility that the discussion never arose amongst the commentators because the land was never actually handed over to Chiram. Had the transaction actually gone through, perhaps traditional commentators would have made some noise about it. Concerning the issue of land for peace, Rabbi Blau offered the opinion of Rav Soloveichik, who maintained that the Israeli government is entitled to give up land if they feel it to be a necessary measure in the attainment

of peace.

The back-and-forth went on for well over an hour, with many heated moments, comments and rebuttals. Arms kept shooting up as students eagerly expressed their thoughts and posed their questions. Racheli Davies, a sophomore at Stern, believes she was lucky to have the opportunity to learn more about the religious aspects of issues often discussed in a more political context. With the handing over of two West Bank cities (Jericho and Tul Karm) to the Palestinian Authorities scheduled to take place some time in the very near future, this event could not have been scheduled at a more appropriate time.

Jews Worldwide Celebrate Siyum HaShas

By Shoshana Fruchter

Tuesday evening, 20 Adar I, March 1, marked the eleventh *siyum hashas*, the completion of the entire Babylonian Talmud in a *daf yomi* (page-a-day) cycle. Public gatherings to celebrate the achievement were held in over forty cities across North America. Stretching from Calgary, Alberta to Boca Raton, Florida, these gatherings were attended by more than 100,000 Jews, while the same number celebrated in numerous countries across the hemisphere.

Many of the *siyumim* worldwide included satellite hook-ups to the largest public celebrations, sharing the Torah insights of notable scholars and leaders in the Orthodox Jewish community.

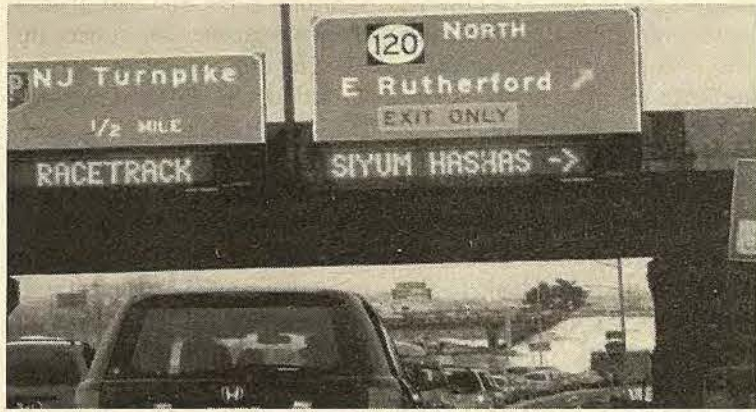
The grandest of all the gatherings was held in the arena of Madison Square Garden in Midtown Manhattan. Sponsored by Agudath Israel of America, the *siyum hashas* was held where the unlikely N.Y. Knicks had beaten the L.A. Lakers in overtime just the night before.

The *daf yomi* is a relatively new concept in Torah study, as "the *daf*" was only canonized by the Vilna printing of the Talmud in the nineteenth century; it was only then that "tzurat hadaf," the specific layout of each page, was established. With the text of the Talmud in the center flanked on both sides by medieval commentaries, the Talmud became a 2,711 double-sided-paged volume.

Innovated by Rabbi Meir Shapiro, dean of the famed Yeshivat Chachmei Lublin in Poland, the *dafyomi* project aimed at encouraging the layman to commit to serious Torah study each day by setting a specific "daf" to be studied by all participants. Studying a "daf" a day would enable completion of the entire Talmud in a seven-and-a-half year cycle. Rabbi Shapiro introduced his plan to the leading scholars of his generation, including the Chafetz Chaim, Rebbe of Tchorokov and Rebbe of Gur at the World Congress of Agudath Israel in 1923. The idea of *daf yomi* was extremely well received and plans were made to set the *daf* into motion on the following New Year, Rosh Hashana 5764.

Rabbi Shapiro, in his presentation, explained the magnitude of the project, "If the entire observant community everywhere, in every single location where observant Jews exist on this Earth, will study the same *daf* of Talmud on the same day...could we have a better way of bringing Jewish hearts into one great, harmonious union?" Indeed Rabbi Shapiro's dream helped to contribute a sense of a global Jewish community.

Tuesday night was evidence of that success. Jews from all over the world united to celebrate the *siyum hashas*, Torah learning in general and most



importantly the unity of the nation of Israel. "Look around this room and capture the site," urged Executive Vice President of Agudath Israel Rabbi Shmuel Bloom, "Jews of every background, with different head coverings have gathered together with one purpose." Rabbi Ephraim Wachsmann, speaking at the Continental Airlines Arena, delivered moving introductory remarks in the same vein. Stressing the "single heart" of the entire nation of Israel, Rabbi Wachsmann reminded the attendants that although geography and politics might separate Jews in daily life, they are all bonded by an illustrious — though sometimes tumultuous — past and fateful future.

In recognition of that shared past, the *siyum* was dedicated to the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust, as it has been since the seventh *siyum hashas* held in 1975. "[This *siyum* is] a mammoth gathering celebrating a mammoth achievement, but after a mammoth loss," began Rabbi Matisyahu Salmon, *mashgiach* in Beth Medrash Govoha of Lakewood, referring to the systematic destruction of European Jewry. Rabbi Gedaliah Weinberger, chairman of the Daf Yomi Commission, noted the jarring fact that a greater number of Jews than all those gathered in Madison Square Garden for this celebration were killed in just one day of the war. "Then, as now, we gather *l'kadesh shem shamayim*," to sanctify God's name, affirmed Rabbi Wachsmann, "then: before slaughter, now: to thank, praise, honor, exalt and extol God's name." These poignant messages were emphasized by the satellite picture of the *siyum hashas* being celebrated at Yeshivat Chachmei Lublin in Poland.

Tuesday's internationally synchronized *siyum* was not only testament to the Jewish people's survival, but also to their growing dedication. Though not all who were present had committed to the seven-and-a-half year cycle, all were encouraged to learn daily. The articulate and inspiring Rabbi Yissocher Frand of Yeshivat Ner Yisrael in Baltimore stated, "We all must leave [the *siyum*] committed to learn more, we must leave inspired to do more," reiterating, "It's never too late, never too little, and never enough."

Indeed, Torah learning has boomed in the past few years as the number of Jewish books and classes multiply weekly. Much

credit is due to publishing companies, most notably Artscroll/Mesorah Publications, which literally translated the Talmud, and were thanked publicly at the *siyum* by Agudath Israel's Rabbi Yaakov Perlow. The 73 volume set of the Schottenstein English edition of the Talmud will be completed this year after fifteen years of work. In addition, daily *dafyomi* lectures total more than six hundred in North America alone, according to the list of teachers in the publication received at the *siyum*. One of the most unusual classes meets on a specific Manhattan-bound car of the Long Island Rail Road each morning. On www.e-daf.com that day's page of the Talmud can be accessed or printed or even explained in English, Hebrew, Yiddish or French. On www.dafyomi.org one can hear any page of the Talmud explained in English.

The four-and-a-half-hour long *siyum* began with the afternoon services, ended with the evening prayers and included more than ten speakers in between. Immediately after the last few lines of the Talmud were learned and the text marking the completion of a tractate was said, the thousands of Jews in Madison Square Garden began singing in celebration. On the men's side of the partition friends, family, and "strangers" grabbed hands to dance together. Though the women did not have much room to dance, a small circle formed to sing and dance together. "I thought it was so nice that the women, even though they didn't actually complete *shas* themselves — and despite the fact that some might have wanted to, while for some it was the farthest thing from their mind — we all danced together in celebration," commented Rachel Davies, sophomore at SCW.

Thanks to Stern's Torah Activities Council (TAC), which bought tickets for Madison Square Garden, fifty students were able to attend the *siyum*. An unexpected number of women were interested in attending, and there were not enough available tickets. "I will make note to whoever is TAC President in seven-and-a-half years that she should buy more tickets next time," said Aliza Abrams, president of TAC.

Start preparing: the next *siyum* is set for 14 Av, 5772, August 2, 2012.

Blaming the Office of the Registrar: Fair or Not?

By Nehama Cohen

There is a topic of conversation frequently discussed on the Beren Campus, one that evokes strong emotions in undergraduates. Frustrated students often blame the Office of the Registrar for many transcript, registration and credit problems. The Office of the Registrar, whose functions include maintaining the academic records of all students, coordinating registration, issuing diplomas, transcripts, and certifications of current enrollment, scheduling campus teaching spaces and coordinating the publication of course schedules each semester, is usually condemned for troubles ranging from transcripts sent out late to long lines for course changes. But is it fair to hold the Office of the Registrar accountable for problems such as these? Or are the students quick to make accusations?

Most complaints directed against the office center around transcripts, which, according to students, are sent to graduate schools notoriously late, often affecting the admission's process. Michelle Faber, a senior at SCW majoring in biochemistry, initially believed that her transcripts were not sent out on time. Returning to the Office of the Registrar to inquire about the status of her request, Faber was informed that the delay was due to the fact that she was not financially cleared with the university, and therefore her request to have the transcripts sent out was not processed. "I was not aware of this rule and therefore my transcripts were not able to be sent out," Faber explained. "Once this issue was solved my transcripts were sent out within the time frame guaranteed by the Office of the Registrar."

Similarly, Ariela Adler, a senior at SCW majoring in biology with a minor in psychology, requested to have a transcript sent out to a graduate school during reading week of the Fall 2004 semester. The transcript was slotted to be released as soon as her professors submitted her final grades to the Office of the Registrar. "It took a long time for certain professors to submit the final grades, and the Office of the Registrar was only able to send out my transcript a month into the Spring 2004

semester," Adler explained. She continued to clarify that professors should be required to hand in grades within an allotted time period to ensure that students applying to graduate schools can send their applications in on time.

Ilana Pister, a junior at SCW majoring in biology with a shaped major in biophysics, said her experience with the Office of the Registrar has been positive. "I never experienced a problem with transcripts that I have requested, they have been sent out on time and I was notified when they were available for me to come pick them up," she explained. Pister advised that "in order to avoid stress and frustrations students should try to go to the Office of the Registrar during off-peak times."

According to Ruth Glick, an employee of the Office of the Registrar for the last 27 years, the problem with transcripts stems from students who wait until the last possible moment to request them. These students then become anxious and nervous when their transcripts are not sent immediately, and can miss graduate school deadlines. Glick, who is responsible for compiling a complete record of students' transcripts and grades, processing requests for letters of graduation and attendance as well as dealing with problems of registration and program changes, recommended that "students should plan ahead in order to avoid rushing requests."

Although blaming the Office of the Registrar may seem reasonable at first, careful investigation reveals several factors surrounding students' complaints. Taking precautionary steps such as planning ahead will further ensure that requests are handled correctly and on time.

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Yeshiva Visits the Supreme Court Students See Classroom Theory Applied

By Ilana Levin

Braving the beginnings of a snowstorm and Manhattan rush hour, 20 Yeshiva University undergraduates set out for Washington D.C. Monday afternoon on February 28 for a two-day trip to observe the U.S. Supreme Court in action. Dr. Robert Greenberg, who teaches Business Law courses at both the Wilf and Beren campuses' Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB), coordinated the program.

After a five-hour bus ride that included watching "Ferris Bueller's Day Off" a few too many times, the group arrived in the suburbs of D.C. for a Chinese dinner and a meeting with Nathan Lewin, a prominent constitutional lawyer who has argued 27 cases before the Supreme Court. A Yeshiva College and Harvard Law graduate, Lewin has regularly provided pro bono legal aid for the Orthodox Jewish community in cases ranging from representing the Board of Education of the Satmar Village of Kiryas Joel to defending Chabad's right to display a menorah on public grounds. Interspersing humorous anecdotes and legal principles, Lewin recounted his experiences clerking for Justice Harlan in the 1960's and arguing the 1986 Supreme Court case *Goldman v. Weinberger* in which he defended a Jew's right to wear a *kippa* (skullcap) in the Air Force.

Preparing his audience for the following day's experience, Lewin described and explained basic court procedures. He also spoke about the "Ten Commandments Case" that was argued two days later, *Van Orden*

v. Perry, Levin filed an *amicus curiae* in conjunction with the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, advising the Court to permit the display of monuments bearing the Ten Commandments on public grounds. The hour-long lecture was followed by a session of questions and answers from the audience, where students were particularly interested in Lewin's experiences of balancing religious liberties with the principle of separation between church and state.

Following a (short) night of sleep, the group arrived at the Supreme Court building by 8:15 Tuesday morning, ready to stand for an hour on the front plaza in the biting cold waiting to enter; anyone is allowed to enter the courtroom, but entrance is on a first-come, first-served basis. After standard security procedures the students were seated in the back of the courtroom. When the justices entered and the proceedings began, they first announced two decisions on past cases. One, it turns out, was a landmark decision in *Roper v. Simmons* which changed the age of eligibility for the death penalty from fifteen to eighteen. Justice Anthony Kennedy read part of the opinion of the court, which determined that execution of juveniles constitutes cruel and unusual punishment, banned by the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution. Establishing 18 as the minimum age, Kennedy noted that it "is the point where society draws the line for many purposes between childhood and adulthood. It is, we conclude, the age at which the line for death eligibility ought to rest." He was joined by Justices John Paul

Stevens, David Hackett Souter, Stephen Breyer and Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Justice Antonin Scalia read the opening of his dissenting opinion, which determined that the Supreme Court is not the appropriate branch of government to decide national consensus on morality. Presumably such an issue should be left for Congress, the representative body of the people, to legislate. He was joined by Chief Justice William Rehnquist (who was absent from the Court) and Justices Clarence Thomas and Sandra Day O'Connor. The 5-4 decision has the effect of staying the execution of approximately 70 juvenile convicts from around the country.

The size and setup of the room allowed observers to see the justices in real-life dimensions and personalities, instead of the usual New York Times' square-inch photos that accompany articles about the Court. Surprisingly, Justice Breyer had the entire courtroom (well, perhaps not the military visitors) laughing at his several jokes. Not as surprising, Justice Thomas did not speak the entire day and at some points seemed not to be moving at all.

After the bonus of viewing the admission of a number of lawyers to the Supreme Court Bar, court attendees listened to the two scheduled cases for oral arguments. The usual setup involves a half-hour position summary by a lawyer on each side of the case. A justice may, at any point in the lawyer's oral argument, interrupt the lawyer and ask for clarification, support a statement with precedents or disagree with a point. After answering the justice's question,

the lawyer must be able to continue the thread of the argument without hesitation.

Because Tuesday morning's schedule consisted of two cases that had been consolidated, courtroom visitors had the pleasure of listening to four lawyers argue their cases. (Perhaps Justice Thomas had a legitimate excuse for his behavior after all.) The cases, *Exxon Corp v. Allapattah Services* and *Ortega v. Starkist Foods*, involved diversity jurisdiction and amount-in-controversy requirements in civil litigation. In the second case, the family of a girl who injured her finger on a can of Starkist tuna fish was suing for damages. While the damages that the girl claimed could satisfy the minimum amount-in-controversy, her family's claim, which is basically emotional distress, may not; if so, the question is if the family can still attach their claim to the girl's claim to meet the requirement and be allowed to sue.

After the first session, many participants in the trip decided to spend the remaining time touring D.C., while others returned to the front plaza to pass through security again and observe the afternoon session. The second case, *Deck v. Missouri*, debated the constitutionality of handcuffing and shackling a convicted prisoner to a belly chain while in front of a jury who is deciding between life imprisonment and capital punishment for the defendant. Additionally, the question was presented as to whose responsibility it is to prove or disprove prejudice on the basis of this action—the prosecution or the defense.

Students then toured D.C., walking down Pennsylvania

Avenue to take pictures in front of the White House, stopping into several Smithsonian museums and touring the U.S. Capitol and Library of Congress. After a brief stop in Baltimore for some fast food and yet another viewing of "Ferris Bueller's Day Off," the bus returned to Brookdale Hall at 10:30pm Tuesday night.

Many of the trip's participants have taken or are currently taking Professor Greenberg's Business Law courses at SSSB, and found that the theories they learned in class were consistent with their observations in the courtroom. "The trip was really educational, especially because we just had a Business Law test and then I came here and found how applicable it was," said Shira Orbach, a sophomore at SSSB. "It was also interesting to see the way the lawyers argued in front of the justices and how they dealt with the pressures of responding to their questions."

Greenberg felt the trip was a successful event. "It was a real treat to hear from Nathan Lewin about his personal experiences arguing before the Supreme Court; the students got to explore D.C. a little bit, and everyone had an opportunity to observe oral argument in two cases and the announcement of a major landmark decision which then made the front page of the New York Times," he explained. "I hope that everyone found the trip to be the combination of a truly unique educational experience and a relaxed social atmosphere that I envisioned and hoped to achieve."

In a unanimous opinion, the participants concurred.

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Women and

SCW Tackles Agunah Problem

By Ilana Levin

An *agunah*, literally, "a tied female," is a Jewish woman who cannot obtain a divorce from her husband. Unable to remarry, she is stuck in limbo unable to take recourse. For years the Orthodox community has tried to deal with this problem and find halakhic and innovative solutions to a seemingly impossible situation. On February 16th, Stern's Torah Activities Council (TAC), along with the Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY) and the Organization for the Resolution of Agunot (ORA), sponsored a lecture on *agunot*, featuring two prominent speakers on the subject.

In a one-hour session, Rabbi Yona Reiss, director of the Beth Din of America, and Rachel Levmore, the coordinator for Matters of Agunot and Get Refusals in the Jerusalem Rabbinical Court, summarized the general issues of *agunot*, informing the small but attentive audience of the historical background and then discussing the contemporary problems and solutions.

Reiss called a "classic case of *agunah* in the Gemara," a wife whose husband is missing and his death cannot be verified. The woman, still married according to Jewish law, is not free to remarry until her husband's death has been ascertained in case he is still alive. Jewish law requires that husbands grant their wives divorces; a *beth din* (rabbinic court) cannot grant it for them. Modern technology, particularly safer modes of transportation, makes this type of *agunah* less common today. Reiss

pointed out, however, that after September 11, such scenarios arose as husbands' bodies could not be found amidst the rubble of the buildings. More common today is an *agunah* who finds herself a victim of "get refusal," in which her husband refuses to give her a legal document of divorce according to Jewish law, sometimes out of bitterness or as a tool of coercion.

Many situations of get refusal involve husbands who are no longer religious and therefore, are unconcerned about meeting the halakhic requirements for divorce, leaving their religious wives in limbo. However, Rachel Levmore cited cases in which even observant men refused to give gets, and she said that monetary and psychological factors are often motivations. Particularly in difficult divorces, she said, hurt feelings and resentment might quickly turn into anger, which is channeled into psychological abuse in the form of get refusal. Aside from these cases in which the goal is primarily revenge, some get refusal cases are a form of monetary extortion. If the divorce agreement involves a heavy monetary burden on the husband, he may withhold the get until the wife agrees to a new settlement.

Both speakers made it clear that solutions to get refusal are not easy in modern times. From the Talmudic period through the 20th century, communities in some areas of Eastern Europe often had leaders who were both the rabbinic authority and the legal authority, giving the *beth din* greater latitude in exerting pressure. Jewish law requires that a get be given voluntarily, meaning all measures must stop short of

coercion, yet, this still allows for some forms of physical force and the jailing of recalcitrant husbands.

In modern America, however, the rabbinate has no power to jail husbands on the basis of Jewish law, a problem Levmore classifies as "the result of a meeting of democracy and halakha." Thus, the most powerful tools left are forms of social pressure, which include boycotting the husband's business, not inviting him to religious ceremonies and not calling him to the Torah in shul as well as other actions. Levmore noted that the rabbinate in Israel is less restricted because of the unique role of halakha in secular law, granting the *Beth Din* the authority to jail husbands refusing to give a get. Despite this, *agunot* still may be chained to their estranged husbands for a long time before the rabbinical courts succeed.

These problems led to the establishment of the Organization for the Resolution of Agunot which, according to its website, is a "non profit social service agency dedicated to helping women who are *agunot*." In addition, it was founded by YU students, and it is endorsed by 25 rabbis. ORA describes itself as an organization that "as a last resort, stands ready to exert pressure on any party hindering the delivery of a get, within the limits of Jewish and secular law." Since its inception three years ago, ORA has helped in 19 successful divorces and is currently involved in over 50 cases. Examples of its activities include "staging peaceful protests at the homes and workplaces of recalcitrant parties," and publicizing the names of husbands served a

seiruv (a document in which a *Beth Din* identifies the husband as recalcitrant) by posting them on ORA's website (www.GetORA.com).

In addition to actively assisting the *Beth Din* in their attempts to arrange for the resolution of *agunot*, ORA offers valuable social services for *agunot* as well, all provided for free. These include child care, a mentoring program by former *agunot* and meetings with psychologists and social workers. Another of ORA's goals is community education, aimed at increasing awareness of problems facing *agunot*; SCW's program was only one example of ORA publicizing these issues.

In addition to explaining possible responses to get refusal cases, the speakers also strongly advocated the signing of Jewish pre-nuptial agreements as a way to prevent such cases from arising altogether. Reiss, as well as the website for the Beth Din of America, says that "it has been our experience that in each case in which the pre-nuptial agreement was utilized, a get was given" (www.bethdin.org).

This agreement is considered a supplement to the *ketubah* (marriage contract) and, in the event of divorce, requires the husband to pay a set amount of money (generally \$150) for every day that he refuses to give a get. Since these agreements are essentially contracts, and therefore legal documents according to American law, they are enforceable in secular courts. Knowing that a court will force him to pay, the husband is encouraged to speed up the divorce proceedings.

Levmore pointed out an interesting irony in regard to

this provision in the *ketubah*, as well as later rabbinic enactments that did not allow for divorce without the wife's consent. Namely, that they were originally created to protect women from their husbands easily divorcing them, while today when some women want divorces, they find themselves trapped in their marriages. Thus, the pre-nuptial agreement is a modern mechanism that protects women by giving them monetary bargaining power.

Reiss explained that enforcing a pre-nuptial agreement is not halackically considered coercion, which would invalidate a get. "It's not putting a gun to your head; it's making you pay your monetary obligation," he said.

YU's RIETS Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Mordechai Willig drafted the current pre-nuptial agreement in accordance with Jewish law through the "pre-nuptial task force of the Orthodox Caucus in conjunction with the Beth Din of America." Reiss noted that some rabbis will not perform the marriage ceremony if the couple does not sign the agreement, though Levmore believes that not enough rabbis are actively encouraging it. "If your rabbi doesn't mention it, you should—or get your mother to," she said. Comparing the signing of a pre-nuptial agreement to buying life insurance, Levmore, though an advocate of it, conceded that most couples preparing to marry don't want to think about the possibility of divorce. Although potentially awkward, pushing engaged couples to sign these pre-nuptial agreements could eliminate the problem of *agunot*.

The Fourth International Edah Conference: "The Courage to be Modern and Orthodox"

By Esther Genuth

On Sunday February 20th, Edah held its fourth international conference at the Skirball Center for Adult Jewish Learning at Temple Emanu-El. Edah's mission is to give a voice to the ideology and values of Modern Orthodoxy and educate and empower communities to address their concerns. More than 1,000 people representing the spectrum of Modern Orthodoxy gathered for the biennial conference titled "The Challenges. The Opportunities. Diversity, Change, Meaning, Justice."

The Edah conference hosted an open discussion, encouraging legitimate disagreement regarding an array of ideological,

halakhic, and public policy issues that pertain to today's Modern Orthodox community. Another goal of the conference was to foster personal, religious and intellectual growth as well as impact the greater Jewish community.

Participants were able to choose from a large selection of speakers and sessions for each of the five allotted time slots. Topics such as the parameters of making halakhic decisions for one's self, the *agunah* problem, facing substance abuse in Jewish day schools, sexual abuse, the relationship between Torah and democracy and *kevod hatzibbur* (respect for the community) were only a few of the 80 topics addressed over the course of the day.

Close to 90 rabbis, leaders

and scholars from both Israel and North America participated as speakers and presenters. Rabbi David Bigman, Rabbi Michael Broyde, Dr. Tova Hartman, Rabbi Menachem Leibtag, Rabbi Dov Linzer, Rabbi Dr. Shlomo Riskin, Dr. Tamar Ross and Rabbi Avi Weiss were among a few of the speakers.

An excited crowd went from session to session participating in open conversation with various participants and speakers. Popular sessions drew large crowds, prompting many spectators to sit on the floor.

Volunteers in royal blue t-shirts, many of whom were college students, helped the event run smoothly by videotaping sessions and registering participants. "The event gave me the

opportunity to seriously analyze myself and the society around me" commented SCW sophomore and Edah conference volunteer Yael Schiller. "As a volunteer I felt that I was able to give back to my community."

Demographer Jacob Ukeles, at the first plenary session, presented a series of statistics regarding the modern Orthodox population of the New York area. The importance of a college education was the litmus test for determining whether an Orthodox household identified themselves as Modern Orthodox. Ukeles concluded that the Modern Orthodox community has outnumbered the Haredi population in NY. "His data seems to be persuasive that there really is a much larger Modern Orthodox community

than we thought," said Rabbi Saul Berman, director of Edah and associate professor of Jewish Studies at Stern College, in an interview with the Observer.

Referring to the growth of Torah learning and Modern Orthodox values in the Jewish community, Berman stated, "I really think we are headed towards a Modern Orthodox renaissance." However, Berman criticized the reputation that the community tries to "find a *heter* [Halachic leniency] when the going gets tough."

The day concluded with the final plenary that addressed the topic of religiously motivated disobedience of military orders in a democratic society.

Orthodoxy

Tahalich Encourages Independent Torah Study

By Chaya Sara Soloveichik

Zemira Ozarowski had an idea. It pursued her throughout her years at Stern College and the subsequent years spent teaching and tutoring at various schools in Israel. "But it doesn't accomplish much if you don't do anything with it," Ozarowski said. And now she has.

The objective is simple. Many Jewish women have not obtained a strong Jewish education, and others simply didn't grow up in a religious household. The Tahalich Women's Learning Program, initiated by Ozarowski following her return to America this past September, caters primarily to them. This establishment provides Jewish women of all ages with the skills and competence necessary for independent Torah study.

Located in the basement of the 5th Avenue Synagogue in Manhattan, the program's spring semester extends from February 27th to June 26th. Four courses are taught every Sunday morning, except for holidays, from nine to two.

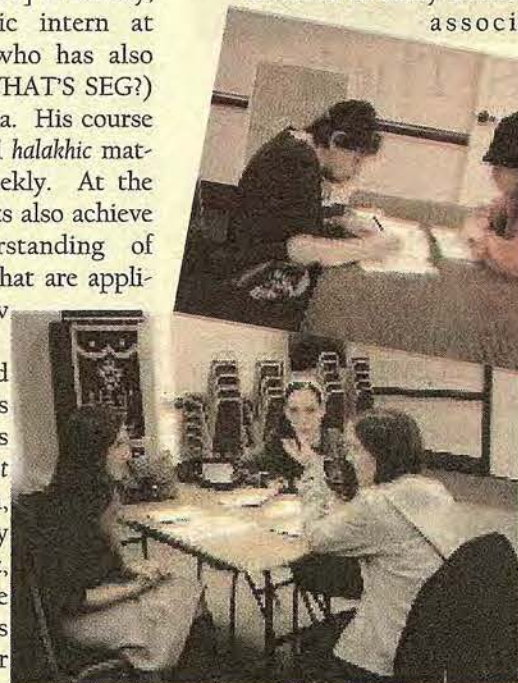
The first two classes are both preceded by an hour of preparation. Students study and examine the various sources with the help of mentors, simultaneously reinforcing their Torah reading proficiency. "Tutors aren't supposed to just translate, but should go through the *shoresh* (root of a word) and show how you can know that *shoresh* from another

context as well," said SCW student Michaella Goldberg, who served as a mentor at the February 13th open house. "And it works."

Following the first hour of preparation, a lecture relating to the laws of Shabbat was presented by Rabbi [WHAT] Wilensky, a former rabbinic intern at Jamaica Estates who has also taught at SEG (WHAT'S SEG?) and Camp Morasha. His course addresses practical *halakhic* matters that arise weekly. At the same time, students also achieve a general understanding of *halakhic* concepts that are applicable to Jewish law at large.

The second preparation leads into a *Tanakh* class studying *Megillot* Esther and Ruth, instructed by Danielle Erez, whose expertise with *Tanakh* is emphasized by her studies at the Bernard Revel graduate program. She has taught at Ma'ayanot High School and was involved in various outreach organizations, including YUSSR and the Lauder Foundation in Germany. Her lectures go beyond ideas found in the selected *sefer* (book) and its commentaries and include general facts about the commentators, their goals, their approaches and common terminology, all of which are an integral part of *Tanakh* study.

These classes suggest the program's objective, but the third course reveals its goals markedly. This class consists of two parts, delivered by Ozarowski, who received her Masters in Jewish Education from YU's Azrieli Graduate School and has been involved in many outreach associa-



tions, including Aish HaTorah and NCSY.

The first, called "The Crash Course in Basic Biblical Hebrew," quickly and efficiently supplies students with an overall grasp of grammar, syntax and root words in Biblical Hebrew. Research has shown that 84 percent of the Torah is comprised from 1061 words. 84 percent of *Tanakh* is made up of a vocabulary of 2004 words. Learning these root words will effectively increase

students' skills. In the second component of the course, Ozarowski imparts basic information and facts important for all Jews to know such as key *seforim* (books) and their authors, the chronology of significant happenings in Jewish history, and the books included in *Tanakh*.

Ozarowski is also teaching another optional course. Every week, students read through a chapter of *Nach* (Prophets and Writings) a day, which she subsequently reviews and summarizes. Although a more cursory method of learning, it still provides students with an overall knowledge and familiarity with early Jewish history. Lunch is provided for those who stay.

A junior at Stern, Ariel Belson, who was also a mentor at the open house, immediately understood and appreciated the program's purpose. "I think it's an awesome program," she said. "It's filling a big need in the Torah learning world of women. It will give women the tools to open a *sefer* and learn by themselves. There are many people in my life who gave me the tools, and I'm thankful for that. This program will do the same for others."

Approximately 15 students participated at the program's open house, held on February 13th, and most were in their twenties. "There was a lot of positive feedback," Ozarowski

said.

Although ostensibly similar to Midreshet Yom Rishon, which provides women with the weekly opportunity to hear two motivating *shiurim* (lectures) from YU *Roshei Yeshiva* and other scholars, the Tahalich Women's Learning Program has a different agenda. "This program [Tahalich] is specifically for women who want to work on their skills," Ozarowski said. "Hopefully, most will be coming consistently every week and will actually achieve the goal of getting better skills." The Midreshet Yom Rishon initiators have been supportive of Tahalich, and there has been talk of some collaboration.

When asked about the program's choice of name, Ozarowski humorously recounted the difficulties she encountered when struggling to select one. She eventually settled on "tahalich," which means "progress." If conceiving a name for the program was difficult, the same must be said for the actual progress. But difficult doesn't signify impossible or monotonous.

"It was teaching me skills, and that was really important to me," SCW freshman, Sharon Sommer said of the open house classes. "I had a great time." For more information about the program and student tuition, see the following website: www.tahalich.homestead.com. Both students and mentors are still welcome to participate.

SCW Addresses Disabled Students' Needs

continued from page 6

Additionally, there is no permanent test reader for students who are unable to read exams for themselves. Nissel admits that the university is limited somewhat because of its small size, but "we do whatever we can to help the students."

Molly Fink, SCW student council president, who is 93 percent deaf but does not consider herself disabled, believes that her deafness is a challenge. "I think it's ironic to refer to it as a disability because it has enabled me to become the person I am today," explains Fink. "I have a 93 percent hearing loss, which requires me to wear hearing aids. I don't think that special consideration is the appropriate term; it's an entirely different lifestyle. I have conditioned myself from a young age to become that much more aware of my surroundings and that much more attentive to the teacher and my classmates to make up for my hearing loss. No, my loss does not in any way inhibit my academic or Stern

experience. I think that Stern does not cater to my needs because I have not vocally challenged Stern to meet any needs."

In accordance with The American Disabilities Act of 1990, buildings built prior to 1990 are not required to undergo renovations to comply with new regulations instituted by the law. Therefore, the Stern buildings which predate the law do not have to undergo renovations. This explains how the 36th Street dormitory, an old building without an elevator, still complies with current standards. A student who is wheelchair bound or walking impaired would not be able to live in this dorm, thereby limiting her dorm choices to Brookdale, Schottenstein, and Independent Housing.

Jeffrey Rosengarten, associate vice president for administrative services, explains, "The law does not stipulate that a building without an elevator is required to put in an elevator." The 36th Street building, however, does have a handicap acces-

sible door and a handicap accessible bathroom on the main floor.

"As the university conducts internal renovations, additions to aid the handicap[ped] are made," clarified Rosengarten. "In the past seven to eight years great additions have been made." Some of the additions and changes that were implemented are the new handicapped bathroom in the 245 Lexington Avenue building near the reference library and the ramps that are in place in the 215 Lexington building. All of the upgraded elevators emit a beeping noise to inform the visually impaired when the doors are closing. The upgraded elevators also have Braille next to the buttons.

One of the biggest complaints of disabled SCW students is that the entrance to the 245 Lexington building is not wheelchair accessible. Rosengarten notes that it would be impossible to create a permanent ramp for that entrance because "the legal requirements are very specific. A ramp built in

the entrance to the 245 Lexington building would not be able to meet the legal requirements. Furthermore the ramp would be unsafe, because it was not built to the regulations. It is better to have no ramp at all than to have a hazardous ramp." Braun adds, "In past years when there has been someone wheelchair bound she has used the ramp on 35th street or a temporary ramp has been put down to allow accessibility to the building."

Tova Guttman, a SCW junior, found the school to be extremely accommodating when she broke her ankle. "I approached Rachel Kraut and asked how I could get to school each morning. She arranged for a shuttle to come pick me up from my dorm and deliver me to school. All I had to do was call security and tell them when I wanted the shuttle." Guttman did not even encounter any problems while using a full elevator and arriving at class on time, stating that "people were just helpful."

Another student, though, experienced the opposite experience when she was temporarily wheelchair bound last year. "I explained my situation to SCW and asked about getting to school each morning, if there was some way that a shuttle could be sent for me. The response was 'this is the shuttle schedule, we can't make special accommodations for you,'" recounts the student. Each morning she asked friends to push her to school. "Thank God for those friends," remarks the student.

One of the most frustrating aspects for students who are in any way disabled is that they are unaware of the services available. If students publicize their issues to the school then the administration would be more helpful. "Students who are struggling should not wait until their senior year to come to the Office of Student Affairs with their problems," suggests Braun, "they should come as soon as they realize that they are struggling."



Yeshiva EMTs Discuss Their Experiences

By Yardanna Platt

On a typical Thursday night, the back lounge of Brookdale Hall is usually filled to the brim with women strewn across couches, crammed next to tables and even cluttering the floors as they strive to catch a glimpse of superhuman doctors Doug Ross and John Carter single-handedly resuscitate the entire city of Chicago on NBC's hit drama "E.R." While few doubt George Clooney and Noah Wyles' extraordinary impeccabilities as faultless physicians, most do not think much about the difficulties involved in transporting the patients to the hospital.

But, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) such as Yardena Mandel, a SCW junior, might have a different take on how the sick reach the hospital. Having worked since she was 16 as an EMT in West Orange, N.J., one could say that Mandel has seen her fair share of traumatic cases. When asked how she approaches emergency scenarios, Mandel said she "removes herself

from the scene" in order to act efficiently. "You need to be able to stomach a lot of things...this job is not for everyone."

On the other hand, the biology department's Dr. Jeffrey Weisburg, who has had experience as an EMT, suggests that this job is "invaluable for anyone who wants to be a doctor." Weisburg added that being an EMT allows students to be more "hands on," and enables them to practice medicine in the fullest sense because they are at the origin of the emergency. "You get to see things that a doctor doesn't really get to see," explains Weisburg.

Daniel Grossman, a Yeshiva College alumnus who studies part time at RIETS while working for Hatzolah's Washington Heights division, notes that being a paramedic is a task for someone who is "sensitive, caring, and emotionally and physically strong." According to Grossman, being a paramedic is different from being a doctor because unlike a hospital, the paramedic finds patients in an "uncontrolled, non-sterile envi-

ronment...the back of the ambulance is not the same as the emergency room and just doesn't have the same supplies and equipment." Even though the profession of an EMT is coupled with many hurdles, Grossman is glad that he has taken the job because he has learned so much in the field, and has become such an integral member of the Washington Heights community.

Being an EMT is hard work indeed; it is the job for someone who can persevere in the most intense of situations. There is something to be said for the person who is first to arrive on the scene, and sees the patient in the danger of the emergency zone. Being on call during all times of the day, and helping people in so many ways, from simply providing emotional support to delivering a baby in a finance office like Yardena Mandel has done, might not be as glamorous as prancing around in a white coat on NBC's prime time drama, but it definitely saves lives.

FEIG'S FAST FACTS In The Spotlight: Limelight

By Jessica Feig

A few nights ago, the major news topic on every channel was the release of Martha Stewart from jail, and newscasters felt the need to follow her every move on her first day of freedom. Although there were many other important issues occurring around the world, the press sensed that this was what the public wanted to hear. When people are in the public eye, they are said to be "in the limelight," and there is no way to avoid being at the center of public attention.

Have you ever wondered where the expression "in the limelight" originated? Limelight refers to a system of lighting invented in 1825 by Thomas Drummond, a Scottish army officer and engineer. Drummond's light was called "limelight" because it was produced by burning a cylinder of calcium oxide (CaO), commonly known as lime, in an oxyhydrogen flame. As the lime was oxidized by the flame, it produced an intense, brilliant light that could be directed into a beam by a glass lens. Drummond's light functioned for stage lighting. Specifically, it was used in the theater as a spotlight to direct the audience's attention to the most important activities taking place onstage. As a result, performers in this light were considered to be "in the limelight."

Limelight was first used in London's Covent Garden Theater in 1837. Its use spread to theaters around the world during the 1860's and 1870's. By the late 19th century, however, limelight was replaced by electric arc lighting.

When the expression being "in the limelight" passed into general usage, it referred to anyone at the center of public attention. Although limelight has long since been replaced by electric lighting, the expression being "in the limelight" continues to be used today.

Growing Dental Possibilities

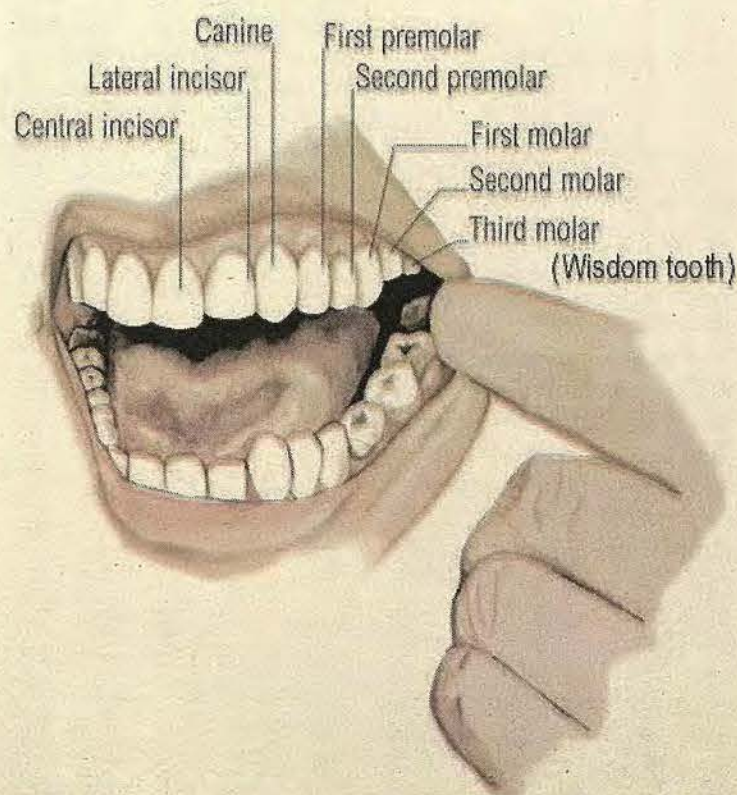
By Sara Frankel

To most Stern College students, dentistry may seem like a small field, but it is now becoming a very popular line of work. Going pre-dent is difficult and requires the same prerequisites that most medical schools require: two semesters each of biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry and physics with labs, as well as mathematics and English courses.

Once organic chemistry, general chemistry and biology are completed, one can start considering when to take the DAT. The DAT is the Dental Admissions Test, which is a standardized test and has great impact on chances of acceptance to a dental school. The test is broken down into 4 parts: Survey of Natural Sciences, which includes questions from all areas in biology, general chemistry and organic chemistry; Perceptual Ability, which tests a

student's ability to picture and perceive different things without actually having them in her hand; Reading Comprehension; and Quantitative Reasoning, which is basically mathematics. The highest score one can receive on the DAT is 30 and the average score is usually around 17. These examinations are given on any day of the year on computers, and scores are available immediately upon completion of the exam. One usually takes the exam a year before she wishes to attend dental school and a couple of months before applying to the dental schools of her choice.

Dentistry is a fun and exciting career. For those of you who are interested, it is a very important field of health. Once an individual has completed dental school, she can choose to practice general dentistry or specialize in an array of exciting fields such as Oral Surgery, Orthodontics, or Periodontics. Many dentists, in addition to their clinical respon-



sibilities, choose to perform research in various areas including physiology of craniofacial diseases and epidemiology. As

you can see, there are many possibilities if you're pursuing a career in dentistry.

The Observer
wishes a
heartfelt
Mazal Tov to
SSSB
President
Sherene Nilli
on her
engagement to
David Pourati

20th Annual Dinner Honoring Rabbi A. Schneier

Senator Hillary Clinton will be the keynote speaker at a March 20th dinner honoring Rabbi Arthur Schneier's 50 years as a rabbi and his 75th-birthday. The event will benefit the Rabbi Arthur Schneier Center for International Affairs at YU and will be held at The Plaza at 5th Avenue and Central Park South. YU President Richard Joel will attend the event, along with various local and national government officials, as well as ambassadors from Washington, Israel, the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, Austria, Hungary and Romania.

Schneier is the spiritual leader of the Park East Synagogue in Manhattan and distinguished alumnus of YU. He is a longtime advocate for religious freedom and human rights as well as is founder and president of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, established in 1965. He is the recipient of the Presidential Citizens Medal and the U.S. Department of State Special Recognition Award. Schneier held positions in several major Jewish organizations, initiated the Resolution for the Protection of Religious Sites that was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly, and he recently served as a U.S. delegate to the Stockholm International Forum for the Prevention of Genocide.

Seth Waxman Visits Cardozo

Former Solicitor General Seth Waxman spent two days immersed in law school life, sharing his invaluable experience by discussing his recent Supreme Court victory, leading a Moot Court master class, teaching Constitutional Law, and delivering a public lecture at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law on March 7 and 8.

Waxman's lecture "Who (or What) is the Solicitor General's Client?", part of Cardozo's Bauer Distinguished Visitor Program, covered the role and responsibilities of a solicitor general, which includes arguing in front of the United States Supreme Court and insuring that the government speaks in one voice on questions of law. "It probably was a job whose aspirations could never be filled," Waxman remarked.

Continuing the visit, Waxman, who has delivered more than 40 oral arguments in the Supreme Court, began his second day at Cardozo by teaching a Constitutional Law class. Jokingly promising a higher grade to anyone who asked a question, including the Hon. Olivier Dutheillet de Lamothe, Justice at the French Constitutional Council who was in attendance, Waxman led eventually to a discussion of his recent Supreme Court win in the juvenile death penalty case of Roper vs. Simmons.

After leading the class and having lunch with a group of students, Waxman served as the judge during a Moot Court master class. Second-year students Rachel Lubert and Rebecca Hagenson, national Moot Court champions, presented oral arguments in front of Waxman and fellow students.

"This was really a pleasure," Waxman commented. "It's quite obvious why you won." He also offered practical advice from his first-hand experience, encouraging the students to prepare and recite their most important one or two points right off the bat. Admitting that justices probably don't want to be considered pupils, he nonetheless encouraged everyone to think of judges as students when answering their questions. "This is all about teaching," Waxman said. "It's about trying to explain something."

Rabbi Mark Gottlieb Appointed Head of Yeshiva University High School for Boys

Rabbi Mark Gottlieb has been appointed head of school of the Yeshiva University High School for Boys, announced YU President Richard M. Joel.

"Rabbi Gottlieb is an outstanding role model with a deep understanding of the culture and values that are at the core of our mission," stated President Joel. "He will also serve as Advisor to the Vice President of University Life on Educational Continuity. These new positions will help support a vibrant relationship between the high school and the larger university community."

With more than 14 years of senior-level experience in higher and secondary education, Gottlieb's appointment is an indication of MST's firm commitment to the principles of *Torah Umadda* (the synthesis of general and Jewish learning).

"I think (YUHS for Boys) can be a paradigm school for Centrist Orthodoxy," said Gottlieb, "just as YU is the university flagship for Modern Orthodoxy."

Most recently, Gottlieb was principal of the middle and upper schools at Maimonides School in Brookline, MA. He is currently a PhD candidate in philosophy at the University of Chicago where he earned his master's in philosophy. He has published and presented papers on both secular and Jewish topics around the country.

A renowned *talmid chacham* (scholar of Jewish studies), Rabbi Gottlieb was ordained at YU's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary and is an alumnus of the high school and Yeshiva College.

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Mother of Slain Voting Rights Worker Addresses Honors Students

On the evening of March 9, 2005, the echoes of history could be heard inside the Jerome and Geraldine Schottenstein Residence Hall on the Beren Campus.

History, however, was not the only lesson to be learned from Dr. Carolyn Goodman, invited by Dr. Cynthia Wachtell, director of the S. Daniel Abraham Honors Program at Stern College for Women. Dr. Goodman's son, Andrew, was murdered in Mississippi in 1964 by alleged members of the Klu Klux Klan. More than 40 years later, in January of this year, Edgar Ray Killen, 79, was arrested and charged with the murders of Dr. Goodman's son and two other voting rights volunteers, James Chaney, 21, and Michael Schwerner, 24. Andrew Goodman was 20 at the time of his death. The abduction and murder of the three young men is considered by many a seminal event of America's Civil Rights Movement.

Though this historic occurrence formed the basis for much of what Dr. Goodman, 89, spoke about, it is the present and future that she prefers to emphasize.

"The South is a very different place than it was 40 years ago," Dr. Goodman said when asked about present-day prejudice and racism in Mississippi. "Today, anybody - Black, Jewish, Catholic, Muslim - can walk into just about any place and won't feel the same tension they would have felt 40 years ago."

Nearly 90 students (from Beren and Wilf), faculty, and administration members attended Dr. Goodman's talk in the Ivry Lounge of the Schottenstein Residence Hall. Dr. Goodman spoke for about 20 minutes and then welcomed the questions of audience members.

Dr. Goodman said Andrew had "a wonderful grandfather" who was fond of saying, "Don't just talk about it, do something."

Grandfather Goodman's philosophy of being a 'doer' is one Dr. Goodman imparted to students. She said there are things in life worth doing. And she acknowledged that some are risky, but she said life, in general, is a risk. "If it is an important goal," she noted, "if it is something that can affect your family, your community, or maybe the world, then you take the risk."

Dr. Goodman is now working on a filmed docu-drama called "Freedom Now" that will feature interviews with those involved with the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and will detail the murders of Andrew Goodman, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner. She said the film should be completed before the end of the year and will be released to selected movie theaters.

Yeshiva Hosts Symposium on Religious Fundamentalism

An Evangelical Lutheran minister, a Sunni Muslim from Syria, and a Jewish studies scholar came together to address the topic of religious fundamentalism at a symposium sponsored by the Rabbi Arthur Schneier Center for International Affairs at Yeshiva University's Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law February 27. All experts in their fields, the three panelists of "The Political Face of Religious Fundamentalism" contrasted and compared fundamentalism in Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.

Renowned theologian Martin E. Marty opened the proceedings by discussing the common features of all forms of modern religious fundamentalism. He characterized fundamentalists as reactive, selective in their reliance on basic teachings, and dependent on an "us versus them" mentality.

"Although religious fundamentalism will always appear in the cast of old-time religion, it is a modern phenomenon," said Dr. Marty, professor emeritus at the University of Chicago Divinity School. "It is a reaction to modernity, which is seen to deprive traditions of power."

Bassam Tibi, professor of international relations at the University of Goettingen, Germany, underscored the contradictions inherent in Muslim fundamentalism. "It says no to the values of modernity and yes to technological advances," said Dr. Tibi, who added that he had flown 22 hours to New York because he "wanted to participate in this dialogue at a Jewish university."

Dr. Tibi traced the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, beginning with the founding of the organization Muslim Brotherhood in Cairo in 1928. He said fundamentalist Islam is distinct from its less extreme counterpart by its being both a belief system and a form of government.

Samuel Heilman, professor of Jewish Studies at the CUNY Graduate Center, described fundamentalist Judaism as "a return to a Judaism that is an imagined past." This is in reaction to a time of crisis, he said, pointing to the Holocaust, the mass migration of European Jews to Israel and the US, and their subsequent absorption into the new host culture.

"Most Jews embrace the modern world as new and improved, but fundamentalists see its attractions as counterfeit," said Dr. Heilman.

The panelists, all authors of several books, participated in the Fundamentalism Project, a landmark study spearheaded by Dr. Marty that brought together international scholars to explore the nature and impact of fundamentalist movements in the twentieth century.

The symposium was co-sponsored by the Yeshiva College Book Project and was held in honor of the 75th anniversary of YC.

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The Lady Macs' Skirts Make Headlines Yet Again – in Florida

By Sari Nossbaum

As the blizzard of 2005 made its way across New York this January, SCW's Lady Macs basketball team was soaking up the sun in Florida. Along with Yeshiva College's team, we flew down together and spent the week in a hotel in Fort Lauderdale. Both teams had two games scheduled during that week, but we had plenty of time to kick back, become acquainted with the pool (and one another), and most importantly, enjoy the sun. The team diet that week consisted of a few very important staples, including power bars, slurpees and TCBY. With our assistant coach, Esther Oppenheimer, as our "soccer mom" driver, our overcrowded minivan hit all the hot spots in town – the new Hard Rock casino, Miami Beach and Florida Memorial College – the location of our first game.

Florida Memorial is a

Division 2, primarily African American School, and as we stepped onto the court to warm up before the game, the opposing team huddled up and watched us in disbelief. "You guys are gonna take those off to play aren't you?" one of them inquired, obviously referring to our skirts. When we explained that some of us actually play the game in skirts for religious reasons, they were astonished and could not get over it. The game turned into a tough and exciting contest, and our team put up a great fight – we were only down by one point at the half. But as the second half played out, the Lady Macs ran out of steam and went down by 25 points.

After the game, one of the players on the opposing team approached us and remarked, "I have to tell you gals that when we saw those skirts, we really didn't expect much of a game. But let me tell you girlfriend, we really underestimated your ability – you skirt gals can really play

ball!" With that said, we were definitely proud of the way we played and the impression we made. But unfortunately, we could not match it with their bigger, Division 2 team.

Needless to say, the skirt sensation did not end there. At our next game, against Palm Beach Atlantic (PBA), the skirts were definitely the topic of conversation that night. PBA is a Christian school, and they had never played against a Jewish school – let alone a Jewish school that plays in skirts! And so, in honor of this occasion, there were reporters from the local news station to cover the game. They interviewed a number of us, and not surprisingly, the hot topic of conversation was the skirts; they were completely intrigued by the whole idea.

After being followed by video cameras throughout the game, The Lady Macs were featured on the local news television station later that night. The emphasis of the story was, of



Lady Macs pose for group photo

course, on the skirts, and they showed a number of our skirt-wearing players in action. Unfortunately, the PBA team was too tall and strong for our team and we were defeated. Nevertheless, The Lady Macs left a strong impression on PBA and their fans, and we earned a great deal of respect – for both our reli-

gious beliefs and our ability on the court.

Overall, our trip to Florida was an awesome bonding experience and we returned to New York with a lot of enthusiasm and team spirit – and of course, great tans.

Stern Students Shortchanged



By Judy Alkoby

Yeshiva University boasts many recently updated facilities ranging from the new Le' Bistro Café to the construction in Schottenstein Cultural Center. Despite all the current renovation, an integral part of university life has been painfully overlooked. Many Stern students feel that the athletic department on the Beren Campus is sorely lacking. Unlike most universities, the Beren Campus has no full-sized basketball court, no swimming pool nor other various sporting necessities. The void in sports equipment and space frustrates many of the women who seek to be more involved in fitness but cannot afford the high membership fees of neighboring sports clubs. Students have complained about these limited facilities and have compromised their standards of fitness as a result.

The deficiency in the athletic department often proves inconvenient for many students, especially those involved in the school's athletic teams. All of the women's athletic teams are unable to host "home games" on

campus. They miss out on the opportunity to bring other teams to a facility for which they and their student body can be proud. The teams must travel, sometimes a great distance, to play against other schools. Sophomore Julie Ast, who participated in the tennis team, felt hassled by the time she invested traveling to other schools. "It was annoying to spend so much time traveling," remarked Ast. By the time I got back to the dorms it was 11 o'clock." In addition, certain physical education classes are held off campus. The swimming class commutes over forty-five minutes to a pool in New Jersey. Even many participants of the intramural sports groups feel constricted due to the limited space. Junior Aliza Cohen commented, "It's overwhelming to have so many girls playing on such a small court."

While installing tennis courts and a swimming pool might be unrealistic expectations, there are many more practical improvements which would greatly benefit the student body. Needless to say, some of the workout rooms are sub par. Upon entering the workout

room in Brookdale Residence Hall, students often find long lines for the few machines available. "I usually don't even bother going to the workout room because all the machines are constantly being used," explained sophomore Nikki Lipman. There are only two treadmills, four bikes and one stairmaster for all twenty floors of Brookdale residents. Currently, over half of the machines are out of order and have remained broken for several weeks. Many Stern students attend local gyms such as Synergy or Lucille Roberts to compensate for the insufficient gym equipment.

The limited athletic facilities are unfortunately discouraging students from seeking out the benefits of exercise. One may argue that it is unfair to criticize the athletic department, since the location of the Beren Campus in midtown Manhattan can prove to be problematic due to limited space. However, is it so unreasonable to ask for a few more functioning treadmills and more gym space? The Wilf campus has a brand new multi-million dollar gym, along with a pool and basketball court. It is a fallacy to think that the women of Yeshiva University are less interested in their physical health and well-being than the men. Stern Students anxiously await reformation in the athletics department and anticipate a more complete gym facility. Hopefully this article will help instigate a brighter and healthier future for Stern College.

COMMENCEMENT
2005



Thursday
May 26

5:00 PM
The Theater
Madison Square Garden

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"Writing about music is like dancing about architecture - it's a really stupid thing to want to do."

-Elvis Costello

Dancing About Architecture: "Sometimes You've Got to Rewind to Go Forward"

By Esther Lam

Though it is practically March as I am writing this and the confetti, party favors and 2004 plastic sunglasses are well on their way to the Staten Island garbage dump, it is time for everyone to take a glimpse back. The start of each year seems to not only provide a sense of excitement for what's to come, but with the Golden Globes, Emmys and Oscars, it serves as an occasion to celebrate what was.

This past year was filled with memorable music moments (*note: memorable does not mean you want to remember them*). From Ashlee Simpson's Saturday Night Live boogie after a lip syncing flop to the political power of song, illustrated by the Vote for Change tour with such music gods as Bruce Springsteen, R.E.M., Ed Vedder and Dave Matthews, 2004 was packed with music memories. However, the most notable contributions of 2004 were a slew of inventive, quality albums. The year brought some outstanding records from some outstanding artists, providing the music lover with pearly white smiles and fanciful daydreams for the future of music. It is, of course, impossible to present every impressive record in this limited amount of space. So, in no particular order, here are just a few of 2004's best showings. If you don't already know them, own them or listen to them multiple times a day, you may want to ask yourself, "Can I truly enter 2005 without having fully experienced 2004?" And without these records, you really have not.

So, without further ado, I present to you the First Annual Dancing About Architecture Awards for Best Albums:

Modest Mouse, "Good News for People Who Love Bad News."

Formed in 1993, Modest Mouse has reached the pinnacle of its signature Indie pop melodies on this latest achievement. Though the album's lyrical content explores themes of life and death through the raspy, and at times seemingly insane voice of lead singer Isaac Brock, the track list remains captivating. Many of you O.C. fans may recognize the band from an appearance a few months ago, and their song, "The View" will be featured on an upcoming release of the show's soundtrack. Modest Mouse is able to appeal to the masses with great tunes like "The View," "Once Chance," "The Good Times Are



Elbow, "Cast of Thousands"

At times haunting, at times dazzling, Elbow's second album masterfully weaves an extraordinarily wide range of elements into an already impressive rock sound. From the sublime "Fugitive Motel" and "Switching Off" to the rhythmic "Snooks

(Progress Report)" and "Buttons and Zips," the Brit band can be described as the tasty shake that results from blending the progressive Radiohead and the beloved Coldplay. Significantly more innovative than Coldplay, and slightly more toned down than Radiohead, Elbow has the best of both worlds. "Grace Under Pressure" is possibly the most impressive track on the record, instantly instilling a sense of vigorous hopefulness, a sentiment sure to be felt after hearing this gem.

Franz Ferdinand, "Franz Ferdinand"

We have an odd thing here. A phenomenon, if you will. "Take Me Out," Franz Ferdinand's hit single, can be heard on just about every radio station. The song is infectious, progressing from an appealing rock song to a full out funkified, agile and distinctive tune. The phenomenon continues with the fact that this description applies to the entire album. An original album that receives plenty of radio attention? Yes my friends. You call yourself a music fan? This album is a must. Enough said.

Rilo Kiley, "More Adventurous"

So you thought lead singer Jenny Lewis couldn't get any cooler. Well you could not have been more wrong. Rilo Kiley's latest album mixes pop rock fun and sultry folk music vocals to produce an enjoyable dosage of girl power. Lewis really belts it out on "Does He Love You?" and a sure-fire karaoke pick, "I Never," but manages to still serve up enjoyable pop hits with, "It's a Hit," "Portion for Foxes" and "Love and War (11/11/46)." The album's overall theme of destroyed love, vengeful ex-girlfriends and loss is most heartfelt on Lewis' country tracks like "More Adventurous" and "A Man/Me/Then Jim." "More Adventurous" is a grab bag full of a rockin' good time and intimate country ballads, making Lewis the queen of Indie.

Honorable Mentions: TV on the Radio, "Desperate Youth, Blood Thirsty Babes," Elliot Smith, "From a Basement On a Hill," Rogue Wave, "Out of the Shadow" and Interpol, "Antics"

Killing Me" and "Float On" while delving into subject matter that remains introspective and clever ("If God takes life, He's an Indian Giver").

The Arcade Fire, "Funeral"

Topping probably every "Top of 2004" list, The Arcade Fire brought pure Indie rock bliss to the world. The album, compliments of the husband-wife team, Win Butler and Regine Chassagne, has a quality of sincerity and openness that is hard to find in this day and age. The Arcade Fire makes the listener feel at one with their melodic creations. On a crowded subway, in a busy dorm room, no matter what the surroundings, "Funeral" makes it all melt away as its music seems to be speaking just to you. Few rock albums display such honesty, providing the rest of us with a listening experience nothing short of spiritual.

Badly Drawn Boy, "One Plus One Is One"

A cheesy title doesn't stop our favorite ski cap-wearing singer-songwriter Damon Gough from producing this excellent 4th album. You may remember him from such music as the "About A Boy" soundtrack, in its entirety. This is BDB's second album since the film and it displays, yet again, that our generation must treasure this true talent for the masterpieces he's created and continues to create. The album is interesting since Gough makes use of instruments often used solely for classical music. In Jethro Tull tradition, the flute provides many of the more catchy melodies, many times echoing the actual vocals. The entrancingly beautiful "This is that New Song," the upbeat "Four Leaf Clover," a boys' choir in "Year of the Rat" and "The Blossoms," a dialogue between the flute and Gough's piano, makes this album difficult to categorize into just one genre. "One Plus One Is One" has assorted pickings that keep listeners on their toes and remind them of Badly Drawn Boy's wide range of capabilities.

Book Review: "Cat's Eye" by Margaret Atwood A Look at the Influence of Our Past

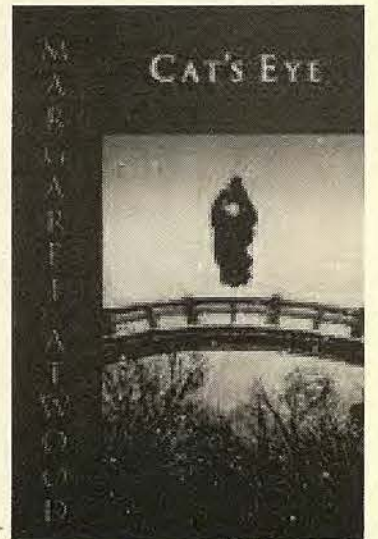
By Shifra Bronstein

Margaret Atwood has created a spellbinding fiction about a character named Elaine Risley, a controversial artist who returns to Toronto, where she spent her youth. Elaine has many strong memories of her childhood, some of them touching, others disturbing, and she must come to terms with all of them to realize the impact that each memory has made on her present life. Since becoming a famous artist, many of Elaine's memories were recreated as paintings, which relate her experiences.

Written in the post-modern style, the story jumps from Elaine's past experiences to the present, often even in the same paragraph, which causes the reader to see instantly the effects her memories have on her life. For example, the adult version of Elaine will often find that she is performing some strange act and so refers back to her childhood experiences for an explanation. Once the reader understands some specifics from her past, it is easier to identify with her sometimes bizarre behaviors and feelings of anxiety.

One of the greatest impacts on Elaine's childhood life are her friendships with Carol and Grace, but particularly with Cordelia. Cordelia clearly controls the other three girls using psychological torment. Elaine is forced to endure countless tests and trials, over which Cordelia presides, to please her "friends." For instance, Cordelia orders Grace to observe Elaine during her recitations in Sunday school and report back to her as to whether Elaine behaved with perfect decorum. Other times, Cordelia, Grace and Carol walk behind Elaine to make certain that she is walking with rigid posture. The consequences for "bad" behavior are especially traumatizing for Elaine. She must endure silent treatment, harsh criticism and exclamations of disapproval. One of the most harrowing experiences for Elaine, however, is abandonment. Cordelia once "punishes" Elaine by tossing Elaine's hat beneath a bridge which covers a frozen river. As Elaine retrieves her hat, the ice cracks, and Elaine nearly drowns in the icy waters, while her friends desert her.

As a result of these traumatic experiences, Elaine believes that she must prove herself to the world, and is terrified of the dissatisfaction of others. She continues to "see" Cordelia everywhere, always nervous that she is not meeting some high standard that Cordelia has imposed on her. Many strangers become Cordelia to Elaine, always



watching her, waiting for her to slip up, judging her. And always, even though Elaine is a fine individual, she harbors perpetual feelings of inadequacy in many areas of her life that include caring for her children and her husband. This novel explores the damage derogatory feedback has on a child - it marks her permanently for the remainder of her adult life.

This novel also investigates the role of the parent within the framework of child-rearing. Elaine's parents are not entirely indifferent to Elaine's problems, but they do not know how to handle the situation. Her father is more indifferent than her mother; he is not aware of Elaine as an individual with feelings, but rather perceives her as a childish girl without real emotional turmoil. Elaine's mother, on the other hand, does realize that Elaine is in pain, but tells Elaine that she does not know how to reconcile the situation, and so the situation simply perpetuates. Part of Atwood's message to her readers is that they should realize how much a child needs the support of both of his or her parents, that their involvement can mean the world to a child's sense of self and stability.

Throughout the novel, the reader asks: Does Elaine settle her feelings of anxiety and inadequacy? In the end, Elaine "meets" Cordelia once again in reality and certain words are spoken. The ending is certainly optimistic, but the reader will surely wonder if Elaine has truly conquered the demons of her past.

This novel is beautifully written, and I thoroughly enjoyed it, from start to finish. It is certainly frightening to apply these messages to our lives, to think that we have been so influenced by our past and childhood, but it's exactly what psychotherapists have been telling us since Freud. The style of the writing itself, the constant jolting from past to present, is a continuous reminder of how much Elaine's past, and indeed all of our pasts, affect Elaine and ourselves.

The Phantom of the Opera Dazzles Audiences

By Shifra Bronstein

It began with the vision of novelist Gaston Leroux upon his tour of the underground caverns of the Paris Opera House, which had been used as a dungeon during the Franco-Prussian War. The eerie surroundings, as well as Leroux's intrigue over the mysterious incident of the opera's chandelier counterweight falling onto an audience, inspired him to write his novel, "The Phantom of the Opera." Since its publishing, "The Phantom of the Opera" has been the subject of at least nine movies, the first of which was produced while Leroux was alive. In 1986, Andrew Lloyd Webber, the famous composer and playwright, brought the story to Britain in Her Majesty's Theatre, and later to Broadway in New York, reworking the movie as a popular musical. The current movie, "The Phantom of the Opera," is based on Webber's musical.

The new movie, which is also essentially loyal to the original book, is set in Paris, 1919. An old man in a wheelchair is purchasing an antiquated item at an auction inside of the Opera Populaire, which appears abandoned and neglected. The last item for bid is a refurbished chandelier, and the auctioneer reminds his audience of the incident of the phantom of the opera who was believed to be responsible for the chandelier tragically

falling on an audience during a performance. The old man, wide-eyed, and drawing a quick breath, watches as the chandelier is raised once again over the auctioneers' heads, on display. At this point, the background, which appears dull gray and white, begins to transform into rich and vibrant colors. The colors spill over the old and dingy theater seats, stage, draperies, and statues, and as the chandelier is raised higher and higher, the setting reverts back to 1870 when the theater still had its original splendor. What makes the opening scene magnificent is not only the magical transformation, but also how the main score of the show plays simultaneously – grand, beautiful, and glorious. There is an underlying tension to the music which prepares the audience for the drama that is in store.

The drama of the movie does not occur until Christine Daae, a young aspiring singer, amazes the audience of the opera with an outstanding performance. Christine has been receiving singing lessons from a strange source: each night when she retires to her dressing room, a man's voice instructs her on how to develop her singing skills. When the voice first came, shortly after her father's death, Christine was not surprised because her father, also gifted in music, promised to send her an angel of music to guide her in his place. The voice that Christine believes to be her "angel of

music" is actually the phantom of the opera, a man with a disfigured face who lives in the recesses of the opera house. The Phantom has lots of grand plans for Christine, and is infatuated with her voice. The phantom ultimately captures Daae during a performance, and Raoul, Christine's childhood sweetheart and present lover, must battle the phantom for Christine's hand.



Emmy Rossum and Gerard Butler

Raoul must also convince Christine that the Phantom is nothing more than a man. The Phantom, however, is intent on imprisoning Christine, and will use any means necessary, even murder, to obtain his prize.

I really enjoyed the actors' performances. Gerard Butler, who plays the phantom, depicts the role of a musical genius in a passionate way. Butler conveys the Phantom's torment over-having so much to contribute to society, yet society refuses to

accept him as a result of his physical deformities. It would have been easy to over-act this dramatic role, but I believe that Butler does an outstanding job of constructing the Phantom's character. There may have been a few too-many hand gestures while singing some of the main songs, but that's my only criticism for him.

I was slightly prejudiced in regard to Christine's role, because ever since I heard Sarah Brightman on the original soundtrack, I was convinced that no one could ever properly replace her. I was, however, quite impressed with Emmy Rossum, despite my earlier convictions. Her voice is superb, and, as director Schumacher remarks, she "could exude a genuine youthful innocence and longing" which was necessary for her role. As Webber himself comments, "It was absolutely crucial that we have people who could really sing because song drives the whole piece."

The Phantom is also a visual masterpiece. I could go on describing each scene, since each one is visually astounding in its own right. The details of the opera house, from its grand carved statues to its lights and theatrical colors are just some of the remarkable particulars. Another striking scene occurs when Christine is walking to her father's tomb at a cemetery, and the audience is able to see that many of the statues on the graves are huge and awe-inspiring.

Everything about the props and the background of each scene is a work of art.

The best part of the movie, in my humble opinion, is the music itself. Each song comes with its own description: humorous, stirring, passionate, to name a few. The dramatic songs are especially moving because the actors put so much emotion into them. For example, when Christine sings, "Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again," her ardent wish that her father was still alive is fraught with emotional tension. I was a little upset when the movie imitated the Broadway show in playing a pre-recording of the song while the performers went through the scene, but I imagine that Webber was attempting to simulate the show. Some of the best songs, "Angel of Music," "The Phantom of the Opera," and "Think of Me" are Broadway classics.

In sum, you can probably tell that overall I really enjoyed this movie, as I have also enjoyed reading the book and seeing it live on Broadway. In many ways, the movie is a combination of both the book and show, but I would of course recommend reading the book for its own worth. (I am an English Literature major after all). Critics, however, loved the movie and it has been nominated for three Golden Globe Awards as well as three Academy Awards. This is an awesome movie, and I would recommend it to anyone who enjoys a dramatic love story.



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"Finding Neverland" Never Quite Finds Its Magic

By Reena Mittelman

With all the negative publicity swirling around Michael Jackson's Neverland Valley Ranch these days, it's a relief to see a return to the legendary "Neverland" of J.M. Barrie's classic, "Peter Pan." "Finding Neverland," which premiered November 12, is a fictional take on Barrie's creation of the beloved children's book. Directed by Marc Forster ("Monster's Ball"), the movie is both inspired by true events and based on a play, "The Man Who Was Peter Pan." The original story, which began as a stage play and has evolved into motion pictures, cartoons, a musical and even a peanut butter brand, tells the story of a young boy who doesn't want to grow up, whose involvement with a group of children teaches them to discover themselves as well as believe in fantasy. Unfortunately, the movie adaptation can't seem to find itself even in Neverland. Despite a gorgeous set and a stellar cast, which includes Johnny Depp, Kate Winslet, Julie Christie, Dustin Hoffman and newcomer Freddie Highmore, the movie lacks the ethereal spark that made the original fairy tale so enchanting.

Set in London at the turn of the 19th century, the movie opens with successful Scottish author and playwright Barrie (Depp) watching his latest play flop on its opening night. His stiff and polite Edwardian audience is bored, and so is Barrie. His London producer Charles Frohman, played with comedic flair by Dustin Hoffman, is disappointed, and his confidence in Barrie's talent only reinforces Barrie's sense of failure. To top it all, Barrie's marriage is in trouble; his icy, ambitious and distant wife Mary (Radha Mitchell) can-

not identify with his childish mentality and resents his obsession with imaginary fantasies and foolish make-believe. To escape from the hardship in his life, Barrie retreats into an imaginary world, and takes to walking and writing in the park, trying in vain to come up with another successful production.

Then, a moment of inspiration comes during one of his daily walks in London's Kensington Gardens, when he meets the Llewelyn-Davies family: four charming boys, George, Jack, Peter (Highmore), and Michael, and their beautiful, recently widowed mother Sylvia (Winslet). Barrie immediately connects with the family, and becomes a surrogate uncle/father, teaching the whole family how to pretend and use their imaginations to find happiness amidst tragedy. At the same time, the family provides Barrie with an outlet for his creativity and emotions, and becomes the basis for his new play, "Peter Pan." Soon, the family's grief is replaced with fantastic creatures and magical adventures, as Barrie leads the boys in acting the roles of daring pirates, howling Indians, and cackling witches. These imaginary scenes are presented beautifully: reality and imagination fuse together as the people and objects in the real world slowly fade away to be replaced by their dream-like counterparts. The magic of these scenes makes it seem perfectly natural when boys bouncing on beds suddenly rise into the air and fly out the window, when a nagging grandmother (Christie) turns into a witch, or when an umbrella becomes the weapon of Captain Hook.

The acting is excellent. Highmore delivers a stirring performance as Peter, one of the Llewelyn-Davies boys whose grief for his father has forced him to grow up too fast. Initially

unimpressed by Barrie's exuberance, Peter soon falls under the spell of Barrie's magical play dates. His pinched expression and teary eyes give way to adorable dimpled smiles and even a talented attempt at writing his own play. Yet happiness comes at a price. Winslet, as Barrie's platonic "lady love," is outstanding in her portrayal of a harried widow stretched too tightly between the judgmental expectations of society, the innocent pleasure of imagination and the harsh realities of her own life. The boys' steely and dominating grandmother, who has no patience for games or make-believe, is determined to keep Barrie away from her family and her daughter, and rumors and gossip about Barrie's troubled marriage, a possible affair with the widow, and pedophilic behavior with the Llewelyn-Davies boys only convinces her that she is correct in her assumptions.

With characteristic skill, Depp plays the role of a troubled artistic genius trapped in a net of good intentions and emotional attachments. "Depp throws himself...totally into Barrie's giddy sense of innocent glee," writes reviewer Phil Villarreal of the Arizona Daily Star. As Barrie's wife's resentment grows, the grandmother's warnings seem to translate into actual costs for the family, and Sylvia's health takes a turn for the worse, Barrie begins to feel that his involvement with the family is only causing more problems than it solves. But when tragedy strikes again, Barrie and the family must learn what it really means to believe in the powers of imagination.

It is hard to criticize a refined and charming movie that examines the important themes of love, overcoming tragedy and believing in yourself, especially one with such remarkable acting,



gorgeous costumes and beautiful imaginary scenes. There is no doubt that the actors carry the movie, realistically portraying their characters and allowing the viewer to understand each character's individual pain. "Finding Neverland" has made its mark on the box-office as well, and received 7 Oscar nominations, including nominations for Best Actor in a Leading Role (Johnny Depp), Best Picture, Art Direction, Costume Design, Film Editing, and Writing (Adapted Screenplay). In fact, the movie won an Oscar on Feb. 27 for its haunting and moving music score.

Yet perhaps the problem with the movie is best summed up in the words of this critic: "It's the Oscar recipe done perfectly without any extra fuss, but it's missing that little extra, intangible something. Maybe a child's imagination can find it better" (Mike Ward, Richmond.com). The movie has all the right ingredients, and each scene by itself is a wonderful piece of acting and directing, but together, they don't add up to evoke the right reactions or the proper mood. There's something inherently disturbing about watching a traumatized family come under the influence of a grown man

who can't seem to strike the right balance between adult responsibilities and the child within. The story as a whole doesn't flow, and each scene moves to the next almost mechanically. When it all comes together, the movie can't seem to decide whether it's a story of misplaced love, growing up, or accepting reality. Perhaps it's all three, but the lines connecting them are just as blurry as Barrie's twisted psychological distortions of reality and fantasy.

For a movie whose trailer promises to leave you with "a story you'll never forget," "Finding Neverland" is disappointingly insubstantial. Watching the movie, you know that you are expected to cry, but I found it hard to feel emotional about a movie that lacks a cohesive dramatic flair. At the same time, though, it does a good job of evoking a magical sense of possibility, and appeals to adults and children alike. I'd recommend seeing this movie for its outstanding acting, and because, if nothing else, it encourages us to rediscover our inner sense of childish wonder and imagination.

Finding Neverland (101 minutes, at area theaters) is rated PG for adult themes and brief profanity.

Little Women: A Stern Production with a Female Focus

By Shifra Bronstein

It was a pleasant coincidence for me that this year's Stern production happened to be "Little Women." Since I am reading it for my literature class, Mothers and Daughters with Professor Laurel Hatvary, I knew I'd be familiar with the details of the story. Like many women, I read Alcott's "Little Women" at a young age and have not picked it up since. It was especially pleasing that the SCW play conformed to the book to the extent that the scenes in the play were acted out just as I had imagined them while reading.

The adaptations that this production chose to perform are interesting. There was not a single scenery change for the entire show, making the March family's living room the sole backdrop of the play. This exemplified one of Alcott's main themes - that of family and the bonds within it.

The characters gathered in the living room to read, sew, write and listen to each other. There is certainly a lot to hear: Beth laughing while delivering everyone's "posts," Marmee complimenting Meg on her wedding gown and Amy's humorous addition to a letter for Marmee.

Another notable change was that there was no character representation of any male roles. All of the men in the story, including the "boy next door," Laurie, and Meg's fiancé, Mr. Brooke, are all referred to in a verbal rather than physical manner. I believe that this variation correlates to a theme we were discussing with Hatvary, namely, that Alcott attempts to create a self-sufficient female community within the March home, and in general, focuses on the females and endeavors to cut out the males. For instance, Alcott sends the March father to war for most of the story. This production succeeded in portraying another one

of Alcott's aims by casting only the female roles in order to focus the audience's attentions on the strength of these figures without any male interference.

Each of the female figures certainly had her own strengths, talents and traits, which were excellently depicted by the cast and emphasized in their costumes. For instance, Natalie Adiel played Jo persuasively, proudly projecting her voice as Jo would, and wearing a lot of red, pronouncing her passionate character. Marni Rosen exemplified Meg with her soft, but heartfelt voice, always trying to teach her sisters about proper manners and morals. She wore a mellow yellow for much of the play, accentuating her gentle nature and cheerful attitude. Sharon Shmuel gave a wonderful performance as Amy, the sister who is sometimes considered vain. The audience was laughing as Amy's sisters gently chided her for the attentions she gave her

vanity as she placed about five or six colorful bows in her hair. Sharon commented that her role "brought out the five year old in her" and was "a lot of fun to play." Joanna Landau achieved the role of shy, quiet Beth in such an appealing way that much of the audience was in tears when Beth related that she was dying. (I mean this quite literally since my friends on either side of me asked for tissues.)

Marmee, the March mother, was played by Sarah Nemzer, who was quite suited to the role. In her matronly garb and with her compassionate nature, Marmee was the guiding force behind her girls' lives, following each experience with a moral lesson. Deanna Frazin, who played both Hannah the maid and uppity Aunt March, was one of the funniest characters. She frequently burst into the room, ready to lend a helping hand as Hannah, or wearing outlandish clothes and proposing that Meg

marry only for money, as scolding Aunt Hannah.

The very language of the play was engaging, and I noticed that a lot of the lines were taken word for word from the book. The words of the book are very simple and poetic, and since the play did not include the book's narrative, the play's dialogue flowed with elegance and style.

As a whole, the play offered a glimpse into an idealized world in which the characters strived to improve themselves and mature from life's experiences. Sarah Nemzer remarked that, "I liked all the hugging, it feels like Full House." Indeed, this is a play about emotions and the trials of real life in which everything that occurs is made a little easier by the sense of a strong familial love. So, as Jo would say, "Three Cheers" for "Little Women!"

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Butterflies Take Flight at NY Museum

By Tali Berger

The American Museum of Natural History is a wonderful place for those who are interested in anything from the Earth's environment to interplanetary study. Current exhibits include a film on "Jane Goodall's Wild Chimpanzees" to "SonicVision: How Do You See Your Music." The most popular exhibit, however, is the Butterfly Conservatory that offers visitors a close look at butterflies as well as the world that they inhabit.

One must be certain to buy an admission ticket (\$14) to the museum that includes the Butterfly Conservatory, because there is an additional charge for entrance to such special exhibitions. It is advisable to check your coat into the museum's coatroom since the temperature in the conservatory is 80 degrees and humid. Before actually entering the conservatory, the exhibit offers an informative introduction to butterflies on tall panels that includes topics such as "Metamorphosis," "Defense" and "Conservation." Opposite the panels is a literal glimpse into the conservatory: plexiglas panes allow visitors a preview of what they will experience once in the humid, tropical environment.

Before entering the greenhouse-like conservatory, visitors can marvel at the array of butterflies displayed in glass cases. Butterflies are classified into five families based on their anatomy, and each family exhibits distinctive colorings and markings. These individual colorings vary from magnificent iridescent blues and purples that are reminiscent of opals, to fiery orange and red patterns that ward off predators. Some are spotted, others are sleek and chic in what looks like black velvet, while some are camouflaged to blend with their natural environments.

There is a similar range in size, from those with a wingspan of 5/8 of an inch to those that span 12 inches.

The conservatory itself transports visitors to a tropical environment, including not only high humidity and temperatures, but also tropical plants and authentic birdcalls on a recording. Here I must dispense some unusual but invaluable advice: Because the many butterflies fly freely in the conservatory, being approached by a butterfly may be

terfly is getting older by looking at its wings, which become tattered, and its color, which fades with time. There is an old wives' tale which is actually true: If you touch a butterfly's wings, the color will come off on your fingertips - tiny scales that cover a butterfly's exoskeleton are what give the wings their distinctive color. Therefore, making contact with the scales causes them to fall off, and the color obviously comes off as well. The butterfly's flight is also affected, because removing a few scales will upset the butterfly's delicate equilibrium.

The butterflies flutter among the exotic ferns and flowers, feeding on the fruit-filled bowls and hanging petri-dish-like structures containing sugar water. During the day, the butterflies are active, flitting here and there and generally not staying in one place for more than a few moments. At night or when it is cloudy, however, they sleep hanging upside-down from leaves and twigs. In this position, they can be mistaken for flowers that will tremble in the slightest




startling. The knowledgeable docents notice most of the visitors freezing when confronted by a butterfly, and explain that there is no reason to be afraid. However, having experienced this, I can tell you that it is disconcerting to have so many butterflies flying around in a rather small space.


The docents will show visitors to a glass case that contains many chrysalises that the museum purchases from butterfly farms around the world. Each butterfly family has its own distinct chrysalis, some of which look like twigs, others that are mint-green and are adorned with a thin gold thread. When the butterflies emerge from the chrysalis after one to three months, the docents will remove them from the case and let them fly around the conservatory for their one-to-three week life spans. One can tell when a but-

breeze. The conservatory was informative and interesting, but I was expecting something larger and more imposing. I had always imagined butterflies as delicate, airy creatures, and they are, but in large numbers and in close proximity I found myself cringing when approached by one. I saw them more as "bugs" than as beautiful transient things. Note, however, that this may be related to my aversion to creepy-crawlies and bugs in general. They are fascinating, fragile and elegant, and the conservatory affords the opportunity to see them "up close and personal." For nature-lovers, this is a must-see, but for those of us who do not have a great appreciation for small critters, you may want to stay away.

Check out the live butterfly cam at: www.amnh.org.



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F A S H I O N



From left to right: Anthropologie brushstroke skirt \$88, GAP seamed denim skirt \$49.40, GAP safari shirt \$39.50, GAP asymmetrical knit skirt bermuda green \$39.50, Anthropologie giraffe circle skirt \$88

MODEST SHOPPING

By Sara Levit

The last issue of the Observer featured a broad range of *tzniut* (modest) clothing from high end designers; however, the cost of one such skirt would put the average student at Stern behind on two tuition payments. Many students were left wondering what options there are for those modest fashionistas that have a budget far below the haute couture range.

One option for consideration is shopping at a strictly *tzniut* clothing store. Such boutiques may be found at various locations in New York, including Brooklyn, Long Island and Monsey. Before you stigmatize and dismiss these possibilities, there are several advantages to consider. Chaya Lerman, head of sales at Top Fashion, a clothing boutique in Crown Heights, described how shopping at stores like hers can turn an often frustrating experience into an enjoyable one. "We've taken the time and effort eliminating all the

non-*tzniut* clothing, and we find the cream of the crop. From people from out of the state are amazed that it's so easy to find all this *tzniut* clothing under one roof," she said. Rebecca Barnett, a sophomore at Sy Syms School of Business, explained that even within the United States it's hard to find stores that do all the leg work for modest shoppers. "There are no all-*tzniut* clothing stores in Columbus, where I'm from," said Barnett. "When I come to New York I go to Brooklyn. I know that anything there will fit my standards."

"I get headaches when I shop at department stores," says Aliza Esral, a sophomore at Stern. Aliza finds herself inclined to shop at these "neighborhood stores" where "there's never as big an amount of clothing to sort through as there is at large department stores." She also notes that due to the intimate atmosphere of these stores one can often benefit from superior service. Others are not quite as appreciative of the extra attention provided and prefer the

wide open space that conventional stores typically offer.

For those of us who like to dress with a twang of originality, (and who doesn't like to be unique?) *tzniut* clothing stores may be the right place to shop. As opposed to department stores and chain stores where the clothing sold is mass produced, a lot of these boutiques carry relatively few copies of an item in each size. This ensures that the skirt you wear to that party won't be worn by five other women.

People might be surprised to find that the clothing sold at *tzniut* stores are a lot more hip than you would expect. "We go to fashion shows in many different locations all over the world," remarked Lerman of Top Fashion. "We search far and wide for the most fashionable, *tzniut* clothing."

With all these aspects to consider, shopping at conventional stores does have some advantages of its own. Because they are chain stores, conventional stores tend to be cheaper, and depending on the season, one

can find a considerable amount of *tzniut* clothing in department stores. Of course, the location of the store can be a considerable factor in terms of the modesty of the clothing they stock. "The Gap in Tennessee probably won't have the same clothes that the Gap in New York does," says Aliza. "They cater toward their clientele." In other words, the inventory at the Gap of New York is certain to reflect the substantial amount of Jews in the area.

The Gap has some great *tzniut* options for this season. One can find some wonderful essentials at Old Navy, while Zara is a good bet for suits and colorful skirts. H&M's website has an entire section dedicated to knee-length skirts. If you're willing to spend a little more money, Anthropologie is always a crowd pleaser. This season, they offer a variety of skirts reminiscent of those that you would find on Israeli *yeshuvim*.

When living in New York, finding clothes that fit within the confines of *halakha* doesn't have

to be a chore. Whether you prefer to shop at religiously owned stores or the Gap, there's something out there for everyone. "Kol kvoda bat melech penima (all the honor of a woman is within her). A woman is considered a *bat melech* (daughter of the king)," suggests Lerman. "She should dress beautifully which also means that she should dress within the guidelines of *tzniut*. We help girls fulfill their potential."

More boutiques for the modest shopper:

1. Top fashion- 384 Kingston Ave. Brooklyn, N.Y. 11213, Phone: (718)756-9620
2. Brenda's- 4518 18th Ave. Brooklyn, N.Y. 11230, Phone: (718)435-1073
3. Fashion Island- 1434 Coney Island Ave. Brooklyn, N.Y. 11230, Phone: (718)677-4300
4. Talking Fashion- 1381 Coney Island Ave. Brooklyn, N.Y. 11230, Phone: (718)253-9825

Boutiques Near Stern: Our Top Picks

By Julie Ast

Akiko

Located next to Duane Reade on 3rd Ave, Akiko features affordable and trendy clothes. They carry popular labels such as Michael Stars, Yanuk, Sweet Pea and Blue Cult in addition to European designers Rina Scimento, Jus D'oranges and Body Language.

The prices are fairly affordable: skirts range from \$80- \$100 dollars. Sales take place two times a year for up to four months at a time. Summer fashions are on sale from September through December and winter fashions are on sale from January through April. Right now the winter clothes are 50% off.

The store carries a wide range of accessories. The shoes are unimpressive, though a jewelry display at the back of the store has similar styles to Israeli jewelry designer, Michal Negrin. Knitted scarves which can be worn as hair bands or belts are pastel colored, perfect for

summer. Beaded bags are produced in unique ethnic styles. No two bags are the same, making them an original way to complement any evening dress.

Many colorful peasant skirts by designer Ashely, which cost \$110 dollars, line the wall. A standout light blue knee-length peasant skirt by Ashely only costs \$45 dollars. Michael Stars shirts are on a table that stands by the door. Evening dresses hang on the far wall toward the back of the store.

The eclectic mix of European designers and American ones make Akiko worth checking out. The store's close location is perfect for Stern students who don't have time to shop on other places besides 34th street.

Akiko NYC
510 3rd Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016
Tel- (212) 725-1013 Fax- (212) 725-7620
Email- DD55DD@Aol.com

Pookie and Sebastian

Pookie and Sebastian is a small store located on 541 Third Ave. It is too close to school for Stern students to pass up.

The store carries a wide range of trends, from crocheted shrugs to sequined clutches. A long pastel purple skirt with scattered sequins proves to be the best buy in the store for \$98 dollars.

In the back of the store 7 for all mankind and Citizens of Humanity jeans line the wall in classic styles. A line of simple tees, tanks and long-sleeved t-shirts come in many colors and for reasonable prices. They also carry satin short-

sleeved shirts more appropriate for going out at night.

The dressing rooms have a Victorian feel with velvet curtains and velvet cushioned seats. The store has several staff working at once, which can be claustrophobic but can be to the shopper's benefit when she needs a different size or a second opinion.

Check out Pookie and Sebastian for original but reasonably priced clothes for a boutique.

