

# The Yeshiva University OBSERVER

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## YU Reacts to Virginia Tech Tragedy

BY YAFFI SPODEK

Parents, teachers, and students around the world were shocked and horrified when they heard of the shooting massacre that occurred at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Virginia Tech) on Monday April 16, 2007. A regular morning on the peaceful college campus turned deadly when Seung-Hui Cho, a 23 year-old South Korean immigrant, opened fire in a dormitory and several classrooms, murdering 32 fellow students before taking his own life. Over two dozen other students were injured in the attack as well. This killing spree marked the nation's worst mass shooting in history and is the deadliest incidence of school violence since the Columbine High School massacre eight years ago in April 1999.

Students at college campuses all over the country were deeply affected and tried to offer comfort in any way they could. In a national outpouring of support, leaders and educators expressed their condolences to the Virginia

Tech community, and sent heartfelt messages filled with sympathy and hopeful blessings for the future. The impact of the tragedy resonated within the Yeshiva University (YU) community, as well as in the greater Jewish world as the heroic story of Professor Liviu Librescu emerged. The 76-year-old Israeli Holocaust survivor barricaded the door of his classroom with his body, sacrificing his own life on Yom

Hashoah to save his students by giving them time to escape through the windows and evade the gunman.

Several hours after the massacre, YU students were reas-

sured via an email from security services of the heightened safety measures that were being enforced on both the Wilf and Beren campuses. But, for some students, this announcement was

said Talia Miller (SCW '08). "The security email that they sent was really not informative."

The email sent to the YU community only referenced the attack, and did not actually

explain what had occurred. Students who were in classes all day and had not yet heard the news were confused as to the context of the email. "Before I got the

email, I wasn't even aware that anything had happened," admitted Sara Halperin (SCW '08).

"Afterwards, I went online to read the full story and that's when I found out the details of it. Only

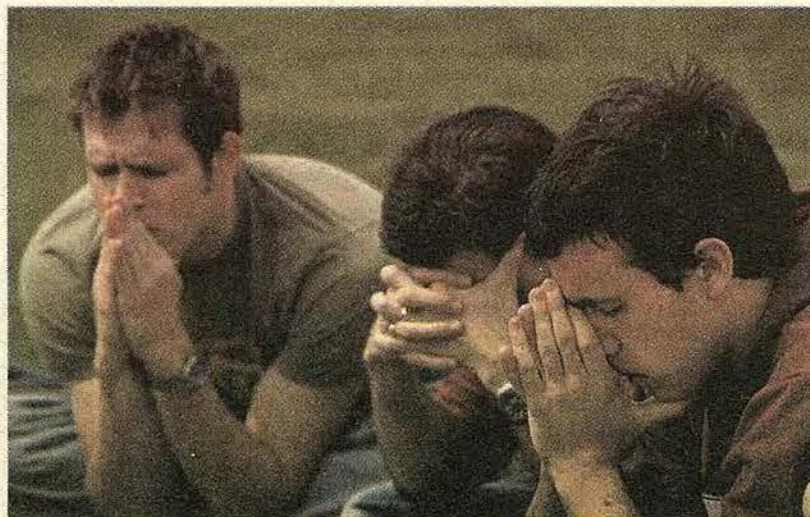
then was I able to make sense of the email from YU."

The men on the Wilf Campus gathered after *maariv* on Tuesday, the night following the attack, to say *tehillim* (psalms) on behalf of those who were injured. On Wednesday, just prior to the weekly *mincha minyan*, Stern led a group of women in reciting a chapter of *tehillim* on their behalf as well. After the *minyan*, YU President Richard Joel addressed a large group of students at the Town Hall Meeting in the Levy Lobby of 215 Lexington Avenue, which was filled to capacity.

He expressed his sympathy for the Virginia Tech community and specifically for Dr. Charles Steger, president of the Virginia Tech. "I am having sleepless nights," President Joel remarked, explaining how, as a university president, he is similarly responsible for thousands of people between all the students, faculty, and staff of YU.

"President Joel's remarks at the Town Hall Meeting were very appropriate and moving," said

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Virginia Tech students pray after one of their own murders 33 in the largest peacetime massacre in American history. Photo courtesy of nytimes.com.

not enough. "I think the school was kind of slow to react," observed Aviva Stern (SCW '07).

"The school should have sent an email detailing exactly what had happened at Virginia Tech,"

## Construction of New Beit Midrash Commences

BY ADINAH WIEDER

After almost three years of discussion and deliberation, construction on the new beit midrash in the 245 Lexington Avenue building on the Beren Campus has begun. The project was the brainchild of a number of students who approached several administrators in hopes of being the impetus to spur expansion of the beit midrash. Throughout the entire process, numerous meetings transpired between students on the board of the Beit Midrash Construction Committee, members of the Planning, Design, and Construction Department, Administrative Services

Department, faculty members, and administration.

The push for a larger beit midrash is reflective of the growing religious needs of the women on campus. Stern College for Women (SCW) is the only institution of its kind; it is the sole all women's undergraduate modern Orthodox institution. It affords students the opportunity to continue their Torah learning as well as a rigorous secular studies curriculum. Recently, there has been an even greater push for women to have the opportunity to pursue religious studies in a more advanced manner. Tiferet Unterman (SCW '07), co-chairwoman of the Beit Midrash

Construction Committee, expressed her satisfaction with the start of the construction. "I am overwhelmed by the fact that there will now be a respectable place where Yeshiva University women can gather as a religious community to pray, to learn, and to explore a closer connection with G-d," she said. "This is an incredible accomplishment of the dedicated students who passionately strove to advance religious learning and religious activities of the Stern College Community. The new beit midrash is a recognition that women have taken great strides in their religious

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## Sy Syms Celebrates Its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

BY SARA LEFKOVITZ

Following a protracted hiatus, the Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB) resumed its tradition of holding an annual dinner, hosting a gala celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary on April 26, 2007 at Gotham Hall in Midtown. The event, which featured presidential hopeful Mitt Romney as its keynote speaker, was prodigiously attended by students, faculty, alumni, and corporate guests.

The affair was an occasion to pay tribute to the school's original architects and patrons, honoring business leaders Sy and

Marcy Syms, founding board chair Hal H. Beretz, founding Dean Michael Schiff, and eight professors who served on SSSB's first faculty. Howard Jonas, founder and chairman of IDT Corporation, Jack Katz, managing partner of Grant Thornton, Daniel C. Kurtzer, former United States Ambassador to Israel and Egypt, and Bernard L. Madoff of Madoff Investment Securities, LLC, were selected as the dinner's honorary co-chairmen. Two alumni from the first graduating class, Roanna Bienstock Pascher and Jonathan Nierenberg, were recognized as well.

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# Letters to the Editor

I respectfully disagree with many of the ideas expressed in Aviva Stern's article, "Religious Disservice" (March 2007). Mrs. Stern suggests that in order to attract more students, SCW must be willing to "cater to everyone." Unfortunately, this is an impossible feat for any institution.

Every university has a unique mission and student body. Students are attracted to the institution that has a mission, values, and student body that they feel comfortable with. A college that attempts to cater to an overly broad segment of the general population risks compromising its unique mission and alienating its core constituencies. Mrs. Stern posits that SCW "needs to cater... to the Ramaz and Midreshet Lindenbaum students, and not only to the more right wing high schools and seminaries." She similarly implies that SCW is alienating current and potential students by not "making every possible attempt to meet all the religious needs of its diverse student body." (italics added). SCW should certainly strive to offer its diverse student body a wide variety of religious experiences. However, it cannot possibly meet all the religious needs of its diverse student body, both for sheer logistical reasons and because certain religious needs either impose on the needs of others or may alienate part of SCW's student body.

Mrs. Stern suggests a number of ways that SCW can cater to a wider variety of students, mostly with respect to providing girls the option of davening with a minyan. For instance, she suggests that there should be a daily mincha minyan, every day and not just one during club hour on Wednesdays. From a logistical perspective, having Mincha during club hour is logistically sound, because most students and faculty have that time slot open as classes generally do not take place during that time. The rest of the week poses a logistical problem, however, as finding a time slot where there will be 10 men who can make the minyan, and enough interested students who aren't at class at that time to attend to make the effort worthwhile, may not be possible.

Mrs. Stern also suggests that male faculty members who teach 9 am classes should come at 8:15 so that the students of SCW can have a minyan for Shacharis. In all fairness, a number of these male faculty members have other obligations at that hour, which may require them to daven with an earlier minyan or at another location. They may be rabbis of shuls and therefore have congregational duties. They may routinely daven at an earlier minyan and then be learning, giving a shiur, or finalizing their lecture notes following the minyan, or have a chavrusa. They may even have wives and children at home, and be needed at home during that time who need them to help

the children get ready for school, as it may be difficult for his wife to handle alone, and will surely create more Shalom Bayis (domestic harmony) if he is able to help at this hectic time in most homes (or maybe the mother must leave for work before the bus comes for the children, thereby requiring her husband to return home from minyan in time to see her off, and be home with the children until the bus arrives. Is Mrs. Stern suggesting that faculty members be expected to abandon and neglect communal, personal, or family obligations so that women can daven with a minyan, something which they are not obligated to do? We see from the story of the Sotah (woman who is accused of being unfaithful) that even Hashem is willing to have his name erased for the sake of Shalom Bayis. Is it reasonable for men to tell their wives that they can no longer be home to help her get the children ready for school because he needs to help make a minyan for some students at SCW who are not even required to daven with a minyan? If the SCW administration felt it necessary to bend over backwards (for the reasons just described) in order to provide students the opportunity to daven with a minyan, they may be placing undue importance on it. If a SCW student feels the religious "need" to daven with a minyan, she is capable of walking the 5 blocks (more or less) to daven at the 29th Street Shul (which has always been welcoming of SCW students); in fact, she'll even get *schar halichah* (the reward for exerting effort to go to daven)!

Similarly, while I am definitely not privy to any information as to the administration's decision-making that goes on at SCW with regard to anything-process, I would venture to guess that allowing a women's megillah reading on campus would also be making a strong statement be very controversial. Aside from the questionable halachic and hashkafic (philosophical) social acceptability of a women's megillah reading, a women's reading would not be socially acceptable to many of SCW's current and prospective students is controversial from the perspective of halacha and hashkafa. Having a reading on campus would be making a clear statement that the administration of SCW feels that it is permissible to have one tacit approval, which may estrange many potential students as well. Having a women's megillah reading to meet students' religious needs is counterproductive. If SCW wishes to attract as many students as possible, and make them feel comfortable religiously, as it will lead many current and prospective students to feel uncomfortable with the liberal and perhaps overly permissive religious atmosphere. endorsing activity that is highly controversial, simply because it allows more religious

expression for women, is not to be taken lightly. Furthermore, the administration's refusal to allow for a women's reading may reflect an acknowledgment of the controversy surrounding them rather than an opposition to the administration of SCW is not necessarily saying that women's megillah readings are not permissible, but rather may be acknowledging the controversy surrounding them, and feels that allowing one to take place on campus would be denying the controversy. A woman who would like to attend such a reading should have no problem finding one off-campus somewhere that is a short subway ride away, and the administration of SCW is not disallowing any student from doing so.

SCW does a great job in catering to a wide variety of students and their diverse needs. The Jewish Studies courses cater to students with a wide variety of interests, backgrounds, levels, and learning styles. SCW also offers a wide variety of majors catering to those who want to use this time to expand their intellectual horizons, as well as to those students who would like to prepare for a career. Students are also provided with the opportunity of a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, both on- and off-campus.

As somewhat of a side note, I find troubling Mrs. Stern's statement that SCW "needs to cater... to the Ramaz and Midreshet Lindenbaum students, and not only to the more right wing high schools and seminaries." While it may not have been her intention, her choice of words implies two notions which are false: (1) that these two institutions are the only ones that are not right-wing, and (2) that all alumni of these institutions have the same opinion about SCW that she is expressing and the same religious needs that she describes she has (despite the fact that she consistently refers the needs as being only hers). I attended Midreshet Lindenbaum, where, interestingly, it was alleged that in that year there were more students who planned to attend SCW than typical. While I cannot speak for everyone from my year who attended SCW, I can say that at least a fair amount of us attended SCW because it was our first choice. We represented a wide range of majors as well as hashkafot. Just like my peer group from Midreshet Lindenbaum who attended SCW, there are a wide range of hashkafot and religious needs even among the other institutions represented. Those who wished to daven with a minyan availed themselves of the 29th Street Shul, and those who desired outlets for religious expression not available on campus went elsewhere to satisfy these needs. Branding people's religious needs by where they went to high school or seminary only perpetu-

ates people's beliefs based on stereotypes. Personally, SCW provided me with the most positive religious experience of any institution and was more than satisfied with what was made available, not having attended a "right-wing" high school or seminary. I know I am not the only one, therefore disproving Mrs. Stern's allegation that SCW only caters to those who attended institutions that she considers to be right-wing.

In the 1990s, a small contingent of Orthodox students at Yale University sued Yale for requiring them to live on campus, where the dorms were co-ed and compromised their values as Orthodox Jews. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Yale, whose argument was that these students were aware of the housing requirements when they applied, implying that if they do not like the housing policies of Yale, they should not come to Yale. Similarly, if one does not think that SCW will meet her academic, religious, or social needs, there are plenty of other institutions that she can consider.

Which college to attend is an important decision for everyone. Jews of any denomination who take their religion seriously must also consider whether the institution will satisfy their religious needs. If a person chooses to attend a college that will not meet his or her religious needs, he or she must be prepared to find other outlets in order to meet them. For example, if a post-seminary student at a secular college requested that the college offer an intense gemara class, she would be ill-advised to attempt to fulfill this religious need by requesting that the college would probably not honor the request. No one is stopping this student, however, from having a chavrusa with another student or attending a shiur off-campus. Likewise if his/her schedule permits, and if the university is in or near a Jewish community where a shiur would be offered.

When planning the curriculum for a course, a professor is almost always forced to choose what materials must be included, often at the expense of other, often due to time constraints, and how relevant the material is to the goals of the course. A student who is interested in related areas not covered by the course are obviously encouraged to research and explore these areas independently. Similarly, if a student at SCW feels that her needs for religious expression are not being met, she can and should find ways to meet these needs. Baruch Hashem, SCW has the good fortune of being located in the heart of New York City, one of the largest Jewish communities in the United States, the city with the largest Jewish population, where a Jew can find almost any outlet for religious expression that he or she desires. There is no reason that SCW should not

be expected to feel obligated to go out of its way to provide these outlets at the expense of imposing on others and alienating students, nor is there any reason for a student to feel that her religious needs are not being met.

Sarah (Epstein) Barth  
Midreshet Lindenbaum, '00-'01  
SCW '04

## A Rejoinder

Mrs. Barth compares Stern to secular colleges in her suggestion that it is a student's responsibility to serve her own religious needs, even if it means going off campus to organizations and programs unaffiliated with her school. In response to this, I would like to point out the most important and most obvious difference between Yeshiva University and secular colleges: Yeshiva is not secular. What this means is that while other schools do not necessarily cater to students' religious needs (although many do a remarkably good job nonetheless), YU does. The beauty of YU is that students need not leave campus to live their religious lives. Sacrifices made at secular colleges need not be made at Yeshiva. Therefore, the demand that Stern caters to the religious needs of the student body is a most appropriate one, and it is these types of student requests which the administration should be eager to fulfill.

Stern needs to capitalize on the opportunity to represent the wide range of Torah u-Madda le-khathila and Modern Orthodox Judaism. Instead of worrying about alienation and controversy, let us use that energy to respectfully learn from one another and broaden our horizons within our community.

Aviva Stern  
SCW '07



BY ADINAH WIEDER  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Last week students on the Beren Campus celebrated the commencement of construction on the new beit midrash. For the last three years of my life, two of which were spent as editor-in-chief of The Observer and one as news editor, I have been immersed in words and as a result, the implication of words and their meaning have become increasingly significant to me. The word commencement is used when describing something that is at its inception and is also used when completing something. I thought about the appropriateness of the term commencement in relation to the beit midrash because this momentous occasion manifests both aspects of the essence of commencement.

With the commencement of construction on the beit midrash, we are ushering in a brand new era at Stern College for Women (SCW); one that strives to reach even greater religious heights, and provide women with every possible opportunity. The beit midrash will serve as a center where all women can come and feel welcome to build a community, together. It signifies the recognition that many more women are rightfully toiling in Torah and need a place in which they can do so. Furthermore, in the other sense of commencement, the building of the beit midrash implies a graduation from previous thought. It represents the acknowledgement of the needs of the women on campus and fulfilling these needs may require a departure from what was always considered the norm. It is symbolic of the embracement of differences, and the casting away of the opinion that women typically do X, and women characteristically get close to G-d in X manner. It is my hope that the students along with faculty work together to continue to go "*mchayil el chayil*" (to proceed/graduate from one strength to the strength) and provide additional opportunities for women to gather and connect to G-d in the halakhically appropriate manner.

It is for this reason that I chose to attend SCW, because of SCW's pride in being a small institution in which students are given the opportunity to approach faculty and administration with their concerns and ideas for enhancing academic and spiritual life on campus. As I sit and reflect on my four years on campus, I can confidently and happily say that there is nowhere else I would have rather been. It is not infrequent that get a call on my cell phone from one of the deans notifying me that the kink in my schedule is worked out or that a class that I, along with another small group of students, wanted that was not on the schedule will be offered because we expressed interest.

On thinking back to my very first Observer meeting, I recall reciting The Observer mission statement by heart because that is where it came from. I began my tenure here at The Observer because I had a vision for SCW and for the women here. There were needs that were not being met and endless resources

that were yet to be tapped into. I wanted to awaken within students the desire to actualize their potentials to the best of their abilities; to raise their voices and contribute to the harmony that is sung here at SCW, because another voice only makes the song sound stronger. I wanted our staff and writers to realize that the time is now and the place is SCW to fulfill dreams.

So we began. In every issue we wrote about the beit midrash. Members of the staff headed the Beit Midrash Construction Committee and Student Life Committee. We sat and discussed what needed to be changed. And then we went to work in order to transform our dreams into reality. During my second year we expanded our scope and spoke with numerous students to hear what their concerns were and what their hopes were. We spoke with students because we wanted to know what they thought was important and then worked tirelessly to produce a paper that reflected their hopes for SCW. I implore the women of SCW to always dream big dreams and to pursue them. Never stop or turn back until you have reached your destination because dreams do come true, and the commencement of the construction on the new beit midrash serves as a testimonial to that.

Thank you to my family, Mom, Ta, Rif, Gershy, Ilani, and Bubba for putting up with me falling asleep in my soup on Friday nights, my seldom assistance in the house, and for my incessant talk about the paper. Thank you for always believing in me.

Thank you to Deans Bacon, Orlian, Braun, Hait for your constant support and encouragement.

Thank you to my staff because without you there would be no paper.

Thank you to Liz and Esther for all your support throughout the year.

For the last two years I have had the distinct honor and pleasure to work alongside some of the finest visionaries I have ever met. Their sense of commitment to the Jewish people, SCW, and *tikun olam* knows no boundaries. Ilana, Shoshana, Tiffy, and Aviva- on behalf of the women of SCW and future generations of Jewish women, thank you.

Juju, thank you for never abandoning ship. Your sense of commitment to the paper and SCW was apparent in all the time that you spent in the office. Thank you for serenading us and always humoring my requests from the minutest line shifts to random article placements.

Alana, once again for the second year I was blessed with an amazing partner. Your honesty and commitment to your friends, family and the paper is just one of the many things that I admire and respect you for. Your clever lines, choreography, and opera-like voice kept me laughing the whole year long.



BY ALANA RUBENSTEIN  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

With graduation looming, I finally decided to do my exit project last week. I am an English Communications major with a concentration in Journalism, and was told that compiling my articles from The Observer into a portfolio would be sufficient for this project. So that's what I did. I came to the office and began reading my work, starting with "Stranded at a Crossroads," the first editorial I wrote as editor-in-chief of The Observer.

I couldn't help but feel a range of emotions as I read about how I was feeling last August. I was unsure of what my senior year would be like and of what I would be doing after graduation. I was confused, full of anxiety, and though I would never admit it then, I was extremely scared.

And then, I found myself laughing. So much has changed in the course of a year. I am not the same person I was last August, and I am not upset about that. I will not lie and say everything was peachy keen all the time, but I would not change anything about this past year. Though at times I wished I had graduated early and found myself counting the weeks until graduation, I have learned so much during my time at Stern College for Women (SCW), particularly as a senior due to being the editor-in-chief of The Observer.

I am a middle child and the characteristics attributed to middle children were not lost on me when I was growing up. I was quiet and often felt out of the loop. While I did not hesitate to let loose in front of those close to me, I was guarded and shy around people I did not know well. Basically, I was nothing like I am now. Sure, I am still a little quiet in public, but being editor-in-chief has forced me to be more outgoing, more assertive, and more decisive. I just recently spent Shabbat with a good friend of mine and smiled when she said, "you were so talkative this weekend." And my mother often tells me: "Alana, you've become so opinionated lately."

It is true, and I am not ashamed to say so. I gained a voice through this newspaper. Despite the stereotypes associated with being a student at SCW, this is truly an amazing place to be a student. I know I have criticized many aspects of our community during my time as editor-in-chief. I stand by my words. Yet, as I prepare to leave the Beren Campus and embark on the next stage of life, I cannot help but feel nostalgic and full of thanks and appreciation for the undergraduate experience I had. I do not think the voice I developed this year would have been as loud or as well received in any other institution for a number of reasons.

First, despite the growing numbers of applicants and students attending SCW, we go to a small college. While some may see this as a negative, it has enhanced my experience tremendously. I have had classes with less than five people in them. Many of my professors were able to name all their students by the end of the semester. And during my time here

many professors not only learned my name, but my personality and strengths as well. While some might find this frustrating since many teachers know when you are not in class or notice immediately when something is not handed in, the individual attention we get here is enviable. I had no problems accumulating letters of recommendation when I applied to graduate schools earlier this year. This was not due to any special skills or talents of mine, but by virtue of me being a student at SCW. It is because I had an opportunity you all have; I had an opportunity to take my favorite professors three or more times and develop close relationships with them. The faculty here cares about knowing their students and wants to help them, both in their academic and personal endeavors. I can recall times this year when I found myself sitting in a professor's office talking to her about life in a similar manner in which I talk to my friends, and I considered her advice because I respect and trust her. Take advantage of the professors here. They take their responsibilities as educators, both of academics and of life, very seriously.

Even rarer is the fact that the administration is the same way. In other universities, it is not common for a student to know who the dean of their university is, and it is even less common that the dean knows the names of students. Yet, I, at SCW, have personally spoken with every dean. Even more importantly, I have been heard by every dean. Again, this is not only because of my position as a student leader. They want students to approach them- they want to get to know you. As one of the deans told me just this week: this is what the school prides itself on; SCW is a place where the administration is a part of campus and student life. The administration wants student feedback and listens to student opinion. The course selection for the fall semester is proof of that. Jewish studies majors, science majors and English majors have asked for additional courses and received them. While the answer may not always come immediately, it will come. And though it may not always be the response you desired, you can be assured that your argument and requests were carefully considered before a final decision was made.

As a result, everyone on this campus, not just me, has a voice. SCW students are what make SCW what it is. Many of the positive changes that have occurred since I first arrived on campus were initiated and devised by students. There is a student life committee here that has unimaginable power. The cafeteria hours, the computer lab hours, the rollover printing paper policy, and many of the food choices in the cafeterias are a result of student requests. The beit midrash, a multi-million dollar endeavor, is being built as I sit here typing due to students like you, women who were dissatisfied about something and wanted to

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# OPINIONS

## Letter to the Editors

I would like to congratulate your staff writer Ms. Jackie Fast for her recent *Observer* article on Congregation Shearith Israel (The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue) of New York. Her enthusiasm and clarity of agenda were manifest both when she interviewed me and in the article. However, there are several statements attributed to me as quotations that in fact are Ms. Fast's paraphrases and abridgements of things we discussed over the phone. Consequently, it is worth clarifying two of the more significant resultant inaccuracies.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, Ms. Fast quotes me as saying: "The services are very formal, the way in which things were done in Spain. In parts of the Middle East, where other Sephardic communities settled, services lacked that same ceremonial aspect that existed in areas under Christian Europe." Western European ritual indeed is characterized by a stress on beauty and formality, and it also is a natural heir of the Spanish tradition. Additionally, there are many features that distinguish the Western European Sephardic ritual from the traditions of North African and Middle Eastern Jewish communities. However, I did not equate the formality of the ritual with how services were conducted throughout Spain; nor would I say that Middle Eastern/North African services lack ceremony or dignity. The amalgamated sentence in the article thus creates several false impressions.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph,

Ms. Fast quotes me as saying: "...Some of our congregants are Orthodox, as we are an Orthodox community, while some are more 'Sephardic' than 'Orthodox'..." Unfortunately, this mistaken paraphrase contrasts between "Sephardic" and "Orthodox"—of course many Sephardim are as observant as their observant Ashkenazic counterparts. In the interview, I described the wide diversity of level of halakhic observance among our congregants, ranging from those who are fully observant to people who are less so, who attend because of the remarkable history and beauty, our warm and embracing community, and many other reasons.

Many congregants also understand that even if their personal Jewish observance may fall short of 100%, Orthodoxy is the authentic expression of Jewish tradition. Therefore, they wish to affiliate with our Congregation. This outlook is a hallmark of the Sephardic world, which never splintered into so-called movements even when community members varied markedly in their personal religious commitments.

I thank you again for introducing our Congregation to the broader Yeshiva University community, and look forward to welcoming students who wish to attend on a Shabbat.

Hayyim Angel  
Rabbi, Congregation  
Shearith Israel of New York

## "Space is the Stature of G-d"

BY TIFFY UNTERMAN

I have always been enthralled with outer space. What happens in that infinite expanse? What purpose does all that space have? Both questions frequented my mind as I constantly imagined myself strapping into a small capsule and then shooting into that vast atmosphere by the rockets beneath me. Unfortunately, my ambitions of an astronaut career were eventually checked by eleventh grade physics. Although my expeditions to outer space seemed unlikely from that point forward, my fascination continued with the same question nagging at my thoughts; what was the point of all that space?

Just a few years later, I found myself in the New York City Architecture and Urban Design course, taught by Professor John Kriskiewicz, offered here at Stern College for Women (SCW). A highly stimulating and eye-opening experience (I highly recommend it), this course brought the very questions I had held about outer space to the fore. This was especially true during one particular day when the professor brought us into an entrance area of an office building. He pointed out that the people passing through the space were all rushing. Why, he asked, is it because the people here are busier than in other places?

After examining the room we had decided that this was not the case. Rather, it was the room that caused the people to rush. There were no benches,

no tables, no storefronts, and no food vendors. It was just an unadorned space that gave the people who passed through no reason to stop. Its sole purpose was to transition people from the place they left to the place they were going.

Although my fascination of space has always been intact, my appreciation and mastery of space was truly lacking as I entered SCW. All I could notice was the deficiency of space. The front lobby of the 245 Lexington building was overcrowded. There was no quiet space to work on the computers, and I was left with no other choice but to work in the larger Wilf Campus library. The cafeterias were always overfilled and the beit midrash was wholly insufficient. I deemed that the space of SCW did not adequately serve my academic and religious needs. I was frustrated by how limited I felt. My initial reaction: get me out of this space.

After complaining and criticizing a fair amount (some of it not so deserved, and some of it very much so) I was appointed as Chair of the Stern College Student Life Committee (SLC). I was told that if I was so upset about a situation, I must do something about it. It was now in my power to affect change on my surrounding space. At first I regarded the situation as irreparable; how could we better the college without more space? Where was the infinitude of deep dark outer space when you needed it?

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## Religious Life at SCW: Accomplishments and Looking Ahead

BY SHOSHANA FRUCHTER

5767 will never be 5766 and that is how it should be. Josh Vogel, president of Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY) 5767, and more importantly, a good friend of mine, taught me this lesson early on this year.

Letting that important lesson sink in, I realized that though Vogel and I are counterparts and often partners in running religious activities on campus and cultivating a stronger community in our university using Torah as our vehicle, our positions are extremely different. Torah Activities Council and SOY are extremely different and the Beren and Wilf campuses are hardly comparable religiously.

The Wilf Campus (Wilf)

is bursting with *minyanim* that sprout up naturally as men want to pray together at a time and in a place most convenient for them. It is bursting with *chaburot* given weekly by *mashgichim*, and a weekly *mussar schmooze*. The beit midrash is full every morning not because there are signs up and not because there are guest speakers. The structure of the men's college, combined with the halakhic possibilities of their religious community, constructs a very well-developed program for religious life on campus.

Imagine the lives of two Yeshiva University (YU) undergraduates, one a student on Wilf and one a student on the Beren Campus (Beren). Though they maybe siblings, good friends, or maybe even spouses, the experi-

ences they have at YU are extremely different from each other. The man might take the religious life described above for granted and the woman, an involved observant Jew, her religious life? Where is it active? When does her service of G-d bring her together with peers for communal activities?

Stern College for Women (SCW) students are fortunate to have their classes as a spring board for their religious community. Thanks to the students' push and the administration's receptiveness more classes are more able to be the building blocks for the religious community at SCW. Next semester, four five-credit courses are planned to meet daily during the first period. But, that is not enough. The

precedent had been for there to be a handful of communal religious events each year at SCW. The Chanukah, Rosh Chodesh Adar and the Purim *chagigot*, were the not just big hits of the year that complement an entire communal religious life framework on campus— they were the communal religious experience at SCW. When I entered as a sophomore *hatarat nedarim* was the sole halakhic communal activity that TAC ran on Beren.

The question of where and what this religious community of women at SCW is, where it stands and how it can thrive religiously, is an important one. I don't believe that the answer is for each student to muddle through their religious lives here

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# POINT-COUNTERPOINT

## The Point Behind Point-Counterpoint

BY SHOSHANA FRUCHTER  
AND  
ESTHER GENUTH

Just three years ago this column began as a forum for public debate on issues pertaining to Yeshiva University (YU), the Jewish community at large, and to the broader society. We hoped to present balanced perspectives on relevant topics that we thought would spark conversation and challenge conventional viewpoints. In doing so, we discovered this forum, in which we can present two equal and opposite sides of a debate, to be invaluable in understanding each issue as a whole. There is not one side to each issue—multiple factors come into every decision. We learned that one could gain a deeper understanding of the world through exploring and questioning, even if a conclusive answer is not reached. We thank our readers for participating in this open debate. Our proudest moments were not when you approached us saying you agreed with our column (though that was always welcome), but rather when you focused on the side of the page you strongly disagreed

with and further debated it with us. We believe that these very conversations are the very breeding ground for change in our community.

Whether or not we think that women should be able to assume leadership roles as synagogue presidents, iPods are society's greatest or worst accessory, Center for the Jewish Future programs should or should not be limited exclusively to YU students, Stern College for Women (SCW) students' college experience is dragged out or enhanced by staying on campus for a full three years, the dress code at SCW needs greater enforcement or is obsolete and should be abolished, a person is or is not ethically obligated to report instances of cheating, the *seforim* sale should be a joint effort between the Torah Activities Council and Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY) or remain a SOY program, our energies should be invested solely in the Jewish community or should be directed towards important global issues such as genocide in

Darfur awareness, an all women's *megillah* reading on the Beren Campus should be encouraged or disallowed, valedictorian status should be determined by grade point analysis versus student input via elections, the two undergraduate student newspapers should join together or remain two separate publications as the *The Observer* and *The Commentator* currently stand, YU's responsibility to the Jewish future does or does not include creating a forum for recent alumni to stay involved ensuring them an indispensable social circle, Dor Yesharim or standard genetic testing offers the most secure and the healthiest screening for Jewish genetic diseases, students' summer breaks are best spent looking back and giving back as camp counselors or looking ahead and investing in their futures with job internships, SCW's Beren Campus is ideally situated in Midtown Manhattan or its location is restricting the community's growth and success, a *shabbaton* like YUnite should be initi-

ated for the SCW student body or each Shabbat on campus fills that need, or if the Judaic Studies Department at SCW best serves the student body as is or should be revamped into a morning program, nixing the integrated curriculum and allowing for *beit midrash* study time is...interesting, but NOT the point. Which side you take is NOT the important thing. Rather, the beauty is in the ability to look at an issue from two sides, appreciate both standpoints and approach the discussion with an open mind.

Celebrating diversity, tolerance and pluralism, is essential to our growth as individuals and members of the YU community. Most notably, our community's growth is dependent upon these very kinds of respectful conversations that propel us forward and allow us to shape the future.

*Interested in continuing the Point CounterPoint debate? Email [sfruch1@yu.edu](mailto:sfruch1@yu.edu) or [genuth@yu.edu](mailto:genuth@yu.edu)*

## On a National Chemistry Meeting, Kiddush Hashem, and Some Confusing Seafood

BY Z. NILLY BRODT

Imagine a room 15 times the size of our beloved caf filled with excited and animated science undergrads from all over the world discussing biology, chemistry and physics. While many of you might describe a scene like that as a "Nerd Convention" (and, let's face it, in some ways you wouldn't be totally off base), I would use different words to sum up my experience at the 233<sup>rd</sup> ACS National Chemistry Meeting in Chicago: inspiring potential.

Every year, Stern College for Women (SCW) sends several students to present their research at the undergraduate poster session of the American Chemical Society's (ACS) bi-annual convention, which is always held in a different city. This year I was fortunate enough to attend, along with Nina Bursky-Tammam (SCW '08), Rachel Yamnik (SCW '08) Sarah Guigui (SCW '08), Dr. Marina Holz, professor in the biology department of SCW, and over 12,000 other scientists. Very briefly, Bursky-Tammam's research was on the use of metal nanoparticles in alternative fuel sources, Guigui studied the thermodynamics and stability base-

stacking in DNA, and Yamnik and I examined breast cancer strains which over-express the S6K1 protein.

The undergraduate schedule was jam packed with things to do from early Sunday morning until late Monday evening. The wide variety of events included a meeting with graduate school recruiters, a presentation on the ACS Outreach Programs, lectures by eminent scientists, a workshop entitled "Dress for Success," and even an undergraduate social. The highlight of everyone's trip, however, was definitely the Undergraduate Research Poster Session at which every student stands by a poster board describing his/her research while other students, professional scientists, and simply curious attendees browse the plethora of over 1000 different experiences and studies in cutting-edge science. I read posters about research ranging from nanotechnology, to making organic chemistry class more interesting, to identifying every lipstick's unique chemical composition for use in crime scene investigation. Yamnik enthusiastically reflects on having had the opportunity to join, "thousands upon thousands of scientists

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## Hedi Steinberg Library Schedule Spring 2007 Reading Period - Final Exams

		North Wing	2nd Floor
April 30	Mon	8:30-2:00 AM	8:45 AM-Midnight
May 1- 3	Tu-Th	8:30-2:00 AM	8:45 AM-Midnight
May 4	Fri	8:30-2:30 PM	8:45 AM-1:00 PM
May 5	Sat	10:30 PM-2:00 AM	CLOSED
May 6	Sun	11:00-2:00 AM	12:00 PM-Midnight
May 7-10	Mon-Th	8:30-2:00 AM	8:45 AM-Midnight
May 11	Fri	8:30-2:30 PM	8:45 AM-1:00 PM
May 12	Sat	10:30 PM-2:00 AM	CLOSED
May 13	Sun	11:00-2:00 AM	12:00 PM-Midnight
May 14-15	Mon-Tu	8:30-2:00 AM	8:45 AM-Midnight

### Summer Schedule Begins May 16

Mon-Th	9:00 AM-5:30 PM	
Fri	9:00 AM-1:00 PM	
Sun	CLOSED	
May 23-24	Wed-Th (Shavuos)	CLOSED
May 29	Mon (Memorial Day)	CLOSED

Good Luck On Your Finals!

# A Message From Our President



SHOSHANA FRUCHTER  
TAC PRESIDENT

Contact  
Shoshana  
at  
sfrfruch1@  
yu.edu

The Torah Activities Council (TAC) has five members. At the same time, TAC has more than 30 members. All at once TAC has just more than 1,000 members.

Some background: Stern College for Women (SCW) is a big place. Walking around as a new student I remember not only getting lost on my way back to the dorm from the school building on the first day of classes, but was also amazed at the tens of students I recognized from previous schooling and from summer camps. Still, these were tens among hundreds of SCW students, and that's overwhelming.

But SCW is also a small place. With 1,050 students living on campus, it's relatively a very small place. There are supposedly six degrees of separation between us and the villagers of the small town in the Himalayas, while at SCW there is at most one degree of separation between students. One degree! All students can be associated with each other through just one other student! That's remarkable for a college. Though sometimes going to a small college presents its challenges, like not having your major's courses offered exactly the semester you need them, it also presents amazing opportunity.

1,000 students to meet, talk, learn, and share with is such a blessing. The 1,000 of us are fortunate to spend so much time together in some of the most formative years of our lives. With many thanks to faculty, administrators and staff, from Yeshiva University (YU) President Richard Joel to Deans Braun and Hait in the Office of Student Affairs on the Beren Campus, including Rachel Shtern, Presidential Fellow Tiffany Khalil and Betty Kam, to Isaac of facili-

ties and Eddie and Joyce in the caf, it is the 1,000 of us students that make these formative years so special.

Five of the 1,000 of us were appointed to serve the community by being on the board of TAC. Shoshana Agatstein, Rebecca Barnett, Atara Lindenbaum and Erin Cooper have been fantastic leaders for our community. Through their hard work and constant efforts, including everything from weekly TAC board meetings, to planning major events, to hanging up flyers to publicize that event. Thank you Shoshana, Rebecca, Atara and Erin. TAC has five fabulous members.

As we know five students can't possibly bring the student body what it needs for student life to be as awesome as it has been. For this the community needs clubs and committees. Presidents and heads of these groups and their members are the ones who ultimately implement their ideas and bring people together in very real, sustainable and fun forums. The 30 plus women who were very involved this year in student activities and events are also our community leaders and, on behalf of the student body, I thank all of the club and committee members and heads for their dedication to communal life this year at SCW.

Even these 35 plus leaders would never be able to bring the community what it needs for even just satisfactory communal life. These leaders succeeded since they were consciously building off of the hard work from last year's TAC, under Hillary Lewin's leadership, and the year before, under Aliza Abram's leadership. It is our understanding our positions in the

context of religious life at SCW that allows us to succeed. Last year Atara and I organized a not-extremely successful learning program for twice a week in the evening. This year we learned from our history and together with the TAC board and a newly founded committee, regrouped, reevaluated, planned again and created Torah on Tuesdays with TAC, T-Cubed. What a success it has been. While it is difficult to learn what previous student governments have accomplished and even more difficult to find out about their floundering, it is essential to living a fully aware and appreciative life. If the community thinks that T-Cubed has been around for years, it is wonderfully flattering as a mark of how much students see it as a natural organic component of religious life on campus, but it is detrimental in that we need to always understand where we are coming from so that we know where we are going. This is true not just internal to TAC. Understanding where YU administrators and staff, and the other student councils is essential as well. Understanding Esther Flashner-Berko and Rebecca Rosenberg's hard work and how Adinah Wieder and Ilana Levin built off that to create record-best issues of The Observer and pushed the student's voice and agenda in a way that has enabled YU to develop in such a wonderful direction. Communal life, which applies to all of us, does not come in a vacuum. The long spectrum of religious life at SCW has benefited so much from these 35 women.

There are some people who are not in the set of 35 women going to be applauded at the final student council event celebrating our peers' great successes, the

Appreciation Dessert on Tuesday evening. As I mentioned in a different piece in this paper, this year was sometimes long, sometimes short, sometimes hard and mostly beautiful. All along the way my family and friend's support has been unbelievable. Try as I did to successfully balance communal and personal responsibilities, I know I often failed, and for that I apologize to you, special friends of mine. Former, current and future roommates, *chavrutot*, counterparts, and close friends, you have all been so helpful, supportive and indispensable. Thank you.

In the same vein, all at once, TAC has 1,000 student members. 1,000 students who support and love the 35 explicated above; who help out whenever, who were there for their friends as they dedicated their time and energy to the student body and who joined in the beautiful community that together as 1,000 we create and develop. We share an unbelievably unique and extraordinary community. I thank you for the privilege of serving you in this sacred work of Jewish communal leadership. And I thank you for participating in this flourishing community and am confident that you will find that the board you have elected to run TAC of 5768, Laura Shuman, Jaimie Fogel, Arielle Frankston-Morris, Reena Ribalt and Chanie Dinerman, will, with the help of 35 plus dedicated club and committee members, lead the next incredible group of 1,000 students to the next great step of religious communal life at SCW.

## Alana's Editorial

*continued from page 3*  
change it. Use your voice. If you are unhappy, do something about it. This is the time and this is the place. You only get to go to college once – take advantage of all the opportunities your college is offering you. Like I wrote in my first editorial, "I urge you all, especially those just beginning their college careers, to use the resources offered at SCW to your advantage and realize that the possibilities are endless."

Maybe not everything has changed! I am still stranded at a crossroads. While I know I am going to law school next year, I have still not made a final decision about where to go. I still find myself not sleeping, but now it is because I am busy with friends or with the newspaper, not because I am scared about what lies ahead. And I cried this week over the newspaper just like I did before my first issue in

August. Yet, then they were tears of frustration that came because I was feeling overwhelmed by the tremendous responsibility of being editor-in-chief of the newspaper. This morning they came out of sadness that the year is over and my time as editor-in-chief of The Observer is coming to an end. This has been a life changing experience, one I never thought I would have or learn so much from.

By virtue of being students at SCW all of you can achieve similar life changing experiences. Whatever your interests and passions, you will find an outlet for them here. Take advantage of it!

The first person I must thank for giving me this opportunity is my predecessor, Ilana Levin. Thank you for believing in me enough to let me follow you. You were a great example for me and a tough act to follow.

Thanks to my family for sup-

porting me through everything. Mommy and Daddy – your kind words and suggestions really helped. And Sara, I will never forget how you saw me thought my first newspaper induced breakdown. You're the greatest! Ditto to David and Andrew. And to Noah, our unofficial sports editor. All your efforts were greatly appreciated.

To Liz and Esther: It was great working with you both this year. Meetings and weekends at the Joel's would not have been the same without you. You both, along with Tiffy, do amazing things for the SCW community, and the Beren Campus will not be the same without the three of you next year. Special thanks to Shoshana for believing in The Observer as much as you do. You're kind words and positive attitude never went unappreciated. Your dedication to the women of SCW is inspiring.

I would also like to thank The Observer staff on a job well done. You did not have easy jobs, but always worked hard to produce a product we could all be proud of. A special congratulations to seniors Julie Ast and Talia Kaplan on graduating and to Sara Lefkovitz and Yaffi Spodek on being appointed editors-in-chief for the 2007-2008 academic year. I am confident you will both do a great job and serve the SCW community well.

To Alissa, Aliza, Eli, Naty and Timi, my roommates when I wasn't pulling all nighters in the office. Thank you for putting up with my complaining and stress, and for always checking up on me late at night. And to the rest of my friends, you know who you are and I thank you for everything.

And finally, to my 20C roommates!

Judy, late nights in the office

spent laughing, singing, eating and occasionally working would not have been the same without you. Thank you for devoting so much of your time to the newspaper. Maybe I'll see you around next year?

*Acharon, Acharon Chaviv, Ms. Adinah Wieder.* Whenever people ask me about working with you, I always answer the same way: I not only love Adinah, I respect her as well, which to me, is equally as important. I have learned so much from you about The Observer and life in general. The passion you have for Judaism, SCW, women, your friends, your family and everything else you care about and take part in is unbelievable to watch. Thank G-d you didn't leave me; it would not have been as tolerable, as interesting, as rewarding or as fun without you.

**Congratulations to Sara Lefkovitz and Yaffi Spodek, the  
2007-2008 Editors-in-Chief of The Observer!**

# And Our Future Presidents



RENA WIESEN  
INCOMING SCW PRESIDENT

Contact Rena at  
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I'm not sure how often we stop to think about how incredibly lucky we are to be part of the Stern College for Women (SCW) community. This is such an unbelievable place to be. The administration is great and always available to talk to students. The students are friendly and so diverse that every single person can find a group of women with whom she feels comfortable. We are located in the heart of Midtown Manhattan. It doesn't get much better than this! But it can be better, if you too make the SCW community the best that it can be.

At SCW, we really try to cre-

ate and foster a feeling of community. Next year, I would like to have frequent events on the Beren Campus just for the SCW community. Fun, local events, that, even in the middle of your crazy schedule, you will be able to and will want to make time for because they're just that fun and they're just for you. Join together with other students, whether you know them or not, and have a good time. I want you to view your university as more than just an institution that controls your transcript.

I would also really like to see you, the students, get involved in SCW activities. It is up to you to

make SCW the amazing community that it could be. Join clubs, help with events, stay in for Shabbatot, and get to know other students. There are so many incredible opportunities in SCW; take advantage of them. This is your school- make it amazing! And of course, if you have any ideas, always feel free to come speak to me, or e-mail me. I'd love to hear your ideas and help you get them started. It's up to you to make the most out of SCW- so do it!



LAURA SHUMAN  
INCOMING TAC PRESIDENT

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Hello Stern College for Women!

To me, Torah, *chesed* and community building are the overarching paradigms of what the Torah Activities Council (TAC) represents. The enrichment of religious life on campus is imperative on both personal levels, and for all of us as a whole. The years spent in college are not merely waiting hubs for our next endeavors, rather, they are a time to thrive, develop skills, and grow as individuals.

Believe it or not, we are a solid community of women. We are also at the front of an era where women are learning more than ever and women's roles in the community are at an all time high. Let's keep that bar high with source based learning, stimulating *shiuirim*, and facilitated *chavruta* learning.

This year, I attended my first ever "Brachos Party" hosted by the Beit Midrash Committee. It was as simple as making a

*bracha* and saying amen, but the presence of 50 diverse women in the Brookdale beit midrash led me to believe that people want enriching religious activities in an accessible way.

We have here a vibrant and diverse group of women, hailing from countries around the world and all kinds of backgrounds. The way I see it, let us focus on this diversity and embrace it.

*Mesillat Yesharim* speaks about the importance of setting goals, attaining them, and then maintaining them. In his work, the Ramchal writes that it is possible that the most challenging part of this sequence-of things is not necessarily attaining these goals, but maintaining them. Yizchak Avinu himself had the job of digging over the wells that Avraham had already dug. On that note, I think that it is important to recognize that the programs created this year were great and so successful. Part of our challenge and goal for next

year is to keep the energy going!

I want to thank Shoshana Fruchter and her entire board for all the hard work they put in this year. Not only did they institute great programs and events, but they created an infrastructure that will help to guarantee continuity.

There is so much potential here, so much talent, and so much want for growth. I see it in the halls, in the cafeteria, and hear it in the late night hallway conversations in the Brookdale Residence Hall.

It is going to be an exciting year full of Torah, *chesed*, and plain old fun activities. TAC is here for everyone, so do not hesitate to approach anyone on the board with ideas, suggestions, and critiques. Next year, with the help of everyone, will B'H be amazing. I am truly looking forward to seeing all of you at TAC activities.

Kol Tuv.



MICHELLE LAUFER  
INCOMING SSB PRESIDENT

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As the future Sy Syms School of Business Student Council (SSSBSC) President, I'd like to introduce myself to the Yeshiva University student body. I am currently in my sixth semester on campus, majoring in accounting and minoring in real estate. In the past, I have served on the freshman and sophomore class boards, was an orientation co-chair, was the photography editor of *The Observer*, and, most recently, held the position of vice president of SSSBSC.

Since arriving on the Beren Campus as a true freshman, I have spent innumerable hours on campus and have found the Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB) to be a very special place. Though SSSB may not have a large number of enrolled students when compared with other undergraduate programs, its presence and students' spirit is hard to

ignore. SSSB's size creates a unique environment where professors and faculty get to know students by name, and students cultivate relationships with many of their classmates.

This past year's SSSBSC has been extremely successful and I am very proud of all our team's accomplishments. It is going to be difficult to say goodbye to Esther Birnbaum and Rachel Katz—both vibrant and integral members of the SSSBSC team. Esther has been a fantastic role model as president and I hope to emulate her hard work and determination. I am anxiously awaiting the start of school; we will continue successful activities such as the SSSB dinner and club events. I am also excited to initiate new programs such as increased networking opportunities, strengthened alumni relations, improved faculty-student

communication, and heightened student body participation. I am excited to work with my awesome board and good friends, Bracha Kahn, Elana Friedenberg, and Penny Pazornick. We've already begun to plan many fun activities.

Ultimately it's up to YOU, the students of SSSB, to make this the best year yet. I urge you all to attend events and bring your friends along. College is a special time in our journey through life and it is important to take advantage of all the positive opportunities that SSSB has to offer.

Please do not hesitate to ask any questions, suggest your ideas, or recommend new programs that you'd like to see happen. Have a great vacation and I look forward to a productive and enjoyable year!

## NEWS

## Student Appeals Elicit SCW Policy Change Concerning Revel Credits

BY CHAYA CITRIN

The Observer has learned that a controversial academic policy affecting Stern College for Women (SCW) undergraduates studying at Yeshiva University (YU) graduate schools has recently been reversed. The 84-credit residency requirement, which formerly counted courses taken only at SCW as on-campus credits, was lately revised to include up to 12 credits of approved courses taken at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies (Revel) and the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration (Azrieli).

Students who graduate in January 2008 will be the first to be affected by the altered policy. According to current SCW rules, students may enroll in joint bachelors-masters programs at the aforementioned graduate schools as well as at the Wurzweiler

School of Social Work. Even without being enrolled in a joint program, they also have the option of taking classes at Revel or Azrieli and counting the resulting credits toward their undergraduate degrees. Formerly, these courses were not counted toward the 84-credit residency requirement, but were counted as off-campus credits.

After meeting with various administrators over the last year and a half, SCW Associate Dean Ethel Orlian explained that the new policy was arrived at by a "collective decision. There has been a reevaluation of the policy given the students' needs, the sense of community and the strong relationships with our graduate schools," she said. The SCW associate dean also noted that the university does not follow self-legislated policies simply because they are the status quo, but rather, that they evolve over time as administrators real-

ize which ones work best.

The 84-credit residency requirement is itself only a few years old. According to Dean Orlian, undergraduate women were formerly required to spend a minimum of four semesters on campus and complete 54 or 56 on-campus credits. The residency requirements were made more rigorous to better ensure that students take the opportunity to experience what SCW has to offer instead of merely filling prerequisites with Advanced Placement and Israel credits. "The 84 credit residency requirement was [designed] to reflect credits earned only at Stern College so that an SCW degree would truly represent the rich and strong education our college has to offer," elaborated Dean Orlian.

Dean Orlian further explained that although some women had been negatively impacted by the former policy,

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## Science and Jewish Studies Departments Expand with New Faculty

BY CHANIE DINERMAN

The Beren Campus has added a significant ensemble of new professors to its existing faculty, most notably to the departments of physics and chemistry, which together have hired three tenure-track teachers for the 2007-2008 academic year.

The move to hire additional faculty was driven by the college's desire to strengthen a range of academic departments and offer a wider variety of courses.

"We are most pleased with the addition of outstanding new faculty to our already impressive roster of professors," remarked Stern College for Women (SCW) Associate Dean Ethel Orlian. "These individuals bring new talents, fresh ideas and exciting fields of research to our college. The students have much to gain from their expertise, from their newly designed courses, and

from their commitments to involve students in their research projects."

The physics major, currently entering its third year, has drawn increasing interest at SCW. To accommodate the growing demand for more courses, the department decided to hire two new full-time professors, Dr. Emil Prodan from Princeton University and Dr. Lea Ferreira dos Santos from Dartmouth College.

Dr. Prodan will be teaching the introductory, algebra-based physics course, in addition to an advanced course in mathematical physics that will be offered to physics and mathematics majors and pre-engineering students. His expertise lies in the area of theoretical condensed matter physics. Additionally, Dr. Prodan completed one of his postdoctoral trainings with Nobel Prize Laureate W. Kohn at the

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## Responding to Student and Faculty Initiative, SCW Adds New Courses to Curriculum

BY NAVA BILLET

Stern College for Women (SCW) has added a total of 19 new courses to the current catalog in anticipation of fall registration, 15 of which are in secular disciplines and four of which have been added to the Jewish studies curriculum. Special efforts have also been made within the Jewish studies department itself to extend a greater number of existing classes to intermediate levels of study.

The upcoming fall semester will see a variety of both newly-devised courses and the revival of courses which have been in dormancy for years. SCW Associate Dean Ethel Orlian explained that since the college lays claim to "a very productive faculty and want[s] to keep students challenged," many of the new courses were initiated by professors. When staff members of a department see gaps in their field of study, they are anxious to fill them, she said. However, this time around, a sizeable portion of the classes were added to the curriculum in response to student feedback and requests.

A common theme among

many of the new course options is interdepartmental bridging. Dr. Carole Silver of the English department has developed a new honors course called "Travels and Travelers," which is geared towards "helping students integrate materials from various disciplines," she clarified. "I proposed this course because I felt, on the basis of student comment, that we needed literature courses that would interest science-oriented students." She hopes that this class, which has both historical and scientific discovery components, will appeal to students outside of the English department.

The physics department, while working to build interdepartmental bridges by offering a new course titled "Mathematical Physics," is also focusing on internal expansion. Dr. Anatoly Frenkel, chairman of the SCW physics department elaborated: "The main reason we are offering this course is the expansion of the Physics department, due to hiring of two new professors, Dr. Emil Prodan and Dr. Lea Santos, which allowed us to expand the course offerings. Dr. Prodan will develop and teach the new cross-

listed course." When describing the particulars of the course, Dr. Frenkel said that "many elements of these topics are already taught in the existing math courses and some are new; however, all of them are tied to physics applications, and serve as a bridge between the two sciences, math and physics."

Another inter-departmental offering is "Sociology of Special Needs Population and Special Education." This course is cross-listed between the departments of sociology and education. Dr. Gail Gumora, an academic advisor at SCW and a member of the education faculty, anticipates that the course will serve to "sensitize students to the challenges people with disabilities confront and the challenge of society to address their needs in an ethical and realistic manner."

The art department has designed several new courses to be offered on different media levels. One of these classes, "Age of Rembrandt," will be offered by Professor Jacob Wisse, professor of art history. The course includes classroom study of art from

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## Tuition Climbs for Second Year in a Row at Undergraduate Schools

BY HILLY KRIEGER

In keeping with the trend of escalating education costs, Yeshiva University (YU) is once again raising undergraduate tuition for the 2007-2008 academic year. The 6%, \$1,860 increase, though 4% less than last year's hike, brings the price tag for students living on campus to an unprecedented \$39,970 per year.

According to university administrators, the rise in tuition is necessary for improving academic standards and for supporting the numerous infrastructure changes occurring on the Beren and Wilf campuses.

Mr. Robert Friedman, director of student finance, attributed the increase to the expansion of various departments at both Stern College for Women (SCW) and Yeshiva College (YC). "We're currently hiring more faculty, cutting edge faculty, brighter faculty and this improvement requires funds," he said. Friedman also explained that most universities raise tuition on a yearly basis when they assess new expenses that must be integrated into the budget. "Each

year," he said, "we ask ourselves, what do we need monetarily to give students the quality education they deserve and for the upkeep of the school?"

When the board decides on the budget, they also consider endowments specifically dedicated to helping students finance their education. Friedman affirmed that increases in financial aid usually accompany increases in tuition. "When tuition increases, our scholarship budget increases as well," he remarked. "There is more scholarship money available and we will be increasing the scholarships awarded to students." Approximately 66% of undergraduates receive some amount of financial assistance and the Office of Student Aid plans to maintain its reputation for awarding generous scholarships to matriculating students.

SCW Dean Karen Bacon commented similarly on the university's expansion and commitment to financial aid. "We are moving forward ambitiously to increase the size of our faculty so that students have more academ-

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# Beren Campus Construction Proceeds with End in Sight

BY ESTHER BARUH

Construction efforts commencing last summer are still underway on the Beren Campus, as administrative officials articulated their hope that the lion's share of labor will be finished before the start of the fall semester.



Signs along Lexington Avenue help students find temporary 35th Street entrance.



Makeshift lobby provides relaxation space for students.

Among the ongoing projects is the redesign of the lobby of 245 Lexington Avenue. Since the end of spring, the glass façade that extends for the first two floors [of 245 Lex] will be including a glass exterior, revamped restrooms, lighting, new furniture, and the installation of an *aron kodesh*. "The beit midrash project is just beginning now," confirmed Rosengarten. "The aim is to get the bulk of it done over the summer, though we're not entirely sure that every piece will be done [by then]."



245 Lexington lobby under construction.

Though work on the front steps is nearing completion, students are still required to utilize the building's alternate entrance on 35th Street. By the time the undergraduate women return to campus in August, however, the front doors of 245 Lexington Avenue will be open for use. The building's exterior will be finished by "late spring," according to Jeffrey Rosengarten, university associate vice president for administrative services. "Between now and the

end of spring, the glass façade that extends for the first two floors [of 245 Lex] will be installed," he said. Other aspects of the renovated lobby include the front porch entranceway and the general-purpose room. Rosengarten cited July 1, 2007 as a definitive end date for these additions. Another prominent item on the agenda involves plans for an expanded beit midrash on the seventh floor of 245 Lexington Avenue. The new facility will be comprised of "lots of pieces,"

construction efforts scheduled over the summer will target 215 Lexington Avenue as well as the highly anticipated 35th Street dormitory. In an attempt to increase classroom space in the building, the administrative offices of the Sy Syms School of Business will be moved from the third floor to the 12th floor. The 35th street dormitory, which according to Rosengarten is "still

not built as a dorm," will also be undergoing renovations to prepare for the eventual accommodation of 135 women and a lounge area for visitors.



Seventh floor of 245 Lexington: home of the new beit midrash.



Soundproof walls separate new classroom space from lobby.

## Summer Honors Course Explores Art History of Florence

BY CHANI KOVACS

The S. Daniel Abraham Honors Program at Stern College for Women (SCW) will be reoffering a 10 day summer art history course in Florence, Italy entitled "Art and Experience in Medici Florence." During the survey of art and culture in 15th century Florence, students will explore the city's famous monuments, works, and architectural sites hailing from the age of the Italian Renaissance.



The Uffizi

was revived based on student interest and enthusiasm for hands-on experiences with art. The class's more interactive aspects include visits to the Uffizi, Academia Gallery, the Medici Palace, and the Piazza della Signoria, which will afford participants a greater understanding of how the politics, religion, and culture of Florence during the Renaissance influenced both the artwork and design of the city. "In addition to studying key works of art and monuments, this course adopts a broader focus by inviting students to study the formation and arrangement of Florence's neighborhoods and public squares, many of which

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## OSA Works to Build Stronger Beren Campus Community with Additional Staff

BY ESTHER BARUH

In an effort to further accommodate the spiritual needs of the students at Stern College for Women (SCW), the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) is currently developing two distinct positions aimed at enhancing the religious life on campus.

The OSA is in the process of hiring a couple that would be involved with coordinating the Shabbat programming on the Beren Campus and would assume the responsibilities of the Shabbat rabbi. It would be preferable for both the husband and wife to be Yeshiva University graduates, and they would need to live in the midtown area in close proximity to campus.

"We're looking for a mature, experienced couple who are invested in community building through Shabbos programming," said Associate Dean of Students Zelda Braun. "They would be coordinating and organizing Shabbat during the week as well

as on Shabbat, and their focus would be community building."

Since the numbers of students spending Shabbat on campus has dramatically increased over the past few years, administrators felt that it merited having the leadership of a couple devoted to enhancing the Shabbat community on campus. "The timing is right," affirmed Dean Braun. "The Shabbos program has grown so successfully over the past couple of years. Programmatically, it just makes good sense. It's a need that we need to meet."

Dean Braun acknowledged the couple's need to work in conjunction with various student organizations who schedule related *shabbatonim* on the Beren Campus. "They would work with the students to determine their role," she explained. The OSA has not yet made any appointments, but "want[s] everything to be in place by fall."

The OSA is also seeking to recruit women to serve as infor-

mal advisors for SCW students during the week as part of the "Yoetzet Program." The advisors would ideally be in their mid-twenties and would speak with undergraduates via group programming and individual meetings. While the OSA is not limiting its applicant pool to SCW alumnae, Dean Braun admitted that graduates of the college would more readily understand the experiences and concerns of the students. The position is open to both married and single women.

"Over quite some time, in our meeting with students, there's been an expressed desire to have women to talk to regarding spiritual issues, Jewish issues, religious issues," revealed Dean Braun. "Yoetzet means to help. Women are grappling in their pursuit of further defining who they are as women and where they're going and where they come from. There's been an expressed need and desire to have

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## Lecture Briefs

### Renowned Author Speaks to Jewish and Female Identity in Hillel Rogoff Lecture



Nessa Rapoport, the acclaimed Jewish author, addressed a full audience in Koch Auditorium on the Beren Campus on Wednesday, April 25, 2007. In delivering the annual Hillel Rogoff Lecture, Rapoport expanded upon the subject of her discussion, "Writing my Way

Home: An Observant-Jewish-Artist-Feminist-Married-Working-Mother Embraces her Hyphenated Identity."

Rapoport combined humor with earnest reflection as she eloquently detailed her journey from a small town in Canada to the busy streets of the Upper West Side. The author expressed her pride in embracing her Jewish upbringing and lifestyle and positively incorporating them into works like "Preparing for Sabbath." She felt she differed from writers such as Saul Bellow and Phillip Roth, who believed

they had to "leave their Jewishness to tell its story."

Fielding questions from students, Rapoport provided her own insights on topics including the relative reconcilability of feminism within observant Judaism and the rewards of working as an editor. Also speaking about matters more mundane, she described her marriage to the renowned Jewish artist Tobi Kahn, as well as the challenges of raising three children and paying the bills.

### Annual Brody Lecture Addresses Behavioral Economics



Yeshiva University (YU) hosted Dr. Richard H. Thaler, P. Gewinn Professor of Behavioral Science and Economics and the Director of the Center for Decision Research at the Graduate School of Business at the University of Chicago, to speak at the annual Alexander Brody Lecture in Economics on Wednesday, April 18, 2007. In his lecture, entitled "Libertarian Paternalism is not an Oxymoron," Dr. Thaler shared some of the innovative theories which have contributed to his prominence in the field of behavioral economics.

Dr. Thaler discussed his views on "libertarian paternalism," a term and subject he personally coined, as it relates to the role of government or private companies offering services to the public. According to the well-known behavioral economist, individuals cannot always be entrusted with the ability to make the most informed and effective decisions. As such, he explained, it is to the benefit of producers to help their consumers make better choices, while still preserving their freedom to do so. Dr. Thaler defended his argument by citing contemporary examples, ranging from the subway system in Paris to Social Security in the United States.

The lecture was held at the Sky Café in Belfer Hall and was attended by students, faculty, and administrative officials.

### Dr. Marcia Robbins-Wilf Scholar-in-Residence Program Hosts Lecture on Heroic Arab Efforts during Holocaust



On Wednesday April 25, at 8 p.m., the Dr. Marcia Robbins-Wilf Scholar-in-Residence Program sponsored an evening with Dr. Robert Satloff, executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, at the Schottenstein Cultural Center on the Beren Campus. The author of numerous books, including "Among the Righteous: Lost

Stories from the Holocaust's Long Reach into Arab Lands," Dr. Satloff addressed the students of Yeshiva University (YU) on the history of the Holocaust as it occurred in Arab North African nations.

Dr. Satloff discussed his extensive attempts at researching and uncovering the lives of Arabs who rescued Jews during World War II. He shared multiple testimonies gathered from Holocaust survivors from countries such as Algeria and Tunisia.

Another important guest who attended the event was Faiza Abdelwahhab, whose father Khaled Abdelwahhab saved a Tunisian Jewish family during

the Holocaust and was the first Arab to receive the honor of "Righteous Among the Nations" from the Yad VaShem Institute in Israel.

At the conclusion of the event, Abdelwahhab was presented with a monogram honoring her family for her father's efforts, bearing an inscription from the Talmud stating that when one saves a single life, it is tantamount to saving an entire world. The daughter of Odette Boukris, whose family was saved by Khaled Abdelwahhab, was also present.

### Medical Ethics Society Sponsors Speakers on Surrogate Motherhood



On April 25, the Yeshiva University (YU) Medical Ethics Society organized a lecture about surrogate motherhood. Founding Director of the Center for Ethics at YU, Doctor H. E. Ash addressed the audience first. He spoke about issues regarding the relationship between the surrogate mother and the child, about payment for surrogate services, and who should be allowed custody of the child.

There are opinions that are supportive of the notion that women should be encouraged to

gestate children for other people, be paid for it, and be expected to keep to agreements in regard to custody over the child that they gestate for. The opposing opinion stresses that the relationship that goes on between the pregnant woman and the child she gestates is very strong and perhaps women should not be paid to gestate a child.

The second speaker was Dean of the Center for the Jewish Future, Rabbi Kenneth Brander. Rabbi Brander addressed the issues of the status of a sperm donor and a surrogate mother. The halakhik definition of paternity was deemed to be the sperm donor. In accordance with that view, there are many opinions that agree to the idea of posthumous paternity.

Additionally, Rabbi Brander discussed the four different

approaches regarding the definition of maternity. Some of the less common views include the view that maintained that there was no mother and, on the other side of the spectrum, that the child had two mothers. The most normative approach was the approach that considered the woman who carries the child the real mother. The definition of a mother is defined as the woman who nurtures the fetus beginning 40 days from the time of conception. This is important because from here we can learn that the donor could be a non-Jew since the definition of maternity is the one who nurtures the child.

### Holocaust Survivor Addresses Stern College at Yom Hashoah Commemoration

On April 15, 2007 at 7:00 p.m., Mr. Joseph Garay addressed the student body of Stern College for Women and Yeshiva College on the Beren Campus. Mr. Garay is a Holocaust survivor from the Czech Republic and spoke as part of a larger program commemorating Yom Hashoah. He spoke about his experiences during the Holocaust and his first years in the United States after the war.

Aside from having a compelling story, which he recalled with vivid detail, Mr. Garay was asked to speak because he is a member of Congregation Aderet-El, better known to students as the 29<sup>th</sup> Street Shul. As Erin Cooper, secretary of the Torah Activities Council (TAC), explained when introducing the speaker, having Mr. Garay

address the students was another way to fuse the Aderet-El and SCW communities.

The program was coordinated by TAC and Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY). Mr. Garay spoke after opening remarks from Josh Vogel, president of SOY, and a brief introduction by Cooper. After the speech a short slide show was shown, followed by the lighting of six memorial candles and the recitation of a *kel molev*. Shoshana Fruchter, president of TAC, gave the concluding remarks.

Contributors:  
Michal Golan  
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## Class of 2007 Commencement to be Held at Radio City Music Hall

BY SHAYNA HOENIG

Yeshiva University (YU) will be celebrating the graduation of its 76<sup>th</sup> class at Radio City Music Hall on Thursday May 17, 2007 at 11 a.m. Yeshiva College (YC), Stern College for Women (SCW), the Sy Syms School of Business, and the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies will partake in the commencement. The other YU graduate schools will send a class representative to attend the ceremony as they convene separately for their own individual exercises at a variety of times and at other locations. A combined total of approximately 2,000 degrees and diplomas will be awarded by the university this commencement season.

Though this is the 20<sup>th</sup> time the university is holding its

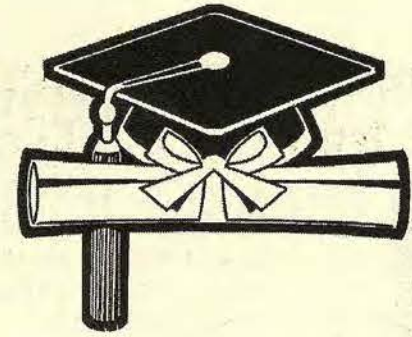


Tim Russert to speak at YU Commencement

undergraduate commencement exercises at an off campus location, this is the first time they are being held at Radio City Music Hall. For the past few years graduation was held at Madison Square Garden, but a scheduling conflict compelled the university to seek an alternative location for the commencement ceremony, one which could accommodate the approximately 600 graduates and their guests. Although Radio City Music Hall was deemed large enough to fulfill this need, Grant Grastorf, director of the events office at YU, assured that "we will be going back to Madison Square Garden next year and are trying to secure the facility for the next three years."

Tim Russert, senior vice president and Washington bureau

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## COMMENCEMENT 2007

THURSDAY, MAY 17 • 11AM  
RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL

IN ORDER TO RECEIVE YOUR TICKETS AND CAP AND GOWN WE WOULD APPRECIATE IF YOU WOULD FILE FOR GRADUATION WITH THE REGISTRAR ON YOUR CAMPUS. PLEASE FILE ASAP SO THAT YOU ARE ELIGIBLE TO ATTEND AND MARCH IN YOUR GRADUATION CEREMONY.

## The Year in Review: A Conversation with President Richard Joel

BY ALANA RUBENSTEIN AND  
ADINAH WIEDER

In preparing for the final issue, The Observer had the opportunity to sit down with Yeshiva University (YU) President Richard Joel and reflect upon the previous four years of the Joel administration while simultaneously peering ahead to what the President sees for the future of YU as a whole, and more specifically for Stern College for Women (SCW).

The conversation began with a discussion of the role of modern Orthodox Jewish women within the framework of a Torah U-Maddah society. President Joel described the purpose of YU as being to live the mantra of Torah U-Maddah *lichatchilah*; it should not be an alternative, but rather a chosen way of life. He maintained that the purpose of SCW is to prepare women to build families with husbands and to fulfill their responsibilities to society. When asked in particular about his opinion on the attempts to build a woman's Jewish community on the Beren Campus, he interpreted the question as coming from a monolithic point of view. President Joel said that he prefers SCW to be "a big tent of Torah with different flavors." Rather than have one community, he takes pride in the fact that SCW is a "community of communities," a place where many

different groups of women can feel comfortable.

President Joel expressed his plans of getting to know the community of the Beren Campus through an increased presence on the campus. Currently, President Joel seldom spends time on the Beren Campus due to the lack of administrative offices in Midtown. "I'm not here because RIETS [Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary] and YC [Yeshiva College] are here," he said, referring to Washington Heights. "I'm here because the YU business aspect is here." This will however, be changing. Though the deans have been on the twelfth floor of the 215 Lexington Avenue building since September, the office area is still under construction. President Joel is building an office there, complete with a board room so that business can take place on the Beren Campus as well. "I want to be part of the fabric of the campus," he said. "I would like to spend one day a week doing business there [Beren]."

The presence of the university president will make the Beren Campus an even greater destination than it has become. Naming the Beren Campus, "The Beren Campus," has made it "a destination, not a compass point," he said. SCW has improved in other ways as well, the most obvious being the physical changes. The creation of the Le Bistro cafeteria

in the 215 Lexington Avenue building, the moving of the academic advisement and deans' offices, and the increase in classes that take place in the building, have all contributed to making the 215 Lexington Avenue building a crucial part of the campus. The president described the renovation of the 245 Lexington Avenue lobby as one of the most important changes on campus. "It [renovation of the 245 Lexington Avenue lobby] makes a radical statement about being a college," President Joel said. These changes, in addition to the many faculty members that have been added to the SCW faculty in the past few years, partially explains why the number of applicants, students, and transfer students has been rising.

Though President Joel stressed the importance of academics many times, stating that academics are the most important component of YU, he said the Center for the Jewish Future (CJF) is also helping YU gain recognition in the outside world and is possibly attracting women to SCW through the myriad of opportunities they afford students. Through programs like Torah Tours, the CJF "encourages students to take ownership of their own destiny," he said.

But, despite all the strides that have been made at SCW and within YU as a whole, one major concern for students is tuition,

which seems to rise every year. However, President Joel countered this complaint with the increased faculty to student ratio, as well as all the construction that is taking place. As tuition increases it is important to keep in mind that so does scholarship availability. "We are working on creating a much more equitable situation," said President Joel. "Tuition was kept at a low point for years. Full tuition only covers between 60-70 percent of what it costs to educate a student. When you are asking people to give philanthropy, we need to make sure that parents are doing their share. The average student pays between 16-17 thousand dollars a semester." The President stressed that it is important to keep in mind that the cost of leading a Jewish life is expensive and the YU undergraduate tuition is the same, if not less, than that of other universities.

Tuition costs, along with philanthropy, are what enable President Joel to keep improving YU. No one in the Jewish community, particularly in the YU community, can mention philanthropy without mentioning Ronald P. Stanton, whose 100 million dollar donation put YU in the national spotlight. To date, this is the largest known contribution to Jewish education and Jewish life in America. The funds of the Stanton donation do not yet have an exact destination, but standards have already been set

to ensure that the emphasis is on Jewish education. The money will fund professors, and help the general agenda of YU proceed at an even faster rate than it is currently progressing. One of the most propitious aspects of the gift is that it changes the way outsiders view YU. President Joel said "it [the gift] makes it easier for me to talk about multi-million dollar donations." While all gifts are appreciated and necessary, 10-15 million dollars is no longer the ceiling for donations. The small gifts must be appreciated but we also must encourage larger ones. President Joel stressed that "the bar has been raised." People look at YU in a whole new light, which will impact how other institutions and the corporate world view YU. Students will now have more opportunities available to them upon graduation.

Even students graduating this year will benefit from the name recognition that the donation has bestowed upon YU. President Joel's advice to graduating students is to "savor life and don't give into survival, life is more than that. Ennoble, enable, and enlighten. University is the time to see possibilities, mourn tragedies, mark sad events, don't ever give up that your generation will move forward...think grand thoughts. Live Torah, learn Torah, and love Torah."

# FEATURES

## The Ins and Outs of Independent Housing

BY YAFFI SPODEK

About 160 students at Stern College for Women (SCW) currently live in the Windsor Court and Lexington Plaza buildings, also known as Independent Housing. These buildings are not officially SCW dormitories; SCW rents out several floors in each complex where juniors and seniors live in apartments that can house five to seven women.

Though these apartments are popular among students, they are also prohibitively expensive to maintain. According to Richard Joel, president of Yeshiva University (YU), it costs approximately \$1.5 million a year to lease the residences at Lexington Plaza. This exorbitant rental fee is one of the reasons which prompted YU to purchase a new dormitory building on 35th Street, with possible plans to eventually phase out Independent Housing altogether.

"The 35th Street building will not definitely be available for next year," said Rachel Kraut, director of Residence Life. "There is a very good chance that

we will have it, but it is not 100 percent."

Earlier in the semester, when students submitted their housing applications for next year, the 35th Street dorm was not among the options listed. "If it is open by then, we will place students there who requested Independent Housing," Kraut explained.

Similar to the Brookdale, Schottenstein, and 36th Street Residence Halls, the entire 35th Street building will be an SCW dorm that is completely under YU's supervision. But, like independent housing, this dorm will be made up of apartments which can house several women, and will also be furnished with a bathroom and kitchen.

Independent Housing mainly appeals to students because it is inherently unlike a dormitory. Students who live there appreciate the relative privacy and quieter atmosphere that it offers, as compared to the chaotic hallways of Brookdale, where four or five women room together and share a single bathroom. The Independent Housing apartments have multiple rooms, including a

living room, kitchen, and bathroom. The kitchen is a big attraction for many SCW students, particularly for people that live out of town and routinely stay in school for Shabbat. Since they have kitchen facilities, they are able to cook their own meals and don't have to rely on the meals from the campus cafeteria.

"It's depressing to be in a dorm building where everyone leaves for Shabbat," commented Danielle Siegal (SCW '08). Siegal is originally from Los Angeles, California and lives in Windsor Court. "Since I live out of New York, I stay in often and it's nice to be able to make Shabbat with my friends here."

Even people who do have the option of returning home on the weekends enjoy staying in their apartments for Shabbat. "When I lived in Brookdale, I barely ever stayed in," said Tara Schoenfeld (SSSB '08), from Woodmere, New York. "This year, since I live in Lexington Plaza, I've stayed in much more because I feel like there's a real Shabbat atmosphere."

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## YU Students Connect to Alumni Living in Israel

BY BATSHEVA LIPSCHITZ

With so many Yeshiva University (YU) students expressing interest in making aliyah—whether immediately or sometime in the future—why doesn't YU create an organization catering to the needs of these students? There are organizations such as Nefesh B'Nefesh (NBN) that are available to everyone, but why not establish something geared specifically toward YU undergraduates?

This year, Aharon Arazi (YC '08), co-president of the YU Israel Club (YUIC), pitched this innovative idea to YU President Richard M. Joel. With President Joel's approval, Arazi teamed up with Rachel Aviv (SCW '09), a member of YUIC, and together they created the YU Oleh Network.

The goal of the YU Oleh Network is to "provide YU students the unique connection that will facilitate their learning of what it takes to go to Israel," explained Arazi. "Not just for getting jobs, but the point of it is also to provide a mentor or advi-

sor to help answer questions that YU students are thinking about. To help students make more informed decisions about aliyah issues that are really important."

"It's sort of like Office of Career Services for Israel," Aviv commented, "but this also targets the relationship aspect." She explained that a YU Oleh mentor can give valuable advice specific to YU students because they themselves graduated YU just a few years ago. "They can guide [students] on a much more personal level, more than the other programs that are available."

They launched a trial run of the program last month, sending out one ystud email and one sstud email. About 25 students responded, a result that both Arazi and Aviv were excited about. "The responses we did get seem very genuine, serious, and eager," said Arazi. He explained that the students were asked to rate themselves on a scale from one to 10 on their interest in making aliyah and most of the numbers were high, ranging between eights and nines.

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## Congregation Edmund J. Safra: How the Upper East Side synagogue created a congregation and a community

BY JACKIE FAST

They were individuals without a community. Historically, the Upper East Side has been home to many Jews, yet, in the past, there has never been a Sephardic synagogue. The Sephardic community was always somewhat sizable, but fractured. Some families were affiliated with the Fifth Avenue Synagogue and other congregations on the East Side, but together, those families didn't comprise a large community by any means.

The idea to create a Sephardic Orthodox synagogue on the Upper East Side was the brainchild of Edmund J. Safra, a Lebanese-born banker renowned around the world for his philanthropic efforts. Safra and his wife owned a residence on the East Side and believed that there was a need for the Sephardic community to find a focal point

To meet that need, they bought two townhouses on 63rd Street off of 5th Avenue in the

1990s and made plans to convert them into a synagogue. Although Safra passed away in 1999, his widow, Lily, took charge of the project, and the synagogue named for her late husband opened its doors in early 2003. On the first week that Shabbat services were held, approximately 40 people showed up.

There was finally a synagogue, but a synagogue without a sizable congregation. Yet, that was only short-lived. The congregation has created a new dictionary-definition for the term "success" in its efforts to both fill the synagogue with a congregation and unite fractured individuals into a community. In only four short years, Congregation Edmund J. Safra has grown to include 450 member families, with an average of 150-200 congregants in attendance on Saturday mornings. Its voracious growth has not yet leveled off. Thanks to the synagogue, new Sephardic families are choosing to move to the neighborhood. Some Sephardic Jews from

Brooklyn have even begun migrating to the East Side.

The congregation has managed to reach its members by offering services and programs of every possible kind, from Shabbat morning toddler and youth programs, to a women's book-of-the-month club, to a nightly beit midrash program for men. There is also a Girls' Club which coordinates art projects, *chesed* projects, and learning activities. There are regular events for singles, both young and old. There's a *Talmud Torah* program for supplementary Torah and Sephardic education. The congregation also joins together not just for daily *tefilah* (prayer) services, but also for trips, including annual picnics in Central Park and excursions to Bear Mountain.

"The goal of the synagogue is to be the anchor of the community and to serve of congregants' needs like the best possible community center," explained Rabbi

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## New Strides In Effect to Bond Past and Current YU Students

BY RENA WIESEN

Despite its nebulous name, the Office of Institutional Advancement is indeed trying to advance our institution. Informally known as the alumni office, the team at the Office of Institutional Advancement is working hard to keep in contact with Yeshiva University (YU) alumni, both for their benefit as well as for the benefit of current undergraduates.

"We cultivate our students to be lifelong alumni," said Becky Schechter (SCW '06), a graduate of Stern College for Women (SCW), who works in the Office of Institutional Advancement. "We give to them, and they give to us. It should be a cyclical program; we provide events in exchange for them giving back to their alma mater."

To this end, the Office of Alumni Affairs assists in the effort to create events and forums for the alumni to reconnect. For example, on May 17, at the 2007 Commencement, the Yeshiva

College (YC) class of '57, and the YC and SCW classes of '82 will walk down the aisle at graduation and will later attend a special reunion arranged for them at the YU Museum that night. One month later, on June 11, the class of '67 will have its 40th reunion celebration.

The goal is to create ways for the alumni to communicate "more often and in a better way," reported Dave Weinberg of the Office of Alumni Affairs. "Our community is our family. We learn from each other, and grow as an institution. Our alumni help with that. We want to give them opportunities to get together...and have a connection with the university."

In addition to reunions and graduations, there are also several other ways through which alumni can stay in touch with YU and with each other. The Office of Institutional Advancement sends out newsletters, e-mails, and even has a website for its

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## Beyond 34th Street

BY JACKIE FAST

There are some places in New York that every Stern College for Women (SCW) student has visited, such as Times Square and the Central Branch of the New York Public Library. Most students have seen the major museums, like the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Guggenheim, and have shopped on Fifth Avenue and walked through Rockefeller Center. But New York is a huge city and there are thousands of famous, beautiful, local and free places that remain obscure.



Madison Square Park

The following is a list of eight sites which if you haven't yet visited, you cannot claim to have taken advantage of your college's Midtown location. Some of these sites have appeared in former columns, but they reappear now as the year's highlights.

Many of them are nearby, and most are free. So, as this semester draws to a close, take this copy of The Observer, get out, and enjoy the city!

1. Madison Square Park- Madison Square Park is just as close to SCW as Bryant Park, but, for some reason, Bryant Park has gained recognition while Madison Square Park has become more little known. The park contains a number of lawns that are open to the public, a children's playground, diverse public art, and numerous park benches. The buildings that surround the park, from the Flatiron Building to the

New York Life Insurance Building, are icons of the New York skyline.

Why it made the list: It's less than ten minutes from SCW, clean, grassy and safe.

Getting There: Walk down Madison Avenue until 25th Street. If you're in a lazy mood, take the 6 and get off at 23rd Street.

Time: 10 minutes.

2. Tudor City- Tudor City is a small cul-de-sac overlooking the United Nations (U.N.). It is unique in that it may be both the quietest and most beautiful street



Tudor City

Midtown. Located on 42nd Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues, it is just about the most unlikely

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## YU Reacts to Virginia Tech Tragedy

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Stern. Other students agreed. "He spoke very well about the tragedy and how it affects us and our community," commented Melissa Srolovits (SSSB '08). "His words were very sincere, and you could tell that he was very emotional and that he really meant everything he was saying. At one point during the speech, he even had tears in his eyes."

Yet, Stern also felt that the Stern College for Women community could have shown more unity and taken more initiative in terms of responding to the tragedy appropriately and offering support for the Virginia Tech students.

"I was also kind of sad that there wasn't an instinct as college students to come together and have some sort of solidarity," she said. "But, people are busy so I guess I kind of understand it."

Although it took a few days for things to be organized and put into effect, the students of YU did step up to the challenge and reached out to show support for the Virginia Tech community. On the Thursday following the attacks, a blog entitled "YU Students Stand with Virginia Tech" was created. Accessible through the YU website, the blog features a letter that YU President Joel sent to President Steger, in which he conveyed his feelings of grief.

"I admire your courage and forthrightness in coping with this horrific loss as you strive to comfort students, faculty, and most of all, the parents whose children have been torn from them in the prime of their lives," he wrote. "Our prayers are with you and it is my hope that you will find the strength and fortitude to heal the wounds of your community as you mourn this terrible, terrible tragedy."

Underneath the letter is the option of posting a message on the blog, an opportunity which tens of students have already taken advantage of thus far.

"Many students expressed the desire to respond to the

attack with condolences, comments of support and reflections," explained Shoshana Fruchter (SCW '07), president of the Torah Activities Council. "I encourage all students to sign it and express their feelings."

Whether the post was just a few words long, or a lengthier one of several paragraphs, they were all woven with the common threads of sympathy, condolences, and encouraging messages for the future.

"Words of wisdom at this time are hard to find, but it is often said that through tragedy we become stronger," wrote Josh Vogel (YC '08), president of Student Organization of Yeshiva. "It is my sincere hope that in the future we will be able to support the Virginia Tech community in times of good as well."

"In grief, we stand with you in support," said another poster, identified only as Sara. "The strength your community has displayed even in the depths of tragedy is resonating throughout the world and giving us hope."

Jeremy Stern (YC '07) felt the need to get further involved and to do something more to show the Virginia Tech community that students from across the country were truly thinking about them. He expressed these sentiments via a letter that he sent to Sue Kurtz, the director of the Virginia Tech Hillel.

"Initially, I felt that the response from other students was disappointingly slow and inadequate," Stern commented. "But, once I sent out the email [of the letter], a few student leaders contacted me and offered their assistance."

Virginia Tech boasts a small Jewish population; only about 1,400 of the 29,000 students on campus are Jewish, and none of them were killed in the attack. Yet, Stern felt that it was important to reach out to the Virginia

Tech community at large and, in particular, to the Jewish students there. "If there is anything we can do to help, please, please let us know," wrote Stern. "As fellow Jews, we are here to show our support and lend a hand in any way possible...we are eager to rally our efforts in assistance and solidarity."

With some inspiration from Rabbi Moshe Bellows of the Center for the Jewish Future, Stern also conceived of the idea to host a meeting or video teleconference between YU's student

reassure students that your well-being is our paramount concern" are the encouraging words that can be found there. "In addition to increased security on campus, Student Affairs staff members are available to talk to concerned students."

Zelda Braun, associate dean of students in the Office of Student Affairs (OSA), reiterated that message as well. "There's been a lot of outreach, encouraging students to use all offerings of help," she stressed. "What happened is on many people's minds and there has been a lot of conversation among students about it...We have to know that there is a healing process and I think it's wonderful that there are so many people available here for students to talk to."

In addition to the formal members of the counseling staff and the OSA, Dean Braun explained that the resident advisors in all the dorms on campus have been involved in reaching out to students on their floors. "People are just concerned and it's important to talk about it with peers and fellow students as well," she remarked.

Dean Braun also gave her assurance that "security is at its optimum" on campus. John Gorman, assistant chief of security on the Beren Campus, confirmed this as well. "We are definitely heightening our awareness and our security activities," he said. "I want to reassure students that we are out there and are trying to be more alert and have more interaction with the students."

"After a crisis like what happened at Virginia Tech, every university today is evaluating and critiquing their current security system," Gorman continued. "Everybody is constantly thinking about what if it happened here." He explained that the YU



Virginia Tech students mourn by erecting a memorial monument. Photo courtesy of nytimes.com

leaders and possibly the rest of the student body, and the students and staff of the Virginia Tech Hillel. "This would grant us the opportunity to express our solidarity and to hear firsthand about the mood on campus and the experiences of the students who have gone through this tragedy," Stern explained in the letter. "Our door is always open and we would truly appreciate the opportunity of forging a relationship, particularly at this time of crisis."

The YU administration also exerted additional efforts to assure students that they are always accessible as well. Dr. Chaim Nissel, director of YU's Counseling Center, sent an email to the undergraduate community reminding them that "there are support services available at Yeshiva University." A new link that connects students to the Counseling Center's website was added to the main YU website. "In light of the recent shootings at Virginia Tech University, Yeshiva University would like to

Security Department works closely with other local agencies, such as the New York Police Department.

Gorman emphasized that he wants students to feel comfortable enough to come and talk to him and his staff if they have a problem that needs to be dealt with. "We want to have an open-door policy...someone is always here and we are very accessible to students," he said. "It's a two-way street- students can always come to us and report anything out of the ordinary...It's always better to be safe than sorry...We might not be able to handle every problem that comes our way, but we can point you in the right direction to be able to solve it."

Gorman acknowledged that since the shooter at Virginia Tech was a student there, it made the situation much more difficult to prevent. "Checking IDs wouldn't have helped," he reflected. "We can keep outsiders out, but if it's one of your own, it's much harder to deal with it and take control of the situation."

Patrick Crudo, security operations coordinator, spoke practically about the differences between the Virginia Tech campus and the Beren Campus. "We're dealing with different issues here," Crudo explained. "Virginia Tech is a huge campus, with about 26,000 acres of land. If there was some kind of attack in our Midtown campus, G-d forbid, there would be a police response immediately, and it would probably be very fast because there are so many people in the area."

"Every organization is different in its needs, but when something happens in one place, everyone turns around and starts to evaluate their own situation and how they would react, and rightfully so," Crudo continued. "Things change every day, minute by minute, situation by situation," he stressed, "but even if you have to ruffle a few feathers, it's always better to err on the side of caution."

# THE ISRAEL SECTION

## Yeshiva University Mourns Israel's Fallen Then Celebrates Her Independence



Students of Yeshiva University joined together last week to celebrate Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut. In commemoration of those who have fallen fighting for the State of Israel Elam Kott, retired Israeli Defense Force colonel who fought in the First Lebanon War and is currently the vice president of the Israel Education Fund, spoke to a packed Lamport Auditorium on the Wilf Campus. The memorial ended with a moving video presentation, which served as a transition into the Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration. The festivities began with an address by Rav Meir Goldwicht, rosh yeshiva of Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, followed by a tefilah chaggigit and chaggiga with Chaim David.

### Yom Hazikaron: In Memory of Michael Levin and Amichai Merchavia

BY CHANA WIZNITZER

The room was packed. People sat on the floor or stood, leaning against ledges or desks. Energy vibrated through the room; a compassionate, emotional, raw sort of feeling. People looked to their friends, then up at the large white screen at the front of the room, apprehensive and excited.

The night of April 22, 2007 marked the beginning of Yom Hazikaron, the day of remembrance for all those lost in the fighting to create and keep the state of Israel. The Yeshiva University (YU) Israel Club, in conjunction with the Torah Activities Council (TAC) and the Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY), had arranged a moving program featuring the video presentation of "A Hero in Heaven," a documentary of the life of Michael Levin z"l, and a speech from YU student Phil Blumenfeld about his friend, Amichai Merchavia z"l.

The evening began when seven members of the audience who had served in the Israel Defense Force (IDF) were called up to light seven candles to commemorate the seven wars that Israel has fought. Packets had been given out with excerpts of prayers and psalms, and the evening was interspersed with their recitation.

After reciting "Keil Malei Rachamim," "God who is full of

mercy," the audience settled back in their seats and began to watch "A Hero in Heaven." It begins with a song and a statement: "They say there is a land/ A land drenched in sun/ Where is that land?/ What is that sun?"

The film gives insight into Levin, who he was, what he stood for, and the cause for which he lost his life.

Born to parents Mark and Harriet, twin brother of Dara and younger brother of Lisa, Levin felt a strong and abiding love of Israel. His mother attributes this to her parents, Holocaust survivors, who would tell him stories about their lives, thus increasing Levin's strong desire to have a homeland. After visiting Israel on several occasions, Levin made up his mind that he wanted to live there, put his papers in order and made aliyah.

Levin was determined to serve in the IDF, something he had dreamed of doing since he was child. He was so determined, in fact, that when he felt his papers were taking too long in coming, he went to the admissions building and demanded to be admitted. The guards stated that he could not enter the building without papers. "But I don't have papers; I've come to get them!" Levin protested. Still, the guards refused to admit him. Levin then decided to be more creative. He walked to the back of the building, looking upward toward the many barred win-

dows. But one window on the second floor, he soon realized, was open. He pushed a garbage dumpster against the building, climbed on top of it, climbed up the bars to the second-floor window, tumbled inside only to find that he was in the men's room, brushed himself off, found the appropriate office, entered and sat down.

"Papers," the man in the office requested, and Levin explained that he didn't have any. The man answered, "You can't get through the front door of this building if you don't have any papers," and Levin rejoined, "What makes you think I came through the front door?"

Needless to say, Levin's impressive measures gained him admittance to the army. Once there, he formed a very close relationship with his commander, whom he called "Hamefaked Gilad."

Gilad recalls the very first day, when Levin introduced himself with his characteristic smile. "He called me Hamefaked, Hamefaked Gilad," he relayed, "and he asked why he was here—everyone else here was eighteen, and he was twenty-one! So I did my thing as commander and told him this is how it is; then I turned my back and started laughing."

But he also recalls Levin as passionate about the state of Israel, someone with a fire in his

### Religious Zionism Today?

BY TALIA KAPLAN

What do you get when you cross Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, a Yeshiva University (YU) *musmach* and the current leader of Ohr Torah Stone institutions, with Mort Klein, president of the Zionist Organization? On April 16, 2007, thanks to the YU Israel Club, Noah Cheses and Josh Weinberg, you got a panel on religious Zionism entitled "Directions for Religious Zionism in America and Israel."

The nearly one hundred students in attendance listened as Rabbi Riskin began the event by answering a question regarding the difference between a religious Zionist in the year 2007 living in America versus one living in Israel. He explained that in America a person is a yearning religious Zionist while in Israel, a religious Zionist is a "compound noun" since, as Riskin said in the name of Rav Yosef Dov Soleveitchik, a person cannot be religious without being a Zionist and cannot be a Zionist without being religious. Klein disagreed with this point saying that he was

born into a deeply religious family that was in no way Zionist. In his eyes there is no difference between a religious Zionist in America and one living in Israel.

Another big issue on everybody's mind was that of giving away land for peace. This was extremely relevant given the centrality of the religious Zionist camp in the protest of giving away Gush Katif. Riskin replied that there have been no positive results from the disengagement;

the only result has been the falling of kaytushas in Sderot and the murdering of innocent Jews. Klein, supporting Riskin's statement, added that another effect of the disengagement has been the rise of a Hamas led government. Klein recalled a question that he had

posed to former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Klein asked Prime Minister Sharon what would be the great accomplishment of the disengagement. He replied that the world would get off his back. For him, disengaging was a response to world



Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, leader of Ohr Torah Stone Institutions

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## What Happened to the Passion?

BY MICHAEL RIBALT

So, it's your first semester in Yeshiva University (YU) and you are confused. On one hand, you're glad to be here because you've at last reached the beginning of your college career- you are one step closer to your life-long career. On the other hand, however, you are upset. You had a wonderful year (or years) in Israel and you wish you were still there. You say to yourself, "of course I will be back in Israel, and I will definitely have it as one of my top priorities." Yet, if you were to speak to a random senior that had this feeling their first semester in YU, you'll find that most of the passion has dissipated and the strong rope that once bound him to the Land has turned into a mere thread. Though this is not the worst thing in the world and a very common feeling, one must ask: what happened to that passion? Is it honest to say that it is *not* a top priority anymore? Where did that feeling go? What must I do as a student in Stern College for Women/Yeshiva College to retain that passion?

One can argue, that the main reason Israel is not on most people's minds is because they are simply not there anymore. By being in Israel for the year, one is

connecting to the Land via a physical bond, or as Rav Kook would say, a "*Tvi'ut Ayin*." This concept is quite perceptive in that it culls within it the act of seeing something and thereby making it a personal reality. Experiencing a place with *Tvi'ut Ayin* has more impact than if one were to merely think about that place; in our case, it invests one with a deep connection to the Land of Israel. Living in America, this *Tvi'ut Ayin* is nonexistent and Israel is relegated to the memory. Furthermore, college is an experience in its own right and requires the proper concentration, similar to that which we had in Israel. College is very similar to our year in Israel in that we are living on our own and are independent. The new experiences which we face every day are demanding and can cause one to not pay attention to the deep connection we feel for Israel.

So, what is our solution? One simple way is to have your friendly travel agent book you a flight during the summer and winter vacations. This is effective because, at least for that short time, it rids you of the distractions of college life and engages your *Tvi'ut Ayin* once again.

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## A Message From Our Israel Club President

BY RACHEL GOLDSTEIN

My journey as Israel Club President began exactly a year ago. As I marched down the aisle at the opening of the Yom Hazikaron and Yom Haatzmaut *tekes* (ceremony) last year holding our sacred Israeli flag, I remember thinking that I would have a part in organizing this annual event the following year. I was nervous to enter into the world of planning, organizing, and public speaking, a world which I hardly knew anything about. However, my passion for Israel and wanting to make a difference on our campus pushed me to take this position.

I don't think there are words to describe how fortunate I am that I had the opportunity to be Israel Club President this past academic year. To work with amazing board members, student leaders, and faculty and to plan events, to learn organization and communication skills that I would have never had the opportunity to learn otherwise was incredible. It definitely wasn't always easy but, in the end, I know all the time and energy put into everything we did throughout the year was worthwhile.

Over the year, the Israel Club brought a mixture of events to

campus. The first type of event was based on personal accounts of peoples' experiences either living or being in Israel, including our opening event in which two Yeshiva University students spoke about their experiences in the Lebanon War last summer, when the family of kidnapped soldier Ehud Goldwasser spoke to a crowd of over 400 students, Sderot Mayor Eli Mayol speaking about the unfortunate situation in his city, and the recent Yom Hazikaron *tekes* in a packed Levy Lobby.

The second type of event focused on Israeli society and cultural programming, such as our annual aliyah fair, the two-part Israel Symposium, Shulchan Ivrit, and the Israel book club.

The last focus was politically oriented events, such as former Israeli Defense Force Chief of Staff Moshe Yaalon, Foreign Press Coordinator for the Prime Minister's Office David Baker, our Israel Table, and the recent Iran Teach-In. The goal of these events was to raise student awareness about what is going on around Israel and in Israeli society, as well as to feel a connection to the land and people. We hope you were able to get as much from the programming as possible.

I am going to leave off with a few recognitions and shout outs. First, I want to say that none of the events we ran this year would have happened without my co-president Aharon Arazi and our board members. I have never seen as much passion and dedication as I have seen from everyone in the Israel Club this year. I am forever grateful for all the time and energy everyone put in. Secondly, Shoshana Fruchter (SCW '07), president of the Torah Activities Council, and Josh Vogel (YC '07), president of Student Organization of Yeshiva, have helped us endlessly throughout the year and it was through their leadership and guidance that we were able to grow and learn how to make our events better. I also want to thank all of you who came to our events and supported everything we did throughout the year. The events were meaningful due to the enthusiasm and support of the student body. Lastly, I want to congratulate incoming Israel Club President Rachel Flaschner, and board members Victoria Stone, Rachel Aviv, and Shani Mintz. Good luck next year!!

## Israeli Society Split Over Religious Ideals

BY JENN SHULDINER

Israel is a country that must deal with corruption at the highest levels of government, road accidents, pollution, the constant fear of terrorist attacks, and the threat of annihilation from Iran. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that there is not much energy left to deal with anything else. What is being ignored is the fact that the cultural divide that exists between the ultra-Orthodox and the secular communities is only growing. Emerging in Israeli society are two separate societies with little, if any, communication. How can this gap be bridged?

Perhaps one should apply the same approach used in conflict resolution. The main goal in this discipline is the transition from zero-sum into a positive-sum. Both groups must believe that although they have different interests that are in conflict with each other, there are still major goals and objectives that can only be achieved with cooperation. There are common dangers to be avoided and mutual benefits that can be gained. Yet, the reality remains that the people of Israel are becoming further polarized

and radicalized. The animosity that exists between the two groups has erased any sense of having a common fate or being part of the same people and state. Below are three different approaches to resolve this conflict.

The first approach is "People-to-people." The problem is defined by the almost complete ignorance each community has of each other. The secular put all religious people into one homogenous group. The ultra-Orthodox see the secular community as a people without roots or values, where drug addiction and juvenile delinquency is rampant. The assumption that all secular Jews fall into this category destroys any interest the ultra-Orthodox may have had in understanding or having contact with secular Israelis.

To overcome this problem many different dialogues have been initiated. Many of them have been in Bar-Ilan; the faculty and students have been very active in this effort since they themselves are pretty evenly divided between religious and secular affiliation.

However, these dialogues

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## What's New In Israel

### Jewish Demographic Problem Not as Bleak as Once Believed

Though many reports have stipulated that the Jewish population, when compared with the amount of Arabs in the country, will decrease in Israel, taking away the Jewish majority there, this is not so. A study done by the American Israel Demographic Research Group showed that by the year 2025 there will be a demographic boost in the number of Jews living in the Land of Israel.

### Preparations Made in Case of War with Syria

Hundreds of tanks and thousands of soldiers, backed by helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles, practiced drills that would be needed in case of war with Syria. In light of the Second Lebanon War, such a war seems likely.

### Olmert Called on to Resign

After findings came out from a state comptroller inciting Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert with criminal activity, several members Knesset have called on Olmert to resign.

### Israel's War Against the Desert

At the "Forests to Combat Desertification" conference, Israeli researchers presented different methods that can be implemented to stop desertification throughout the world.

### Not Playing Tennis in Israel

In order for Israel's Fed Cup Team to advance to the World Group of the competition, it must play in Austria on July 14-15. Team members were looking forward to playing in Israel on its home turf.

## Sy Syms Dinner a Success

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Aside from its celebratory function, the anniversary dinner served as an extensive networking opportunity for both current undergraduates and alumni. Outside corporate recruiters and executives were invited as part of the school's attempt to broaden its contact base and repute within the larger business world. Dr. Joel A. Hochman, interim dean of SSSB, noted that although the executives present were predominantly representatives of companies that customarily recruit at Yeshiva University, there were many new faces among the crowd, largely due to the efforts of board members with additional corporate ties. "Exposing [corporate executives] to this kind of event will make students more attractive to them," he said.

Dean Hochman lauded the fundraising prowess of Esther Birnbaum (SSSB '07) and Oliver Rosenberg (SSSB '07), presidents of the Sy Syms School of Business Student Council (SSSB-SC), who raised over \$50,000 in order to sponsor the event. The two students initiated the drive to reinstate the dinner and oversaw all of the logistics pertaining to its coordination.

"My role along with the SSSB-SC originally began with planning this dinner and raising money," said Birnbaum. "We raised a significant amount of money in order to subsidize the cost of the dinner for students. We were also involved in the planning with other departments."

Such departments include the

university's Office of Institutional Advancement, which offered to contribute additional resources after deciding to run the event on a larger scale. The hope was that the prestige and incoming donations concomitant with the gala would be enough to revive the more modest annual SSSB dinner that had



Republican Presidential hopeful Mitt Romney

been held in the past. For the last few years, the event had been cancelled due to insufficient student council funds.

"I think it's a great thing that we're having this event," remarked Dean Hochman. "[We can] get back on track for additional dinners in the future."

Awards were presented during a ceremony at the start of the evening and were followed by presentations by the dinner's honorees and members of the SSSB administration. For many however, the event's appeal was claimed by former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, who met with students before addressing

the audience.

Mr. Romney devoted most of his talk to foreign affairs, articulating his proposals for greater military spending and tighter economic sanctions on Iran. "We can and must lead the world," he said. However, the former governor's remarks in support of Israel received the most rapturous applause and earned him a standing ovation at the conclusion of his address.

The sanguine mood of the evening bespoke an undercurrent of optimism regarding the future course of SSSB. A year after the destabilizing mass exodus of SSSB faculty, the school has steadied itself along a promising course, with multiple items on its agenda. Currently in the process of obtaining accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, SSSB is also seeking to acquire more classrooms to accommodate the growing number of matriculating students.

"There are more and more students coming and more and more demand for courses," explained Dean Hochman. "It's a good kind of problem to have."

According to Birnbaum, the primary purpose of the anniversary dinner was to provide a venue for undergraduates to celebrate SSSB and the plethora of opportunities it has afforded them. "The school is making strides to offer students better classes and teachers," she said. "There is a lot of opportunity for student growth both in the classroom and out of it if they take advantage of it."

## New Beit Midrash Begun

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studies and that it is worthy of emphasis."

In the middle of April, Caryn Koster, the assistant project manager of the Planning and Design Committee along with architect Michael Wyetzner of Michielli & Wyetzner Architects, were invited by Unterman and Torah Activities Council (TAC) President, Shoshana Fruchter to come and observe the beit midrash. Unterman and Fruchter felt that it was important for those involved in the plans to get a feel for what life is like in the beit midrash. Koster commented that the meetings between Robert Sal Peter, the project manager, Jeff Rosengarten, associate vice president for administrative services, and students have always been helpful and informative. She found that the involvement of the SCW students to be very positive, helpful, and extremely informative.

They wanted Wyetzner and Koster to gain a greater understanding of the daily occurrences in the beit midrash; to see the students preparing for *shiu*, *chevru*

and individual learning, and the constant influx of students coming to pray. Koster said that the meeting provided the architect and herself "with insight into the situation and what goes on there." She said the visit inspired her and gave her a greater understanding as to the function of the beit midrash; it was helpful because it enabled members of the planning committee to fully comprehend the needs of the students thus ensuring that the plans will utilize the space in the most appropriate manner.

The new beit midrash is being built on the seventh floor of the 245 Lexington building. To increase seating space, the seventh floor will be expanded to include the patio that is currently an unused space. This new extended interior will be enclosed in glass, allowing the beit midrash to be bathed in sunlight. The construction will triple the seating capacity as well as provide additional space for larger sized learning groups. Bookshelves will line the perimeter of the beit midrash and an *aron* (ark) will be created so it can be used as a place for all stu-

dents to join together to pray. Eva Greenspan (SCW '07), TAC beit midrash committee chairwoman commented: "As it stands right now we have outgrown the current beit midrash. During T-Cubed and *shiu* there are not enough seats, everyone who wants a seat should have one. Hopefully, the new beit midrash will facilitate that. Aside from providing more space the new beit midrash will definitely add to the learning community in SCW."

Sara Rosengarten (SCW '07), a member of the Beit Midrash Construction Committee described the current construction as "...a monumental addition. I think that it will enhance Torah life on campus," she said. "It will serve as a center where everyone can go and feel comfortable." Rosengarten described one of the main points of students meeting with the architect and those involved in the planning was so that they could convey to the designers that the space needs to be welcoming. "It will be phenomenal," she said. "It's a really big deal."

## "Space is the Stature of G-d"

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With guidance from the many university departments that participate on the SLC, I learned how to utilize the space we had for more appropriate uses and to use that space as a way in which to harness certain values. I learned that appropriating and maximizing space was the key to expanding it, the key to cultivate the values I saw as vital to the university. The SLC started looking for spaces that could be better used and lined them up with values that needed to be upheld, such as converting the mostly unused glass room at the back of the reserve library into a quiet alternative to the main computer rooms, thereby allowing students to study and work on their academic pursuits while upholding the value of academic excellence. The same is applicable to the expansion of different facility hours (computer room hours, cafeteria hours, etc.). Here we not only had to maximize what was in the space, but the time during which the space could be used to expand its availability.

The biggest challenge by far, though, was the beit midrash in the 245 Lexington building. At first, I was terribly dejected. Here I had come to a university that spouted the ideals of both secular and religious education and found that the reality contradicted the theory. How could a beit midrash that seats only 50 students be adequate to serve the religious community of over 1,000? It was a daunting and upsetting thought, for not only was there no space, there was also no larger community.

Limited by the reality of the situation, I joined with other interested students to try to see if we could make this space more palatable to our religious needs. Our decision: to promote the idea of a larger beit midrash. Initially, we ventured to gain this by inundating the channels of communication between the students and the administration with requests for such a space. This approach turned out to be informative, but insufficient. After this setback, we decided to maximize the space to such an extent that its use would be greater than its capacity. Perhaps through this

method we would transcend space through use. And so, a group of dedicated students organized the first night *seder* that took place last year and drew 40 students. This first night *seder* became what is now known as T-Cubed, which draws about 100 students together to learn on a weekly basis. A morning Tanakh *shiu* that integrates classroom and beit midrash study was instituted to complement the daily *Gemara shiurim* that take place. Student efforts to have an all women's *megillah* reading have also greatly added to the sense of religious community. These are among many other initiatives to expand and cultivate the SCW religious community.

And it was successful.

The new beit midrash that is being constructed will be much larger, and more prominent. The space in the current beit midrash needed to be maximized and therefore elevated to necessitate a new space. As a result of all these efforts, one can sense the growth of a broad religious community on the Beren Campus. With the continued efforts of students, faculty, and administrators, this new space will serve the religious needs of the community, and will be an inviting space for students to sit and learn. This space is an end in it of itself; students should aim to start and finish here, instead of just utilizing it as a transitional corridor from one course assignment to the next. I hope that the beit midrash gives students a reason to stop, and that it will nurture an atmosphere of religious activity and will offer a place to encounter God through text and contemplation.

Although I still do not know what all of the infinity of outer space harbors or what its purpose is, I have learned how to infuse space with infinite purpose.

Title is from: Joseph Joubert (1754-1824), French essayist, moralist. *Pensées*, ch. 12 (1842), trans. by and ed. H.P. Collins (1928).

GOOD  
LUCK  
ON  
FINALS!



# Beyond 34th Street

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place to find solitude (cars hardly ever drive by), greenery, and neo-gothic, castle-like architecture—not to mention a fine view of the East River and U.N. buildings. There are several park benches and two gardens open to the public. You can walk down the Isaiah Stairs to visit the U.N. building when you're done.

Why it made the list: It's nearby, and refreshingly inurbane. The buildings are old-fashioned, the street is quiet, the parks are well kept, and the view is scenic.

Getting There: Walk up to 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and then cross-town to 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Walk straight up the hill toward 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue until you reach Tudor City Place.

Time: 15 minutes.

3. Morgan Library and Museum- Last May, the Morgan Library reopened after nearly five years of construction with a brand new indoor plaza designed by internationally renowned architect Renzo Piano. Now, the complex of buildings once owned by the Morgan family are integrated as a single unit, and the collection—including rare books,



Morgan Library and Museum

medieval crafts, and manuscripts from the last 200 years—is as stunning as ever, and displayed more tastefully than before.

Why it made the list: The Morgan Library is a world-class museum, and it's almost next-door to the Beren Campus. How many other colleges can boast to

have such outstanding cultural resources so nearby?

Getting there: Walk up Madison Avenue to 36<sup>th</sup> Street.

Time: 3 minutes.

Cost: \$8 for students.

4. Brooklyn Bridge- Still an engineering marvel even over 100 years after its completion, the Brooklyn Bridge's gothic towers are as much a symbol of New York City as the Statue of Liberty. However, the greatest way to enjoy the bridge is to walk across its span instead of gazing



Brooklyn Bridge

from a distance. The pedestrian path is wide and boasts a tremendous view of Lower Manhattan and Brooklyn.

Why it made the list: The Brooklyn Bridge is a significant landmark, and the walk is pleasant, gorgeous, and absolutely free.

Getting There: Take the 6 to the Brooklyn Bridge/City Hall stop and follow the signs as soon as you exit.

Time: The subway ride is about 20 minutes and the walk is almost a mile in each direction.

5. Rockefeller Park- For all of Manhattan's waterfront property, no section of shoreline offers tremendous paths and views like Rockefeller Park in TriBeCa. Here, amid rows of glitzy new condominium towers, is a long pedestrian esplanade along the Hudson River, newly landscaped and very visitor-friendly. The Statue of Liberty looks like the park's next-door neighbor. Rockefeller Park takes first place in my book as the most attractive park in Manhattan.

Why it made the list: Although Rockefeller Park isn't as easy to find as Madison Square

Park, it is beautiful to a degree



Rockefeller Park

that generally doesn't exist in Manhattan. And, since the esplanade extends for quite a distance, it's a great place in which to take a long walk with friends.

Getting there: Take the 6 to the Brooklyn Bridge/City Hall stop. Take a right on Broadway and a left on Chambers Street. Follow Chambers Street to the Hudson River.

Time: The subway ride is about 20 minutes and the walk is another 10 minutes.

6. The Strand Bookstore- Of the hundreds of bookstores in the city, the Strand is just about the only one that can truly qualify as a destination— a place to spend a Sunday afternoon. Amid the high canyons and narrow alleys of shelves are used books of every possible variety. The section of



The Strand Bookstore

Jewish and Israel-related books is gigantic. There are valuable rare first editions, one-dollar paperbacks, and every sort of book along the spectrum in between. Not every bookstore can allege to house 18 miles of books, but the Strand lives up to this claim.

Why it made the list: There are other quirky used-book stores in New York, but none compares with the Strand for its sheer volume. It's not very far away, and it's an experience. If you haven't been to the Strand, you haven't

truly lived in lower Midtown Manhattan.

Getting There: Located at 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway, you can walk there (roughly one mile), or take the 6 downtown to 14<sup>th</sup> Street/Union Square and walk two blocks down Broadway.

Time: Approximately 20 minutes by foot and 10 minutes by subway.

7. Bethesda Fountain, Central Park- The architects of Central Park tried to limit the number of formal spaces in the park to maximize the area of



Bethesda Fountain

grassy lawns and winding paths. But, they decided to design one section of the park with the stateliness of the parks of Europe by including pillars, plazas and fountains. That section is the area surrounding the Bethesda Fountain, where even on weekdays you'll find puppeteers, street dancers, skateboarders, and people-watchers amid the terraces. If you haven't seen the Bethesda Fountain, you haven't seen the focal point of Central Park.

Why it made the list: Sure, everyone has been to Central Park at one point or another. However, the Bethesda Fountain is the most dramatic landmark in the park. It's one of the park's few formal spaces that operate on a Manhattan-sized scale. It captures all of the grandeur of Central Park in a single location.

Getting there: Take the 6 uptown to 68<sup>th</sup> Street, enter the Park at 72<sup>nd</sup> Street, and walk up

the mall until you reach the end.

Time: The subway ride is about 15 minutes and the walk from there is about an additional 15 minutes.

8. Washington Square Park and its surroundings- Greenwich Village is one of the most pleasant and significant neighborhoods in New York, as well as one of the most famous. The focal point of the neighborhood is Washington Square Park, which has managed to retain the bohemian flavor of the neighborhood even in the past few decades as the local residents have gentrified. Although the park was once a popular location for drug-dealers, in recent years, it has been significantly cleaned up and is quite safe. The Washington Arch at the north side of the park is a famous New York landmark. Amble around the surrounding blocks to explore the heart of Greenwich Village: find the Washington Mews, converted stables which now house prestigious New York University faculty, the stained-glass castle Jefferson Market Library which was saved from the bulldozer by poet E.E. Cummings, and the homes of many famous writers and artists.

Why it made the list: The park is the main landmark of one of the most significant neighborhoods in Manhattan. It's scenic, not too far away, and worth a visit.



Washington Square Park

Getting There: Either walk down 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue until reaching 8<sup>th</sup> Street, or take the 6 downtown to Bleecker Street, turn left on Broadway and right on 4<sup>th</sup> Street.

Time: Approximately 40 minutes by foot and 20 minutes by subway.

# Religious Life at SCW

*continued from page 4*

alone and rejoin her parents' community every time anything halakhic comes up. But what are we to do? Over 1,050 students live on campus forming what is the largest community of observant Jews in the world without a *beit kneset*, a place of communal prayer with daily services. We must continue to pursue this question, to continue to find the way to build a religious community on campus while balancing this progress with tradition.

So when I look back upon the year and think about the religious communal events we

have now, Torah on Tuesdays with TAC, aka T-Cubed, the weekly Torah learning community event with over 60 women gathering each Tuesday to learn Torah together in the *beit midrash* and spilling over to every classroom on the sixth floor, when I think about *hatarat nedarim* being joined by the weekly *mincha minyan* to up the frequency of halakhic activities organized by TAC from once a year to once a week, I am incredibly grateful to the students, faculty and administration at SCW. I am incredibly thankful to the TAC board, to all of the students who organized these activities

and to all of the students who participated in these activities.

This year was sometimes long, sometimes short, sometimes hard and mostly beautiful. There were attempts to build the religious community and halakhic opportunities on campus that did not come to fruition. After countless meetings and discussions, students who were interested in having a women's *megillah* reading on campus in their *beit midrash* were disallowed from doing so on the grounds that this activity would be perceived as too far left for students to organize on campus. The fear was that this would

reflect negatively to certain crowds and shake SCW's image. This was disappointing.

Organizing the weekly *mincha minyan* was also tough and it took tons of student effort to coordinate the male professors and administrators to create a quorum in which we could have structured prayers and pray as a community. The question of religious life on campus at an observant women's college arises again. Whose responsibility is it to ensure a rich religious life for students at SCW? Whose position affords them that opportunity? A couple of weeks ago another question arose: as a TAC

event, our weekly *mincha minyan* runs like other student activities, and was planned to be held every Wednesday during Club Hour, even when our university president, President Richard Joel, was to come and speak with the students and faculty at the Town Hall meeting. This put the TAC board in a strange position. We did not want there to be an event, even prayer services, held in the same small timeslot scheduled for us to hear President Joel. Should we cancel the *minyan*? That too was unsettling; it seemed even inappropriate that

*continued on page 25*

# Arts and Culture

## Summer in the City on Museum Row

BY LEA NEW

Despite ambivalent weather and the hopeless deluge of papers and exams, summer will eventually arrive. And when it does, New York's visitors and residents will be graced with a florescence of artistic exhibitions situated in some of New York's world-renown venues of art and design. The exhibition lineup runs the gamut of subject matter and artistic media, ranging from neo-Impressionist paintings, to pop art from the sixties, to abstract sculptures done in steel. Here are some exciting art and culture-imbibing opportunities to look forward to this summer.

### Yeshiva University Museum



The Yeshiva University Museum  
Center for Jewish History  
15 W. 16<sup>th</sup> Street (Between 5<sup>th</sup> and  
6<sup>th</sup> Avenues)  
New York, NY  
212-294-8330  
<http://www.yumuseum.org/>

### "And I Still See Their Faces: The Vanished World of Polish Jews"

Now through June 24

Since February, an exhibition of photographs titled "And I Still See Their Faces: The Vanished World of Polish Jews" has been showcased at the Yeshiva University Museum. The collection of photographs, gathered from international owners by the Shalom Foundation, comes from the albums of Polish Jews living in the decades before World War II. Enlarged and accompanied by no text save the simple descriptions provided by the photographs' most recent owners, this haunting exhibition offers a glimpse into the day to day lives of the masses of Polish Jews who perished so tragically during the Holocaust.

### "Poet's Portraits: Lines for My Image"

Now through August 30

Portraits of Israeli literary figures by Israeli artist Zvi Lachman will be featured in "Poet's Portraits: Lines for My Image." The drawings, made on paper, have been culled from among Lachman's oeuvre over the last 20 years. Included in the exhibit are portraits of celebrated Hebrew poets H. N. Bialik, Yona Wallach, and S. Y. Agnon. Poetry has always been an important element of Lachman's life. The closeness he feels with the poets and their influence



Israeli artist Zvi Lachman

upon him resembles that of a parent to a child. The focus of the artist in the creation of his portraits is to express the meaning and nature of his subjects' gazes. He seeks to convey the spiritual extraordinariness he senses within each poet through the reconstruction of their physiognomy on paper.

There is a variety in drawing style among the exhibited portraits. Before beginning to draw, Lachman regards his subject's face meditatively and responds to the inner gaze of the sitter by drawing in the particular style it requires. Juxtaposed with some of the poets' portraits are poems they've written. The poems selected are connected to one theme of the exhibit that emphasizes the expression of inner meaning through the drawn lines of the faces. Lachman, who works in a variety of media, will also exhibit four sculptures which relate to an additional theme of the exhibit, the theme of simultaneous closeness and distance. In his portraits, Lachman plays with the dynamic between what is close and meaningful in the gaze of the subject, and what is also, at the same moment, very other.

### Museum of Modern Art



Museum of Modern Art  
11 W. 53<sup>rd</sup> Street (Between 5<sup>th</sup> and  
6<sup>th</sup> Avenues)  
New York, NY  
212-708-9400  
[www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org)

### "Picasso's Demoiselles d'Avignon at 100"

May 9-August 30

Starting May 9, 2007, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) will host Picasso's ground-breaking work "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" in celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the work. The exhibit, named "Picasso's Demoiselles d'Avignon at 100," features the painting *Les Demoiselles* alongside its preparatory drawings and other works created during

the same 1906-1907 period. The collection's purpose is to examine Picasso's creative process with *Les Demoiselles* and the impact the painting had on Picasso's other artwork of the same period.

### "Barry Frydlander: Place and Time"



May 17-September 3

Also slated for appearance is the work of Barry Frydlander, an Israeli photographer who documents scenes from contemporary Israeli society. In the 10 photographs featured in "Barry Frydlander: Place and Time," Frydlander employs the remarkable method of piecing together small digital photographs taken of one scene at different moments in time. A large, minutely-detailed frame is thus created, which contains allusions to the passage of time involved in making the picture such as the repetition of individuals in the frame. Included in the exhibit is an image from the August 2005 disengagement in Gaza.

### "Richard Serra: Forty Years"

June 3-September 10, 2007

On June 3, 2007, MoMA will launch "Richard Serra: Forty Years," a retrospective exhibition featuring art from the past 40 years of work by Richard Serra, an American minimalist artist. The show begins with some of his earlier sculptural undertakings with neon and rubber, and progresses into a presentation of Serra's later work involving giant steel plates and sheet metal.

### Whitney Museum of American Art

Whitney Museum of American Art



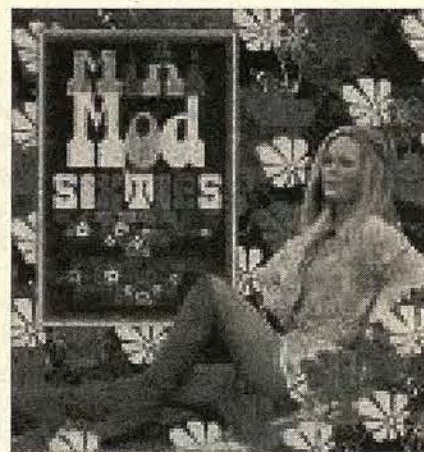
945 Madison Avenue at 75<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY  
1-800-WHITNEY  
<http://www.whitney.org/>

### "Lincoln Kirstein"

Now through August 27

At the Whitney Museum of American Art, the work of photographer Walker Evans, painter Pavel Tchelitchew, and sculptor Elie Nadelman will be on view together in an exhibit simply titled, "Lincoln Kirstein." As suggested by the show's name, the binding thread between these three artists is their connection to connoisseur Lincoln Kirstein, who patronized the artists for many years. Celebrating 100 years since Kirstein's birth, much of the text and labels accompanying the artwork is gleaned from his own writings on the work of the featured artists.

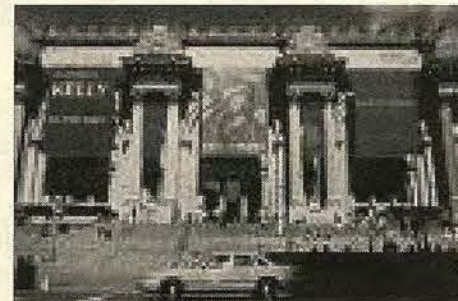
### "Summer of Love: Art of the Psychedelic Era"



May 24-September 16

Sixties lovers get excited! The Whitney Museum of American Art celebrates the art of the most tumultuous decade of the century by presenting "Summer of Love: Art of the Psychedelic Era." The exhibit will include photography, video, sculpture, and painting from some major artists active in the sixties. Posters and cultural paraphernalia will also be displayed, together with videos of iconic events and shows to help illustrate the "psychedelic aesthetic" of the era.

### Metropolitan Museum of Art



Metropolitan Museum of Art  
1000 Fifth Avenue at 82<sup>nd</sup> Street  
New York, NY  
212-535-7710  
[www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)

### "Frank Stella on the Roof"

May 1-October 28

**"Frank Stella: Painting into Architecture"**



May 1-July 29

This summer, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met) presents two exhibits featuring the artwork of Frank Stella: "Frank Stella on the Roof" and "Frank Stella: Painting into Architecture." Stella's abstract sculptures in carbon fiber and stainless steel will be displayed on the Met's rooftop, so that visitors can enjoy a great view of New York City and Stella's experimental art at the same time. The second exhibit, "Frank Stella: Painting into Architecture," explores the dynamic between Stella's art and architecture. His paintings and wall reliefs will be on view alongside some of his architectural models and life-sized work suggesting how the formal bounds between the two creative disciplines were linked in Stella's work.

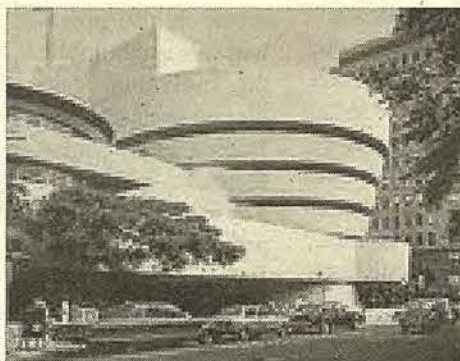
**"Impressionists and Early Modern Painting: The Clark Brothers Collect"**

May 22-August 19

For those who delight in Impressionist art, also scheduled at the Met this summer is an exhibit titled "Impressionists and Early Modern Painting: The Clark Brothers Collect." The exhibition focuses on the artistic "rivalry" between brothers Robert Sterling Clark and Stephen Carlton

Clark, wealthy heirs to the Singer sewing machine fortune. The museum combines, for the first time, their formidable collections of painted works by early modern masters like Renoir, Seurat, Picasso, Sargent and Degas, among others. Differences and similarities in the brothers' artistic tastes are accentuated by the juxtaposition of their rich collections.

**Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum**

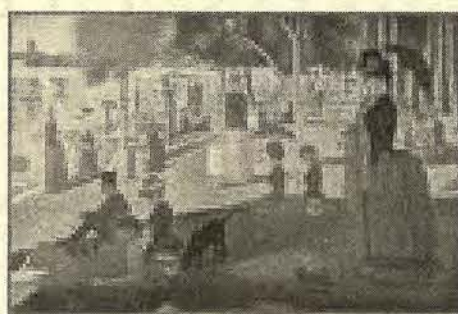


Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum  
1071 Fifth Avenue at 89<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY  
212-423-3500  
www.guggenheim.org

**"Solomon's Gift: The Founding of the Guggenheim: 1937-1949"**

April 14-September 30, 2007

In 1937, when Solomon R. Guggenheim first created the art gallery that became the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Guggenheim), he began by exhibiting a collection of paintings garnered with the help of sculptor Hilla Rebay. The art in this original catalogue was primarily non-objective, abstract art, exemplified in the work of Kandinsky, Moholy-Nagy, Mondrian and Rebay herself. Also included in the early collection



Georges Seurat's *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte* on display at the Guggenheim

were other types of artwork not adhering to the non-objective aesthetic, like the paintings of Chagall, Rousseau, Modigliani, Léger and Picasso. Seventy years later, in "Solomon's Gift: The Founding of the Guggenheim: 1937-1949," 65 of those original pieces of artwork, which serve as keystones to the present day Guggenheim, will be on view. Modern art aficionados, as well as others, will appreciate this exhibit, which involves superior artwork and an interesting edification of the museum's beginnings.

**"Divisionism/Neo-Impressionism: Arcadia and Anarchy"**

April 27-August 6, 2007

Some artists in the wake of the Impressionist movement adopted the Pointillist/Divisionist method of painting, a method in which dots of paint were applied side by side on the canvas and, when viewed at a distance, colors were naturally blended by the eye to form a coherent design. The paintings of Italian Divisionists form the bulk of this exhibit, but they are also joined by some artwork by French Pointillists. Both similar and distinct artistic movements, the exhibit invites discussion on convergent and divergent features of Italian Divisionism and French Pointillism.

**Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum**



Cooper Hewitt  
2 E. 91<sup>st</sup> Street at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
New York, NY  
212-849-8400  
http://ndm.si.edu/

**"Design Life Now: National Triennial 2006"**

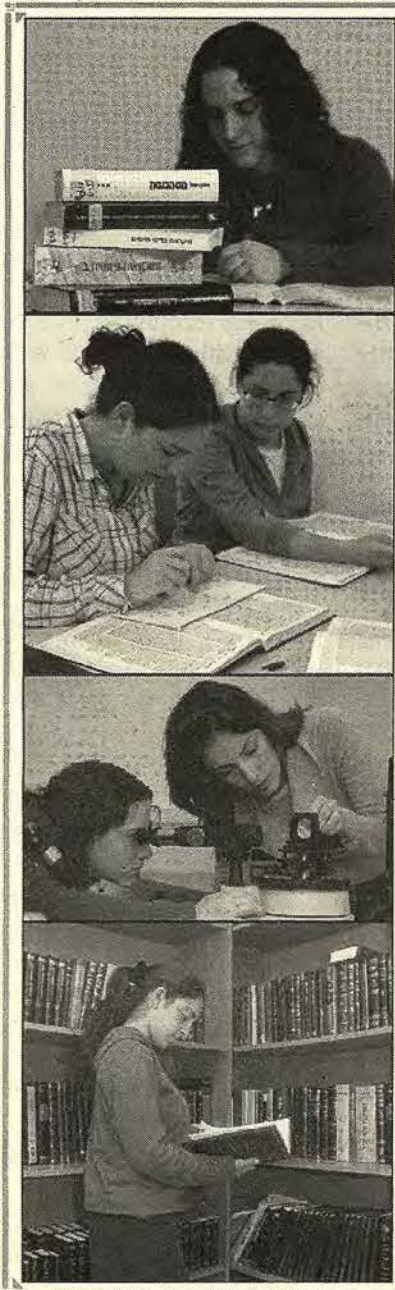
Now through July 29

Since December, the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum has been housing "Design Life Now: National Triennial 2006," a showcase of some of America's most innovative objects of design. The exhibit incorporates design ideas in the realms of design, fashion, animation, and architecture.

**"Design for the Other 90%"**

May 4-September 23

In the spirit of democracy for design, the exhibit "Design for the Other 90%" focuses on objects designed to serve practical functions for regular individuals at small prices. Environmentally and socially conscious, the items are arranged by categories devoted to topics like energy, water, education, and shelter.



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## "Cha-Zack" wins CJF Film Competition

BY YAEL WOLYNETZ

It was no surprise when the Center for the Jewish Future (CJF) announced "Cha-Zack" as the winner of their first annual film competition. "Cha-Zack" tells the story of Zack Pollack, the star of the movie and a 13 year-old boy who suffers from cerebral palsy. The film depicts Pollack's fight to conquer the daily struggles he is faced with as a result of his illness. Narrated by singer Avraham Fried, one of Zack's own musical heroes, the movie also shows Zack's love for Judaism and Jewish music.

Over 2,500 people viewed the five finalist films online, and "Cha-zak" emerged as the viewer's choice. Film producers Josh Graber (SSSB '07), Mathew Cherney (SSSB '07), and Richard Lewis (SSSB '07) were the recipients of a \$2000 prize to be used towards film equipment. The win however, meant more than a cash reward for the producers of the short film.

"All of the hard work and effort finally paid off," said Graber, who met Pollack two summers ago when he was his counselor at Camp HASC. "I'm thrilled. The more people who get to experience Zack Pollack, even if it's on a screen, the better off this world will be."

When Graber found out about the title of the film competition, "Who is Your Jewish

Hero?," he knew immediately that he wanted to make a film about his camper and friend Pollack. However, having no previous experience in film production, he consulted the expertise of his friends Charney and Lewis to help out with the technicalities of filming and editing. "They knew about Zack through me, because I spoke about him all the time," Graber said of their group effort.

What the producers admire most about their hero are his efforts, despite his disabilities, to be just as normal as any other 13-year-old. For example, Pollack recently celebrated his bar mitzvah just like all of the other boys his age. "Watching him overcome the obstacles in his way inspires me on a daily basis," revealed Graber.

Jessica Morris (SCW '08), one of Graber's childhood friends from his earlier years in Memphis, Tennessee, describes the uniqueness of Graber's relationship with Pollack. "All of Josh's friends know about Zack because he talks about him so much," Morris said laughing. She also added that Graber is returning for his third summer as a counselor at Camp HASC on Pollack's account.

Morris believes that Graber's relationship with Pollack has been a life changing experience. "Josh genuinely cares about Zack," she explained. "He considers him one of his greatest

friends and I know he actually talks to him about stuff and listens to his advice. Whenever Josh has an issue in his personal life, one of the main people he consults is Zack."

Morris recalls a Shabbat when she stayed at Graber's house in Woodmere. Morris was not the only guest in the Graber household that weekend. Pollack, a frequent visitor to the Graber household, was also there. "When Zack comes, Josh moves into the guestroom with him, in order to be there to help him," Morris recalled. The whole family always welcomes Zack into their home with open arms.

In an effort to win the competition, Graber and his fellow producers sought after votes for their film. They appealed to Yeshiva University students by sending out a chain e-mail with a direct hyperlink to the voting website to make the process as simple as possible. Graber signed the e-mail with a quote by Christopher Reeve, which he felt was most fitting for Pollack. "A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles." According to the polls, Pollack exemplifies what it means to be a hero.

BY BATYA CARL

Tevere is a small Italian Restaurant featuring Roman Jewish cuisine. Its décor is warm with red brick walls and archways reminiscent of the old pantheons of Rome. The Rome theme is also prevalent on each table; the individual candles on each table are framed by roman theme paintings. These large murals provide the backdrop for extensive amounts of wine bottles placed just so on its brick ledges and shelves. A hexagonal wooden chandelier adorns the red brown ceiling, reflecting white layered tablecloths and thick napkins folded into fans. Dark wooden chairs are tucked into tables covered with layered white tablecloths and off white china plates.

Immediately upon sitting down at the table one is offered a plate heaped with crisp bread pieces with olive oil and garlic. The plate of bread and water glasses are replenished quickly throughout the meal. Yet, this is all that is free. The prices of the dishes are exorbitant. Appetizers range from \$10.95 to \$14.95 and pasta dishes range from \$19.95 to \$22.95. Meat dishes range from \$26.95 to \$43.95.

On a student's budget, such

prices could allow for a single entre and a single appetizer. *Carpaccio di Salmone*, marinated salmon with green salad, costs \$12.95. The salmon appetizer turned out to be more visually gratifying than filling; the salmon, sliced so thinly that it

resembled an orange film, lined the plate and was topped by a small portion of savory lettuce.

*Fettucine alla Bolognese*, a "home-made fettucine sautéed in a ground

veal tomato sauce" is \$20.95. Yet, this dish, when compared to the appetizer, is abundant. I t even comes with fresh pepper, grinded by the waiter directly onto the pasta.

The dessert menu is equally impressive; the desserts ranging from *crème brulee* and *profiterole* (cream puffs), to *Pere in Camicia* (poached pears in red wine), all costing roughly \$10.

*Tevere* is located at 155 E. 84<sup>th</sup> Street between Lexington and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. They are open Monday thru Thursday from 5 p.m. until 10:30 p.m., on Saturday nights one hour after sundown and on Sundays from 2 p.m. until 10 p.m. The restaurant is closed on Fridays. Tel: (212) 744-0210.



Tevere

## Meet Singer Song Writer Emilia Cataldo

BY TIKVA HECHT

Emilia Cataldo (SCW '08) juggled more than just a double curriculum these past few months. She was also putting the finishing touches on her debut CD, "Pick Your Battles." Backed by a variety of musicians including Yeshiva University graduates Chaya Glaser, Hayyim Danzig, and David Keesey, "Pick Your Battles" is full of sometimes fun, sometimes emotional, but always original music. The Observer sat down with Cataldo to find out just what it's like to record and perform.

The Observer: What does the title "Pick Your Battles" signify?

Emilia Cataldo: Pick your battles signifies just that. At a certain point I realized that the problems in my life often were caused by either my inability to fight for what I truly wanted or needed, or fighting for the wrong things. The fact is that life is an uphill battle, blah blah blah... but we don't have the time to waste fighting someone else's battles. The unofficial title is "Pick Your Battles"

(not your friends battles). It's a good mantra. Don't get upset over everything in a sense.

O: How did you first start performing?

EC: I had begun to write songs, and I mentioned it to a friend, Jake Marmer who organized *Mimaamakim*, (a Jewish literary journal and cultural group)...and he offered me a 15-minute spot in one of his shows. That was the first time I performed my own material. I grabbed Chaya Glaser to back me up on guitar since I only played an African drum at the time...I went up to her in the old caf on the 2nd floor and asked her if she was interested in performing. *Pharoh's Daughter*, a band fronted by Basya Schechter, a hero and now friend of mine, played at that show. I was so excited.

O: When you're on stage what's running through your head?

EC: Before and between songs I'm assessing the crowd thinking about timing. During songs, I'm trying to get lost usually.

O: What makes a good show for you?

EC: A responsive audience. I don't care how many people are there. Of course I want my voice to be in great shape.

O: From where do you gain the inspiration to write your music?

EC: From everything I see and everything that happens to me. I feel that I become pregnant sometimes when I haven't let it all out and written a song about my thoughts and feelings. I feel that way now.

O: How would you describe your music?

EC: Heartfelt and sarcastic.

O: Who are your inspirations?

EC: Rickie Lee Jones, Regina Spektor, The Beatles, Counting Crows, the jazz singers, so many influences. I like the Decemberists, and Bowie... I just bought Ayelet Rose Gottlieb's "Mayim Rabim."

O: Do you find that Stern College for Women (SCW) provides a good atmosphere for an aspiring

artist?

EC: Maybe. My instinct is to say no because it feels creatively stifling at times, being mostly homogenous... and mostly people that have different backgrounds from mine, but that process of alienation and isolation is a fertile breeding ground for ideas. Plus I lived in Windsor Court when I wrote some of the songs on "Pick Your Battles." "Sign" is partially about a homeless woman who continuously refused my offers of food and clothing saying that they weren't her style, I thought that was great. But I have a little community of artists here. One SCW student is making the video for "Perkolatin," one of the albums' songs.

SO: What do you prefer—performing live or recording?

EC: Both are fun and different. Recording says that you're going to get it right and many people can hear it, but live is intimate. The problems aren't worth mentioning; they seem big when they happen, but I complain about the process enough.

O: What are your future goals, musically or otherwise?

EC: Keep recording, create music videos with my friends for this album, finish another album soon, make a movie or four, finish SCW, tour right after that or the summer before... and save the world.

O: Where can someone buy your CD?

EC: From me! By the time someone reads this "Pick Your Battles" may be available on iTunes and Rhapsody. If not, soon thereafter.

O: Do you have any upcoming shows?

EC: I'm not planning on doing any official shows until after the first half of the Omer. It was very important to me to have the CD release before Pesach and I need very much at this point to focus on finishing the semester. But I will do things here and there. I'm recording again!

For more about Emilia check out [myspace.com/nehedarandfriends](http://myspace.com/nehedarandfriends)

## A Hero in Heaven

BY LAURA SHUMAN

Still images of cream colored stone, a dusty path surrounded by wild flowers, and dessert provide one dimensional realities of nature. Devoid of context and sound, these images conjure up little for the imagination. However, coupled with words of Naomi Shemer praising Israel's beauty, and the story of a young American man who made aliyah to Israel at the tender age of 18, joined the Israeli army, and then died while protecting his country only to be buried on the same day as the destruction of the Temple, the still pictures suddenly take on a life of their own, a life filled with layers of emotion.

On April 22, 2007, the Levy Lobby on the Beren Campus overflowed beyond capacity as approximately 200 students came from both campuses to attend this year's Yom Hazikaron ceremony, a new event sponsored by the Yeshiva University (YU) Israel Club, the Torah Activities Council, and Student Organization of Yeshiva. Nina Bursky-Tammam (SCW '07) spearheaded this event with Avi

Posnick (YC '07), bringing "A Hero In Heaven," a 40 minute movie documenting the life and legacy of Michael Levin, z"l, an American *oleh* who died in this past summer's Second War in Lebanon, to YU.

Levin grew up in the outskirts of Philadelphia, in a traditional Jewish household. Active in United Synagogue Youth and an avid camper at Camp Ramah in the Poconos, Levin was intent to move to Israel and join a front line command unit in the Israel Defense Forces. Upon graduating high school, he took a year long course in Israel and then fulfilled his dream of making aliya. In the summer of 2006, he was released from the army for a few weeks and came back to America to visit his family. While he was home, the war with Lebanon broke out. Without hesitation, Levin returned to Israel and went straight to his commanders, demanding that he be put on the front lines in the North to fight against Hezbollah. Seven days later, on the seventh day of Av, Levin was killed in battle.

The most successful movies are those that interact with their

audience. They pause, create silences, and return to images within different contexts to stir up emotions. This movie, produced and directed by Sally



Michael Levin

Mitlas, in conjunction with The Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, did just that. Mitlas, a well known Jewish entertainer in the Greater Philadelphia area, chose a unique way to briefly let the audience watch Levin's growth. Early images of Levin were seen as photographic stills, while the moments where he was living as an Israeli soldier and speaking about his dreams were very vividly shown in the film. Thus, as his vision and passion

for Israel grew, so too did his life and he became all the more alive on screen. Some of the most moving pieces of footage in the film are clips of Levin as a soldier, talking and laughing at the camera while speaking about his dream.

This documentary was unique; it sought to evoke sadness but also provided personal inspiration by allowing the audience to laugh. It is hard to let the audience relax when watching a film of this nature because it is meant to be sad. Yet, it is not surprising that Levin, famous for his constant infectious smile and positive attitude, would cause others to smile too.

Realities and dimensions change the way we look at things. On the morning of Tisha B'Av, the day that the Jewish people mourn the destruction of the first and second Temples, the Levin family, which flew in from Pennsylvania for the funeral, doubted that they would even have a *minyán* present at the funeral. When they arrived at Mount Hertzl they saw hundreds of people and figured that there must have been several funerals

that day. Little did they know that 2000 people from across the country, "secular, Reform, Orthodox, black-hatters," according to his family, had come to pay their last respects to Michael, a young man who sacrificed himself for the sake of his country.

The story and lessons learned from Levin are vast and go beyond the length of this article. Family, heroism, dedication, and belief are some of the lessons learned from Levin, a man who was barely 118 pounds and whose weight lies in his spirit. His memory lives on in the lives that he saved, the people that he touched, and the people that have been inspired by him to move forward in their love and commitment to Israel.

Newfound significance is given to those still images of nature at the close of the movie. The words of Naomi Shemer were part of one of Levin's favorite poems, and, amidst the Jerusalem stone and the hills of the Golan, remain the legacy of someone that will live as part of the land as the history of the Jewish people continues to unfold.

## YU Museum Exhibit Reveals Polish Life Pre-WW II

BY MICHELLE SCHIFFMAN

Almost fifteen years ago, actress and singer Golda Tencer recognized the need to find and protect the few remaining pieces of tangible evidence of the Jewish culture that once existed in Poland. Through her Shalom Foundation, dedicated to the preservation of the Polish-Jewish heritage, she broadcasted an appeal on Polish Television to people throughout the country. She felt certain that many Jews faced with deportation to the ghettos had entrusted photos and family albums to friends and neighbors.

The response was overwhelming. Photos poured in from all over Poland, and as well as from the United States, Canada, Israel, and Argentina. More than 8,000 photographs were received. The majority of photos came from non-Jews, and the remainder came from Holocaust survivors and their children. An international selection committee chose 456 of the photographs to feature in an exhibition. Some were identified, some were documented, and some were carefully preserved through digital restoration and enlargement. Many delicate pictures were sent to her with great care.

The intention behind these photos is beautiful. The compilers sought to capture the vibrancy of the lost generations of Polish Jewry. They were people like us: doctors, lawyers, teachers, poets,

artists, comedians, and adventurers. They were people with professions and with real personalities, all of whom were lost in the Holocaust. They lived normal lives and had their own communities. It is those pictures with personality, people doing regular activities, and odd scenes that caught the eye of the viewer.

Yet, it may be difficult for young viewers to connect to these photographs. Perhaps it is because this generation is used to bold colors, and vibrant pictures of action and smile. These were portraits of dull faces playing chess, people sitting or walking, and dimmed colored faces with half smiles. Though many of the paintings subjects were wearing traditional Hasidic garb, which is still recognizable, something about the pictures maintains its own barrier between audience and exhibit.

Some of the photos were extremely eye catching anyway because of their intensity. One image, which had so much detail in it, showed an old and seemingly pious man peering out of a window. He had *tefillin* attached to his wrinkled forehead and a very long grey beard. His hand and shoulders were draped in a *tallit*. There was an open *siddur* in front of him. But, despite being precious, the photo is still someone distant and not relatable. It doesn't really reveal how life in Poland was at the time. The inscription next to this photo stated, "The praying Jew was our

neighbor in Barenov Sandomierski."

This picture, and many similar to it, relays the fact that Jewish life was intense and that Jewish life did thrive, but the issue here is that reality does not evoke a personal feeling of intensity or the feeling that one is thriving.

Even after reading the background of the exhibit, it is still unclear what the purpose of the exhibit is meant to be. Was it celebrating the Jewish Polish culture in the hundreds of years leading up to the Holocaust, mourning for its loss, or both? The photographs and aura of the room in which the exhibition is being held fails to reveal the answer. Some though, will be satisfied with this. Upon entering the museum one man, when asked about what he thought the purpose of the exhibit was, said, "I don't know, let's just look at the pictures."

His answer represents the dual reality existent within this exhibit. It is long gone yet alive, wise yet simple, black and white yet full of color and vibrancy. These pictures preserve memories, giving people a chance to simply look and remember what once was.

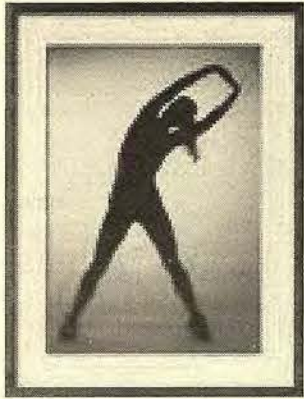
The Stern College for Women community offers condolences to the Bacon family upon the loss of Dr. Isaac Bacon, Dean Emeritus of Yeshiva College.

## SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Studying for Finals?  
It Might Help to Hit the Gym

BY ESTHER FISCHER

It was a remarkable discovery: as the lab mice were made to exercise more, they grew new cells in a brain region within the hippocampus called the dentate gyrus, which is known to be the area affected in age-related



decline in memory for most humans over the age of 30. Furthermore, it was suggested that exercise produces increased levels of a molecule called brain-derived neurotrophic factor, which increases connections between brain cells. As scientists are exploring this new field, more and more evidence points to the fact that exercise might not only be healthy for your body, but it might also carry some important benefits for your mind.

Dr. Scott Small, a neurologist at Columbia University Medical Center in New York, led a study with humans similar to the one conducted in mice, and examined participants' brains using magnetic resonance spectroscopy (MRI) before and after exercise. Perhaps, not surprisingly, the same brain patterns were observed. This is the first

research ever to be conducted regarding the benefits of exercise on the brain, and it certainly promises to be groundbreaking. Brain expert Fred Gage, of the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California, who ran the initial study in mice, later conducted an experiment in which healthy volunteers were to undergo a three-month aerobic exercise regimen. MRIs were taken of the participants before and after, and the fitness of each participant was measured by measuring oxygen volume before and after the training program. The researchers found that the more exercise a person underwent, the more blood would flow to the dentate gyrus.

A study published last year in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* reported that elderly people who exercised at least three times a week were about a third less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia than people who exercised less. Furthermore, several studies have shown that, for instance, workers who exercise during the workday feel more productive and seem to handle stress better than those that don't. Other studies suggest that exercise enhances cognitive skills such as reasoning and concentration. However, it is unclear exactly what type of exercise is most beneficial. To examine this, Professor Arthur Kramer from the Beckman Institute in Illinois, divided participants into two groups: one was put on a cardiovascular fitness program, and the other was put on non-aerobic stretching sessions. The aerobic

exercise consisted of 45 minutes of brisk walking a day. After six months, the participants were scanned using MRI and given mental tests. The scans showed distinct changes in brain function in two areas: the middle frontal and superior parietal regions, areas that have been linked to the ability to concentrate, especially on tasks requiring spatial attention. On the mental tests, the group that had undergone aerobic exercise improved their scores on average by 11%, whereas the stretching group actually showed a slight decline in scores.

The recent fitness craze may be more than just a quest to look good and feel healthy. Rather, exercise provides well-known benefits such as strengthening the heart and lungs and protecting against diseases such as diabetes,



heart disease and stroke, as well as acting as a natural mood enhancer. Now, there may be one more reason for scholars to hit the gym, focusing particularly on aerobic exercise. Mounting evidence suggests that to keep your mind sharp, it is important not only to exercise your brain, but to exercise your body as well.

Another Kind of  
Nuclear Proliferation

BY OLIVIA MATHIAS

As global warming becomes a more serious scare and gas prices rise to over \$60 a barrel, Americans are looking to other means of energy. More significant in energy conservation than

hybrid cars and solar powered homes, nuclear power plants are entering the market for cheap energy

with a boom. Two years ago there were no talks of nuclear power plants in the United States; however, many companies are currently looking to build around a dozen over the course of the next few years.

Different countries use various numbers of energy sources to provide power. There is wind and solar energy, which saves the environment, but unfortunately, is not very effective since you can't always bet on there being wind or sun. A country can also use its natural resources, such as coal and oil. But, if a country is not resource rich, then this method can be quite costly. This leaves countries considering the benefits of using nuclear energy.

Some of the problems scientists and engineers are met with in building nuclear power plants are economic capital and public

opinion. Once governments find the means to fund the project, it has to be accepted by the citizens, which has proven to be an even more troublesome task.

Although these power plants could fix the global warming and greenhouse gas problem, there is

always a slight but terrifying chance that something could go wrong. Nuclear mistakes



Nuclear power plants fuel controversy.

are long-term and fatal; the calamity of these accidents is unparalleled. The most notorious nuclear mistake was in the 1986 Chernobyl accident where an explosion at a plant in Ukraine resulted in radioactive contamination of the surrounding geographic area. Since this catastrophe, people have been even more vehement in their opposition to nuclear power as a source of energy.

Also standing in the way of utilizing this nuclear technology is the issue of radioactive waste. Once it's been used, where does the deadly substance go? The United States has areas in which to contain the used waste, but space is limited and already running out. The French have invested in plants in which to recycle

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## Birth Order Affects Personality

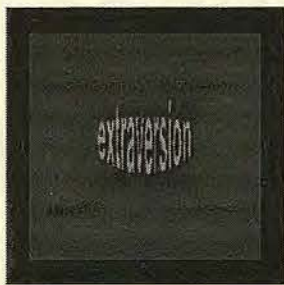
BY ALIZA REDISCH

Is it possible that the chance of becoming successful in life is affected by your birth order? Your personality may have been shaped and molded because you happened to be a firstborn, a middle child, or the family baby.

For many years both scientists and lay people have studied and hypothesized how birth order affects the development of individual characteristics. As early as 1874, Sir Francis Galton concluded that famous male scientists were more likely to be firstborns in their families than children born later on. Characteristics of firstborns make them likely to be involved in politics, while other studies have shown that birth order affects the Big Five personality dimensions of extraversion, neuroticism, con-

scientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to new experience.

Frank Sulloway collected data on thousands of people in history and suggested in his book *Born to Rebel* that firstborns are leaders and tend to defend the status quo, while later-borns are



rebels against it. He suggests that firstborns are interested in maintaining the status quo regardless of their age, sex, class or nationality. Sulloway hypothesizes that firstborns grow up knowing they are bigger, stronger, and smarter

then their younger siblings, which makes them more assertive and dominant. They also might be jealous of their younger sibling who has invaded their territory. Since firstborns have been favored by their parents, they should be closely aligned to their parent's values and standards. The later-born children should develop a more sociable and agreeable approach because they need to get along with their older siblings. The later-born will also tend to be more open to novelty and innovation because they want to make their own unique path in life different from their older sibling.

Emma Beck, Katrina Burnet, and Jane Vosper investigated the reasons for inconsistent findings concerning birth order effects and

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Live Longer on  
Less

BY GRACE CHARLES

We're in America. And one thing everyone knows about Americans is that we love to eat. Well, if we also love to live long lives, some new data suggests we better cut down on all that eating.

A study at the Wisconsin National Primate Research Center compares the health of two rhesus monkeys, Matthias and Rudy. Matthias is 28, and, as is typical for a monkey his age, is losing his hair, getting a gut, and has wrinkles all over his face; he has slowed down in his later years. Rudy, although actually slightly older, is thin and energetic. The average life span of a lab monkey is 27 years. Of the two lab mates, Dr. Ricki Colman, an associate scientist at the center who cares for the animals, says, "You can really see the differ-

ence."

Well, what exactly is the difference? It's the secret behind Rudy's liveliness and youthful looks, and it's not a very American idea; it's calorie restriction. This method requires that one eats about 30 percent fewer calories than normal, while still getting enough vitamins, minerals, and other necessary nutrients. Calorie restriction is the only life style strategy known to extend life consistently in a variety of animal species.

Recent studies indicate that the rate of aging is not fixed, but that our lifestyles have a huge effect on it. In the last year, calorie-restricted diets have been shown in various animals to affect molecular pathways likely to be involved in the progression

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## Study Reveals the Benefits of Caffeine

BY NILI SELESKI

Finals are approaching, as are the seemingly endless, sleepless nights that come along with them. The best way to keep your tired eyes open stands only a few hundred feet away on the corner in Starbucks. If Starbucks' coffee does not suit your taste there is always the Dunkin Donuts right across the street from the Brookdale Residence Hall. As your body is rejuvenated by your refreshing cup of java, think about this: studies have shown that a few cups of coffee a day can also be beneficial to your health.

A study conducted jointly by the Channing Laboratory in the Harvard School of Public Health and Brigham Women's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts suggests that coffee consumption over a long period of time is linked with significantly lower risks of type II diabetes. The research followed 41, 934 male participants from 1986 until 1998 and 84, 276 female participants from 1980 until 1998. None of the participants had diabetes, cardiovascular disease, or cancer at the onset of the research. Every

two to four years researchers questioned the participants through a questionnaire. Upon completion of the study and tabulation of the data, an inverse correlation between type II diabetes and coffee intake was observed.

A later study performed in the University of Guildford in the United Kingdom attempted to pinpoint the reason for the reduced risk of type II diabetes in coffee drinkers. Evidence shows that certain polyphenols, molecules with multiple ring-structures, affect the small intestine and alter glucose uptake. The study investigated the effects of the chlorogenic acid, a polyphenol, found in coffee. The goal of the researchers was to explore chlorogenic acid's modulation of glucose uptake, insulin secretion, and gastrointestinal hormone secretion. To complete the randomized study, researchers gave the control group sugar water, another group decaffeinated coffee, and a third group regular, caffeinated coffee. The regular coffee contained 2.5 millimolar chlorogenic acid per liter.



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## Vaccines in Development to Treat Cancer

BY YUDIT DAVIDOVITTS

Cancer is a leading cause of death in the United States, second only to heart disease. It is responsible for more than half a million deaths per year. Cancer consists of more than 100 separate diseases all characterized by an abnormal growth of cells. The abnormal growth forms a mass of tissue called a tumor. Neighboring blood vessels provide the tumor with the nutrients it needs to grow. Sometimes the tumor releases cells into the bloodstream, and while most are killed by the immune system, some survive and form tumors elsewhere in the body. Cancerous tumors have several dangerous effects. They put pressure on nearby tissue, damage tissue by invading them, or make invaded tissue vulnerable to infection. Tumors are only dangerous if they are capable of spreading; benign tumors will not spread or grow back once surgically removed.

While environmental effects, such as exposure to carcinogens, play a role in causing cancer,

gene mutations are cancer causing factors which we cannot control. The mutation can occur in an oncogene, which is essential to cell growth. When mutated, the oncogene produces a protein that stimulates cells to multiply prematurely. A mutation can also occur in tumor suppressor genes responsible for preventing tumors. When mutated, the defective gene no longer prevents cells with abnormal DNA from surviving and multiplying. The uncontrolled, abnormal cells increase the probability of tumors developing.

The three most common ways to treat cancer are surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy. Surgery is used when the tumor is localized to one part of the body. Healthy tissue surrounding the tumor is removed with it, in order to ensure that all the cancerous tissue has been removed. Radiation therapy is used to shrink the tumor, and is often used to facilitate surgery, or post-surgery to ensure that the tumor doesn't re-establish itself. Chemotherapy is a useful method of fighting cancer when the can-

cer has spread to other parts of the body. It is often used with surgery and radiation to improve results. These treatments have a variety of side effects, including nausea, hair loss, fatigue, and greater risk of infection.

Vaccines are being developed to treat cancer by using the body's defense system to prevent further cancer growth, or to prevent cancer by targeting cancer causing viruses.

There are currently two vaccines approved by the FDA to prevent cancer caused by viruses. They are the hepatitis B vaccine, which prevents the virus associated with some liver cancer, and Gardasil, which prevents cervical cancer caused by the human papillomavirus.

Vaccines used to treat cancer take advantage of the molecules specific to the surface of cancer cells. These molecules, called antigens, are either proteins or carbohydrates. They stimulate the immune system to respond to foreign substances in the body. Researchers hope that a vaccine

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## Allergies Attack Americans

BY CHANIE LADAEW

Allergies are an overreaction of the body's natural defense system that helps fight infections. The immune system normally protects the body from viruses and bacteria by producing antibodies to fight them. In an allergic reaction, the immune system starts fighting substances that are usually harmless. Examples of such substances are dust mites, pollen, or a medication. The body's natural defense system interprets the presence of these substances as if they were trying to attack the body. The result can be a rash, itchy eyes, a runny nose, difficulty breathing, nausea, and diarrhea.

An allergic reaction may not occur the first time one is exposed to an allergy-producing substance commonly called an allergen. Sometimes, during a

later exposure, one might develop hives or difficulty breathing. These are the results of an allergic reaction.

Most people will have some problem with allergies or allergic reactions at some point in their lives. Allergic reactions can range from mild and annoying to sudden and life-threatening.

Most allergic reactions are mild, and home treatment can relieve many of the symptoms. An allergic reaction is more serious when severe allergic reaction known as anaphylaxis affects the entire body. It can occur within a few seconds or minutes after a person is exposed to a substance. Symptoms include nosebleeds, wheezing, or coughing.

Allergies often occur along with other diseases, such as asthma, ear infections, sinusitis, and sleep apnea. There are several



Sneezing is a common symptom of allergies

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## Smile...It May Just Save Your Life

BY EMILY LIEBLING

A smile a day may, in fact, keep the doctor away. We are all keen to keep our ears open and eyes peeled for the latest tidbits of groundbreaking research that cause our health practices to oscillate more frequently than a pendulum. A recurring theory that has been the subject of much scrutiny is the positive effects of happiness on cardiovascular health.

As many may already be well aware, stress is notorious for its adverse effects on heart health. The corticosteroid hormone cortisol, which is produced by the adrenal glands, assists in the regulation of blood pressure and cardiovascular function. It is secreted when the body is exposed to a stressor and has the potential to increase risks of heart disease and diabetes and suppress the immune system. A British study found that when subjected to a stressor, its happier participants exhibited lower levels of cortisol, and consequently had lower heart rates.

*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, a British publication, reported the results of several experiments that supported the notion of happiness's benefits to physical well-being.

When placed under stress, the participants who were happy showed lower increases in their levels of plasma fibrinogen, a detector of inflammation and an indicator of the future likelihood of heart disease. Blood pressure and heart rate were monitored after a mental stress test and levels of plasma fibrinogen and cortisol were measured. After the tests, participants rated their hap-



piness levels on a scale of one to five. Individuals who produced the best chemical results were those who had the highest happiness ratings.

As exams and papers become as rampant as drained Starbucks cups in the upcoming finals season, stress seems like a phenomenon with which a college campus may be all too familiar. Hence, we hearken to the pearl of wisdom which King David ingeniously bestowed

upon those who seek it: "Ivdu Et Hashem B'Simcha." Yes, work seems cruelly incessant when we grace the library with our presence as we transform to our nocturnal selves. We must keep in mind, however, the wonderful blessing that work represents - it indicates that we are able to tackle it head-on. Thank G-d it is the expansion of our minds at which we toil and not back-breaking labor; the kind that many, unfortunately, must endure. Nor are we incarcerated in the prison of those who are emotionally and mentally unable to study and learn. So as the year draws to a close, we should remember to have a happy frame of mind and to approach our obligations without the worry. The wise will heed the call of the Cheerios mascot to "Bee happy, bee healthy" and will literally be awarded the last laugh.

# Skywalk at the Grand Canyon

BY RACHEL-ALI ELBAZ

The Grand Canyon is spectacular and breathtaking. A glass bottom skywalk that provides an incredible view of the gorge recently opened. Towering over the Grand Canyon, the skywalk makes visitors feel like they are hanging in midair or walking on a cloud. The skywalk is U-shaped and sticks out 70 feet beyond the rim of the canyon. Located at Eagle Point, most visitors tremble at this marvel of engineering while they view nature as never before.



The Grand Canyon

The Skywalk deck is anchored into the limestone cliff and is supported by steel beams weighing a million pounds. Three inch thick glass layers groan and creak softly as visitors gingerly walk on it. Although it was constructed to withstand hurricane strength winds, the skywalk wobbles or vibrates slightly as it is walked on.

The maximum capacity allowed on the Skywalk at one time is 120 people. Each visitor is given a pair of numbered shoe covers so that the glass floor will

not be marked. Mark Johnson, the Skywalk architect, says it can support more than 70 million pounds of weight and withstand winds in excess of 100 miles per hour. Special shock absorbers ensure that the structure does not bounce when people walk on it.

With a birds-eye view, visitors see and absorb the beauty and the force of nature that the Grand Canyon reveals. For millions of years, the Colorado River cut a channel more than a mile deep in the canyon.

Almost two billion years of the earth's development is exposed due to continual water erosion and the uplifting of the Colorado Plateaus. The desert location of the Grand Canyon translated into hard-baked soil. This cracked dry soil cannot absorb water, and plants that grow in this type of soil have very shallow roots that are unable to slow soil erosion. Annual spring floods moved rocks, sediment and debris toward the Pacific Ocean. With the passage of time the banks of the river widened and continually lowered revealing deeper layers

of rock. The rocks that are deep in the Canyon take much longer to erode because they are granite.

As one peers out over the Grand Canyon, it is likely they will question where all the rocks came from. The answer lies in the fact that the continents rest on 'plates' that float on a center of molten rock. The plate upon which the Grand Canyon is located was at one time much further south with a far different climate. Over time, this plate traveled north and rotated about 90 degrees. It is called the North American Plate and it is currently moving toward the west and colliding with the Pacific Plate. Because they are heavier, the oceanic plates usually go under the continental plates. The collision of 'plates' is often responsible for mountain building.

In the distant past, there was a range of mountains that was comparable in size to the Himalayas. They now lie at the base of the Grand Canyon. These rocks are about 1.7 billion years



Colorado River

old. These mountains are long gone and were covered with sedimentary deposits from a continu-

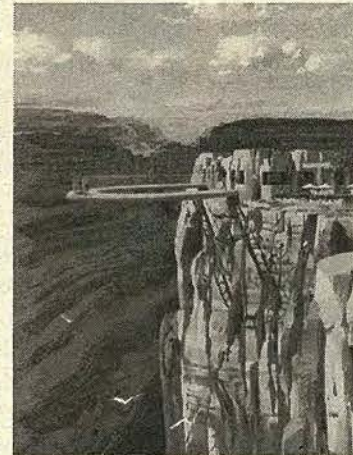
al advance and retreat of oceanic coast lines. It is because of this that one sees so many different layers of sedimentary rock in the Grand Canyon. Each layer was formed when the ocean advanced and eventually retreated. Limestone deposits occur when the ocean advances, while slate, shale, or mudstone deposits occur when it retreats.

Most rock in the Grand Canyon is sedimentary. It contains fossils of coral, sea lilies, fish teeth, and mollusks that have been dated as 250 million years old. The sedimentary rock is layered with sandstone and shale. Scientifically, it is clear that oceanic waters continually advanced and retreated. The Grand Canyon was slowly created as layer upon layer was built and eroded.

The Colorado River was born with the Rocky Mountains. It changed its course numerous times and continually eroded the land mass. Approximately 17 million years ago, the Colorado Plateau rose due to pressures in the Earth's crust that were probably caused by the collision of

plates. Most likely, the rise of the plateau prevented further incursions of the oceanic waters.

While some of the geologic history and development of the Grand Canyon is debated by geologists, the beauty and emotion it instills in those who see it is beyond debate. The Skywalk at Eagle Point is a way to experience it as never before. The land



A schematic representation of the Skywalk deck

that the Skywalk is built on is owned by the Hualapai Tribe. Their reservation is located 90 miles west of the National Park. It was built with the intention of ending regional poverty with tourism dollars. Entry to the Skywalk is \$25 in addition to the fee to enter the National Park.

Great debate has ensued both on and off the reservation with regard to the environment, the integrity of nature, and respect for tribal burial grounds. All debates set aside, the Skywalk is finally open! Not surprisingly, it is on the must experience list of many people.

## Dear Students:

# Good luck on final exams! Have a fantastic summer!

## From all of us at

# The Office of Student Affairs The Office of Residence Life



## Getting Back the Passion

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However, the simple act of getting to Israel is a luxury that, unfortunately, many do not have the time or the money for. A more practical solution is to GET INVOLVED! By taking action and being proactive in Israel-oriented events, one is making the memory come alive. Maintaining a bond with Israel is similar to the bond one has with his/her *chavrutah*. If one schedules for a definite time, the *chavruta* will take place. If not, there won't be a full time-commitment and any small distraction may eliminate the possibility of it ever happening. By being active, one would always be putting oneself in check by contemplating Israel's importance to them in their own lives. If one is inactive, the feeling may not arise and it may even fall further away into the recesses of one's mind.

YU offers many opportunities to get involved. Whether it is the Israel Club, Counterpoint, a variety of *shiurim*, Lmaan Achai, Aliyah Club or the Middle East Club, there is always a forum within which to be proactive when it comes to Israel. Dylan Kurlansky, future president of the

Israel Club, stated that, "being active on campus has allowed me to sharpen my focus and to keep my love for Israel alive, even though I've only managed to return there once." Many others feel this way too—past president of the Israel Club, Avi Narrow-Tilonsky stated: "Being active on campus has allowed me to maintain a connection with people in Israel that are constantly building the Jewish community... their passion is often contagious."

The advantage of being active? Not only will one retain one's passion for Israel, but one will also be surrounded by others in the YU community who share that very same passion and are also experiencing those very same struggles. This provides the environment and support one needs to keep the dream alive.

## Creating a Religious Community

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this decision was in our hands.

The question of the religious community at an all-women's observant institution, in a traditional and thus male-indispensable framework, is a difficult one. Should we live without the many brilliant halakhic opportunities for growth, *avodat Hashem* and the platform for religious communal life? Should we mimic the halakhic options available to our male counterparts, despite the non-halakhic nature of such activities? Or maybe we should recruit men constantly to provide for us the traditional religious lifestyle?

These questions arose time and time again throughout my time at SCW. They are inherent in this college. Certainly this college as placed in Midtown Manhattan, with no resource of organized Jewish males in our community to pull in to create the third option above. Though most progress made at SCW while the class of '07 doesn't directly answer this question, it does enhance our religious life immeasurably to know that we will soon have a beautiful space in which to share this experience, a 150-seater, Torah scroll-housing, refined *beit midrash*. This space for learning is invaluable in cultivating our religious life at SCW. It will inspire women to learn Torah together, to pray

together in a *makom Torah*. It will provide a serious and complete platform for our religious community. Every morning Torah classes, which next semester will have quadrupled from fall 2005 with two *gemara* courses and two *tanakh* courses. That means about 40 plus students learning the same subject matter, with the same peers, in the same area every morning! This is a tremendous thing for SCW. The *beit midrash* is full of life and learning by 8:40 a.m.!

Time and space are essential in encouraging our religious community and SCW has made great strides in this. Graduating students will leave SCW confident in its development on this front and anticipating more and more exciting developments in the future. Current students, poise yourselves for pushing advancements in the realm of religious life at SCW. Approach and challenge your peers and administrators; there are so many opportunities for positive and effective change for religious life at SCW. Let's look forward to celebrating the successes of 5768.

## Hareidi and Secular Israelis In Disagreement

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tend to not have a major impact on Israeli society. The number of people involved is small. Also, the individuals who come to such events are the more open-minded and accepting persons. Sometimes these dialogues turn into a screaming fest where individuals list a long litany of complaints to the other side. Both sides usually believe they are the sole bearers of truth. Very rarely are the stereotypes broken and personal relationships are permitted to develop. Although this mode of conflict resolution is an important one, its impact should not be overestimated.

The second approach that can catalyze the people of Israel from zero-sum to positive-sum is to mobilize the elite opinion leaders like the journalists, rabbis, Jewish educators, business leaders and mid-level politicians. These leaders could have a rippling effect on the community at large. This resource, which exists in both communities, has not been tapped into. The exceptions are the think tanks and small groups involving journalists and academics. These workshops have had little success in the past and are usually filled with heated arguments in which each side presents their views and attacks

the other side with little room for compromise. Also, these groups almost never include *Hareidim*.

Workshops such as these that include members of the elite from each sector of society need to be instituted. These leaders must be sensitized to the importance of finding a common ground and shared goals. This way they can influence their different communities. Sustained efforts have to be made to include *Haeridim*. If these meetings are not completely inclusive there is little hope for success.

The third approach is to redefine the 'social contract.' At the creation of the State of Israel, leaders from both camps met to hammer out a status-quo arrangement. They were able to come to an agreement on a variety of different issues including the role of the rabbinate in religious marriage and divorce, public observance of Shabbat, *kashrut* in public institutions, and separate and autonomous educational systems. This agreement was status quo; it would continue unchanged. This was done to prevent conflict in a time when Israel's survival was hanging in the balance. It was understood that this was necessary at this crucial focal point in Jewish history. A common interest, to protect the Jewish people,

was shared. Since it was the leaders of the two communities who negotiated this social contract, all Israelis adhered to this arrangement.

Today, this agreement has broken down. How can it be repaired? Can a new social contract be negotiated? There have been efforts made in this direction. Some changes that have been suggested are the opening of more shopping malls on Shabbat, providing alternatives for couples to marry outside the rabbinic system, and secular schools strengthening their Jewish studies curriculum. Of course, many contentious issues remain. A few examples are the exemption of the ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students from military duty, the large number of *Hareidim* who collect social assistance, whether roads going through Orthodox neighborhoods should be open on Shabbat, etc.

Due to the wall of ignorance between the secular and the religious, both communities feel they are under attack from each other. In reality, both communities are thriving. The Middle East does not allow the luxury of a house divided against itself.

## On a National Chemistry Meeting, Kiddush Hashem, and Some Confusing Seafood

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from all over the world," who one day may be behind cures for the diseases of our time.

Hovering around my poster in a sea of incredibly intelligent people, I was simultaneously hit with intense feelings of pride and humility. Having students from many universities listen intently to me describe my work and then compliment my research with looks of admiration was a great feeling. As Guigui said, exposing her research to the science community made her project feel "more meaningful and concrete." But a mere walk through one row of posters, whose titles made as little sense to me as the fish-balls in the caf, was a powerful reminder of how large the puzzle and how tiny my piece. Bursky-Tammam put it best, describing her experience as "empowering and inspiring." Most of all, seeing the huge numbers of students and professionals interested in the overall pursuit of scientific knowledge was encouraging, both in my own goals and aspirations and in my hopes that with every budding scientist we have ever the more potential to understand and combat the mysteries and illnesses of our time.

Throughout our two day trip, there were moments during

which we were strongly reminded of our Jewish/religious background. We spent half of our Sunday traveling Chicago in search for Kosher food, and had to vaguely explain to our new friend Sara that we just "weren't in the mood" to stay at the club-like undergraduate social mixer (insert funny mental image of science nerds "getting down" to the beat of a DJ) before making a beeline to the exit two minutes after arriving. But, in all seriousness, we all felt an extra element of pride presenting our research when we would say we were from SCW or Yeshiva University. After all, doesn't my Torah U-Maddah education constantly implore me to bring wisdom to life? Throughout my trip, I was struck by thoughts centering on how, as a representative of the central modern Orthodox institution of higher education in America, my contribution to the meeting bore a unique responsibility. Especially considering how rarely we at SCW interact with students from such a diverse population as those in attendance at the conference, I wanted to take full advantage of my opportunity to perform a *kiddush Hashem* (positive representation of G-d's people). Yes, the primary obligation of the Jewish nation is

to learn and develop Torah, but we are also meant to be a "light unto the nations" in every possible manifestation of G-d's presence in our world, be it in the fields of fashion, business or science. I was also pleasantly surprised by other students' positive interest in, and responses to, our description of our distinctive background and lifestyle. The conference was definitely enhanced by a pervading atmosphere of mutual respect and acceptance.

I would strongly encourage any science major to consider participating in research, and then in the poster session held at SCW each year. There is so much knowledge waiting to be uncovered, and even the smallest of pieces is needed to complete any puzzle. But I would also hope that every student reading this article can take away from it a small sense of the great potential you have, no matter what your interests, in fusing your responsibility as a Jew with pursuing what you love.

## YU Students Connect to Alumni Living in Israel

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Arazi and Aviv's job is to gather the information about the interested students and convey these details to the YU Office of Alumni in Israel. The office in Israel is responsible for pairing current YU students interested in making aliyah with YU alumni who have already done so.

Although the YU Oleh Network was only formed in the last few months, it has been an idea of Arazi's since he transferred from Brandeis University in 2005. He recalled that Brandeis has a system that can link students to alumni all over the world and he thought it would be appealing for YU to have a similar system. That component, coupled with his knowledge that numerous students contemplate aliyah, was the impetus behind

the creation of the YU Oleh Network.

"I had students approaching me asking how to find jobs in Israel," explained Arazi, "and the only thing I could do, was direct them to NBN. But even though NBN is great, we have the resources to connect YU students to YU *olim* (immigrants)."

According to Arazi, there are three to four thousand YU alumni living in Israel, and he hopes that they will be able to help current YU students with their decision to make aliyah. "There are so many students thinking of aliyah," stated Arazi. "Aliyah is either in back of their minds or closer to the front and I think the main factor stopping them from making aliyah is a lack of familiarity, connections in the job market in Israel."

Aviv agreed. "My parents

are Israeli so I know personally, from my parents, that unless you're financially secure in Israel it's really hard to leave America," she noted. "That's why I got involved, because I want to help people."

Arazi and Aviv are now awaiting responses from the YU office in Israel and hope that this program will be able to offer potential YU *olim* the contacts they need in Israel to actualize their aliyah dream in a more comfortable way.

## Congregation Edmund J. Safra Flourishes

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Elie Abadie, M.D. Rabbi Abadie also serves as the director of the Jacob E. Safra Institute of Sephardic Studies at Yeshiva University, and is a gastroenterologist.

Due to its fantastic location and gorgeous building, as well as its rising prominence as a significant congregation in Manhattan, Congregation Edmund J. Safra has already welcomed numerous international dignitaries, including prime ministers from Israel. It has also partnered with CAMERA, the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America, the Israeli Likud Party, and the Jewish National Fund for various projects.

How has the synagogue managed to accomplish so much in so

little time? "We have good public relations," said Rabbi Abadie. "We don't have the red tape that many congregations have, where a new idea must pass through committees and committees and the board and votes. Instead, we basically just have the Rabbi and the programs director, and we make sure to get our goals accomplished."

"With the synagogue," he concluded, "the Sephardim here are really a community now."

## Remembering Michael Levin and Amichai Merchavia

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eyes whenever Israel was mentioned. "I believe you can read a person by their eyes," Gilad said. "Every time I stood in front of him, whether I was shouting at him or laughing with him his eyes would open wide with a spark in them."

After going home for vacation, during which time he attended a Broadway show and a Phillies game, the Second Lebanon War broke out. Levin cut his vacation short and returned to Israel because that is where he wanted to be.

Shlomie Singer, an IDF medic, remembers asking somebody who was religious if he could borrow his *kippah*. Immediately Levin took off his *kippah*, which Shlomie describes as "huge, bigger than his head" and gave it to him. When Levin was hit by enemy fire, Shlomie Singer was the one who carried him back to a designated safe house.

"Hamefaked Gilad" was informed that he would be helping to carry a dead soldier back across the border. He and others did this, even though it was extremely difficult and at times they were under severe fire. It was only afterwards, when a section commander remarked, "That Michael was really light- that body didn't weigh anything at all," that Gilad realized whom he had been carrying throughout the night.

The funeral was held in Israel in fulfillment of Levin's wish to

be buried on Har Herzl. His parents were concerned that there might not be a minyan- after all, "nobody knows us in Israel." Not only was there a minyan, but the number of people there was in the thousands.

After the documentary, Blumenfeld gave a moving speech about his friend and comrade in the army, Merchavia. "Amichai saw everyone as his friend, even our commanders," Blumenfeld explained. He described how Amichai would volunteer for the "bad" guard duty, would sacrifice for his friends no matter the situation. He was the one who volunteered to stay on base the very first week when everyone wanted to go home, show off their uniforms, and talk about their experiences to their families.

Merchavia, as a native Israeli, offered his services as unofficial tourguide, enhancing the experience of the other soldiers. He loved to educate them and "you could see in his face that every step he took in the land was a *zechut* and a blessing," recalled Blumenfeld.

A natural leader, Merchavia received the Excellent Soldier award, and then went on to Commander School. Never afraid to express his opinions and beliefs, he wrote a letter to an official explaining very respectfully that he felt the disengagement was wrong. That official was not pleased with his remarks and tried to strip him of his honors. Thanks to the intervention of others, Merchavia was only put

on three weeks of probation.

On July 25, 2007, 30 members of Gimmel Company, Merchavia's Company, were hit. He was killed.

At his funeral, Moshe Merchavia, Merchavia's father, said "Amichai- your grandfather fought for the establishment of Israel. In your merit- in merit of you and those who fight for the land of Israel, we continue to live and prosper in land of Israel." Moshe also had a message for the YU students who would be listening to Amichai's story, asking that Blumenfeld "please tell them that we are waiting for them here in Israel. Tell them that this is what Amichai fought for."

In the film, "A Hero in Heaven," one speaker quoted the words of Israeli poet Shaul Chernokovsky:

Peace to you Rabbi Akiva  
Peace to you Rabbi  
Where are the saints?  
Where is the Maccabee?  
Answers him Akiva  
Answers him Rabbi  
All of Israel is sainted  
You are the Maccabee.

Levin and Merchavia were passionate, caring, idealistic, young people who died as heroes defending the state of Israel. Levin and Merchavia are the Maccabees.

## Riskin and Klein Discuss Zionism

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pressure, not a security issue.

The question regarding giving away land for peace led Riskin, the rabbi of Efrat, a neighborhood surrounded by three Arab communities, to discuss the failed goal of religious Zionists in bridging the gap within Israeli culture between *Hareidi* Jews and secular Jews. He attributed it to the growing disconnect between secular Jews and the Land of Israel. If religious Zionists were supposed to be the ones that valued the Torah of the *Hareidim* and the land that the secular community valued, the goal is lost when valuing the land is a religious endeavor. A poignant illustration of this was when Riskin com-

pared his own son and grandson who had served on the front lines of the Israel Defense Force to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's sons who have never served. Both Klein and Riskin gave bleak answers as to how much at American religious Zionists can do for Israelis. Klein felt this was due to the fact that everyone is waiting for their own leaders to take positive actions, and this means getting rid of the Hamas

government. Riskin voiced his views of discontent for American religious Zionism saying: "You simply cannot do it in America. You can only do it in Israel. There is a great divide between our communities. That great divide has to do with serving in the army...putting your lives on the line." On that note, he encouraged everyone in the audience to make the move to Israel. Upon hearing those words, Deborah Anstendig (SCW '07) felt "his statements were a little harsh. I'm not sure its fair to fault our generation for the accident of the location of its birth at the same time it is clearly more authentic to be a religious Zionist in Israel," she said.

Regardless of the side they chose to take, everyone in attendance was able to agree on one thing: the evening was relevant and thought provoking, causing people to think about religious Zionism in new ways.



Mort Klein, President of the Zionist Organization

# F A S H I O N

## New Fashions Reminiscent of Older Looks

BY JULIE AST

Miucca Prada premiered clothing influenced by 90s minimalism for her fall collection. A few months earlier, at her spring show, she sent models down the runway in mini shorts reminiscent of a 40s pinup girl.

In a slew of fashion shows taking place bi-annually in cities across the globe, designers took inspiration for their ready-to-wear collections from previous decades and reworked a bygone aesthetic into their new lines.

In Milan this fall, Bottega Veneta showed clothing suggestive of the forties with flapperesque evening dresses. While in Paris, Lanvin featured dresses with a reimagined 80s padded sleeve done in a loose airy version.

Designers receive inspiration for these innovations from vintage stores, which carry clothing from the last century. James Hanington, the manager of Cheap Jack's, a vintage clothing store in Midtown Manhattan, frequently sees designers in his store shopping for period pieces that will ultimately influence their next collection. "Calvin Klein comes in," he said. "Tommy Hilfiger himself comes in. Marc Jacobs himself comes in. A lot of major designers come in, especially during fashion week. Either they will send their teams in or they will come in themselves."

Designers' purchases in the store indicate which styles will be popular. "This season they were looking at a lot of the army navy stuff and the 60s wild print dresses," he revealed. "They are buying anything with a funky print and graphic colors. Calvin Klein started shopping a while ago with his design team, but I noticed that what they have come out with has a bit of an army navy look to it. And they bought

a lot of army wear... I know that they are going for the army navy look."

These looks debut on the runway, but are then translated into more affordable wear for consumers. At Zara, a green belted jacket, reminiscent of army wear, retails for \$99. The navy trend is ubiquitous in most clothing stores for spring. Nautical stripes done in blue and white can be found anywhere from Forever 21 to Banana Republic. Forever 21 interprets the trend in a casual striped shirt, while Banana Republic makes a cotton flutter sleeve sweater dress.

them; like they can be new shoes as long as they can match with the outfit."

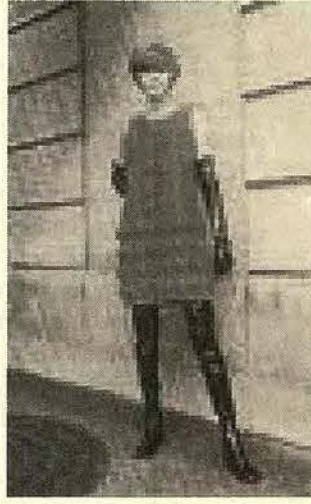
This melding of decades can be attributed to fashion magazines, who translate designers' latest offerings into must-have trends, but have lately been sending mixed messages to consumers. *Lucky*, a hybrid of a shopping catalogue and fashion magazine, features a quote from Hope Greenberg, a fashion director, who says, "I'm craving the crisp 20s-throwback glamour of *The Great Gatsby*." In a February issue of *Harper's Bazaar*, another fashion publication, editors

dress though, creates a distinct style combination that belongs to current times. Updated looks from the past could be fashion's defining characteristic for the first decade of the new millennium.

While previous fashion successes have been an ideal copied by designers today, they have started to look at the future for inspiration this season. The new futurism look features silver, gold and bronze done in leggings and mini dresses. "Commes des Garcons that is always a little more futuristic than all of the more and Junya Watanabe, all the



The 50's



The 60's



The 70's



The 80's



The 90's

During fashion weeks in Paris, New York, Milan and London, designers come to a consensus over which trends will be prominent next season. But recently, they have drawn inspiration from such a variety of decades that even the discerning

fashionista would have trouble determining which dated aesthetic is in style today.

Hanington observes that in Cheap Jack's, a combination of decades, and not one period alone is most popular. "Today, it's weird, I see everyone wearing a cross between 60's,

70's, and 80's," he said. "The blouses are great if you wear them with jeans of today and throw on a cool belt- you know, if the shirts a little long you can throw on a cool belt over it. A lot of 60s, 70s and 80s dresses look good with big modern belts you can mix and match. It doesn't matter what shoes you wear with

report that the 80s is the newest decade to covet. Editors are not fully to blame for projecting a garbled view of future spring trends. They take their cues from designers who are sending a hodgepodge of looks down the runway.

Over the past couple of years trends have ranged from 60s inspired baby doll dresses, to leggings hailing from the 80s, to plaids reminiscent of 90s grunge. The new century has ushered in an eclectic mix of fashions from past decades without determining a style of its own. Instead, trend conscious women haphazardly combine these looks, casually throwing on a pair of leggings under a baby doll dress to winterize an outfit. The combination of leggings and a 60s baby doll

Asian designers are more futuristic," explained Rachel Shpayer, an intern at Bergdorf Goodman's buying offices. "I haven't seen the new futuristic look in stores yet, but I would buy it when it comes out."

Hussein Chalayan ushered in this look last spring when he showed an innovative collection that combined technology and fashion. His oeuvre encompassed iconic pieces from previous decades with a modern twist and a futuristic quality.

This futurism look championed by Chalayan has not usurped the past, but hints of trends to come. Maybe designers will stop copying their former designs and

instead utilize their own creativity to create something new. The futurism trend has come too late to characterize a decade a melding of decades already has.

## Where to Shop



**Cheap Jack's**  
303 Fifth Ave at 31st  
New York, NY 10016  
212 777 9564



**Forever 21**  
50 West 34th St  
New York, NY 10001  
212 564 2346



**Banana Republic**  
17-19 W. 34th Street  
New York, NY 10001  
212 244 3060

## Student Appeals Elicit Policy Change at SCW

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they had known of it in advance, as SCW communicates its procedures to high schools. Additionally, she said, the more restrictive requirement did not present a serious problem, especially since academic advisors helped students plan their schedules accordingly. If undergraduates, usually transfer students or joint program participants, were dissatisfied however, they could appeal their cases to the Committee for Academic Standards. For a number of women, the committee did in fact lower the residency requirement, generally to 81 credits, which according to Dean Orlian, made a substantive difference for some students.

One such student is Aviva Stern (SCW '07), who described the challenges she encountered when enrolling in courses at Revel. "I have taken two Revel classes at Stern, one each semester of my senior year," she said. "I plan on continuing at Revel for my masters [degree]. So taking classes at Stern does count towards the masters, but I also

felt that there weren't enough challenging classes here, and that I wanted graduate level [classes]. My issue with on-campus credits is that I transferred from Brandeis, so I needed all my credits during my two years at Stern to be on-campus, and Revel classes are not considered campus credits. I petitioned to have these courses count as campus credits, and, after a lot of fighting and appealing, these requests were approved."

Stern continued: "I think that the rule is silly, because Revel is part of the university and many members of the Stern Judaic Studies faculty teach at Revel as well. Dean Orlian compared taking a Revel class to an FIT class, which certainly does not count as on-campus. I don't see how you can compare those two though, because FIT is a different school, while Revel is part of Yeshiva. I also find it ironic that students like myself, who transfer to Stern because of the opportunities in Judaic Studies, are met with such difficulties in the Jewish Studies departments and Dean's office. Just because Revel and Stern are

not physically on the same campus doesn't mean that they are not closely connected."

The administration hopes that with the newly changed policy, students interested in taking advanced Judaic studies courses at the graduate level will have an easier time doing so. Rabbi Dr. Ephraim Kanarfogel, chairman of the Rebecca Ivry Department for Jewish Studies at SCW, articulated this perspective. "I believe that the shift will be very helpful," he said.

## Science and Jewish Studies Departments Expand with New Faculty Additions

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University of California in Santa Barbara.

The second newcomer to the physics department, Dr. Santos, specializes in research related to quantum computing. She will be teaching both an introductory course and an advanced course in quantum mechanics. A post doctorate research associate will also be hired to work under her guidance to create more opportunities for students to participate in independent research with their professors.

Dr. Anatoly Frenkel, chairman of the physics department, expressed enthusiasm over the new additions. "The new faculty members are emerging as world leaders in their fields," he said.

Dr. Evan Mintzer, a physical biochemist at Clayton State University, has been recruited to the SCW department of chemistry. A researcher of lipid and protein interactions, Dr. Mintzer will teach biochemistry, biochemistry lab, and organic chemistry, a class which was previously only taught in one time slot by one professor. Dr. Lea Blau, chairwoman of the chemistry

department, pointed to the conduciveness of Dr. Mintzer's research to student involvement, as well as his dynamism as important factors contributing to his hiring.

The sciences are not the only disciplines undergoing expansion. SCW's Jewish Studies department has also assembled a sizeable roster of new faculty. Smadar Rosensweig has been hired as a full-time professor of Bible. She received her B.A. from Barnard College and M.A. and M. Phil from Columbia University where she is also currently pursuing a doctorate in Jewish History. Lynn Kaye, a doctoral candidate at New York University (NYU), will be teaching an advanced Hebrew class focusing on grammar through the lens of the Bible. Miryam Brand, also a doctoral candidate at NYU, will be offering a course on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Rabbi David Cohen, a *sgan mashgiach* on the Wilf Campus, will teach a class dealing with rabbinical responsa.

The lower intermediate and intermediate Judaic studies levels will also be gaining new faculty as of the fall. Mindy Eisemen, an

SCW alumna, will give a course on *hilchot nidda* (laws of purity), which has not been offered on an intermediate level for many years. "Our more beginning levels have grown and thankfully they too need more faculty," said Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel, chairman of the Rebecca Ivry Department for Jewish Studies.

Ophira Kopitnikoff (SCW '08) praised the college's recruiting efforts. "[The new hirings] will give SCW students a wider range of classes to choose from and cater to a broader range of interests."

## SCW Adds New Courses to Curriculum

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Holland's Baroque era supplemented with several field trips to a temporary 17th century Dutch art exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Professor Wisse said he developed the course because "the students at Stern have revealed to me and the other art history instructors a strong interest in experiencing art directly, unmediated by digital images or power-point presentations. This exhibition seemed to me an ideal setting in which to provide such experience and a marvelous medium through which our students could absorb an entire culture."

Other courses that have been added to the art department include "Advance Computer Design" and "Digital Video Production." These two courses will utilize high-tech software and equipment that the university has recently purchased. "Advanced Computer Design is in direct response to student interest and need," said Professor Traci Tullius, the driving force behind the new offerings. "Interest in computer design is growing rapidly, and the technology changes so quickly. This course will allow us to offer courses on new software as they become industry-standard. It also allows us to utilize the expertise of Professor Min Min, who was teaching only intro to computer design courses. Now students will benefit from his fluency and experience in graphic design beyond introduction of software and into advanced and specialized study."

"Digital Video Production" will be taught at the new communications lab in Belfer Hall on the Wilf Campus. "My own research is in video, so it made sense to take advantage of the new facilities to introduce Stern students to this growing and dynamic media," Professor Tullius explained.

The Jewish studies department at SCW is also a target of efforts to expand and diversify course offerings. Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel, the Rebecca Ivry Department of Jewish Studies chairman, has been working to address the needs and interests of students on all the various levels of the core curriculum. The "Biblical Hebrew" language course, taught by Dr. Lynn Kaye, a doctoral candidate at New York University, has been revived in response to both student and faculty requests. "Our ability to offer Biblical Hebrew was a felicitous combination of student and administrative interests," Rabbi Kanarfogel said. "We had offered this class a number of years back and very much wanted to offer it again, but it is not simple to find faculty who can teach it, given the expertise in a combination of disciplines that is needed. At the same time, stu-

dents had approached me and expressed their interest in this possibility. Energized by their request, I was able to reach out and find a very appropriate new adjunct faculty member."

Another class that has been revitalized is titled "Dead Sea Scrolls." It will be taught by Ph.D. candidate Miryam Brand, who is studying this area for her doctorate.

The Jewish history department has also expanded to include two additional courses on more contemporary periods. One, on Polish-Jewish relations in modern times, will be taught by Dr. Joshua Zimmerman. The other will be taught by Professor Reeva Simon and is titled, "Minorities in the Middle East." "Middle East courses ignore the significant contributions of Jewish communities that lived under Islamic rule for more than a millennium," elucidated Professor Simon in an effort to explain why she chose to introduce the class. "Jewish history courses tend to focus primarily on Ashkenazi Jewry. I am offering this course to fill the gap." Both of these courses are cross-listed with the secular history department as well.

Due to popular demand and its successful launch in spring 2007, the five credit Bible beit midrash course will once again be offered in the fall. The program has been expanded to include two courses instead of just one. Professor Naomi Grunhaus will be teaching a course called, "Biblical Exegetes: Radak," and Rabbi Mordechai Cohen will be teaching "Biblical Poetry," an analysis of Song of Songs.

"I felt that a course on Biblical poetry, with an emphasis on *Shir ha-Shirim* (Song of Songs) would be especially appropriate, because it is a good mix of skills and the focus on a text that deals with the human emotion of love, relationships, etc.," said Rabbi Cohen. "Also, there is a significant *parshanut* (textual analysis) component, and students will become familiar with exciting new developments in this field of scholarship that is now experiencing a renaissance in the modern Israeli academic world."

## Tuition Climbs for Second Year in a Row at Undergraduate Schools

*continued from page 8*

ic opportunities and a greater variety of scholars with whom to study," she said.

Dean Bacon also ascribed the tuition increase to the multimedia that is being added to every classroom, the purchase of a new residence hall, and the construction of an enlarged beit midrash. The university will be renovating all biology laboratories for research and instruction purposes as well. "To aspire to this level of excellence requires significant funding," she explained. The SCW dean also mentioned that YU President Richard M. Joel and other administrators were in the process of seeking further contributions to existing academic and financial scholarship funds.

In comparison to other similarly ranked private universities in U.S. News and World Report, YU actually falls in the middle to low range for education expenses. Tulane University, ranked at 44 along with YU, charged \$43,363 for an undergraduate living on campus for the 2006-2007 academic year. Other universities such as Rensselaer Polytechnic University, George Washington University and Case Western Reserve, ranked within the YU range and their rates are \$43,439, \$46,730, and \$39,818 respectfully.

Students were conflicted over reports of climbing tuition

costs. "I think it's a bad idea to raise tuition again," said Deena Zanger (SCW '08). "Academics and tuition go hand in hand and tuition should reflect this. The cost of Jewish living is so great and YU just adds to the pressure by charging an exorbitant amount. I have two other siblings at YU and the idea of my parents paying that kind of money three times over is just crazy."

Nechama Citrin (SCW '08) offered a different perspective. "I think it's important for students to be well informed of the improvements that the monies generated from this tuition increase are facilitating," she asserted. "Especially with regard to the additional professors who are joining the undergraduate campuses, their arrival should be publicized and student research opportunities with these professors should be available. I don't feel that the university has to account for every penny as a justification for its tuition hike, as much as making students aware of the academic and extracurricular benefits associated with this rise."

## Efforts Underway to Hire Shabbos Couple, New Advisors

*continued from page 9*

women to talk to, to help them explore their being, their Jewishness, their souls. We're hoping to have people Sunday through Thursday."

In order for the advisors to best meet the needs of the different students on campus, the women selected "will parallel the diversity of the student body," according to Dean Braun. The idea is for students of different spiritual and religious stripes to have advisors to whom they can relate.

Dean Braun's vision is for small groups of students to meet with an advisor and talk about things "that concern them in the spiritual, Jewish realm. We're thinking about small effective

programming to reach out to students," she said. "We're building a student committee right now to help give input in the program."

As with the hiring of an on-campus couple, the Yoetzet Program will likely be implemented by the start of the fall 2007 semester.

## Summer Honors Course Explores Art History of Florence

*continued from page 9*

retain their orientation from the late Medieval and Renaissance eras," explained Dr. Wisse.

The class will also feature a Jewish history component with excursions to the former Jewish quarter and synagogue of Florence. Another destination on the itinerary is neighboring Siena, Florence's leading rival city-state during the Renaissance.

All lectures will take place



The Medici Palace



Piazza della Signoria



Academia Gallery

on location, with a few offered by representatives of the art and Jewish communities of Italy. Dr. Wisse articulated his hope that the speakers "will offer perspective on the Jewish and artistic life in Florence—in historic and contemporary context."

Participants will be staying at a hotel in the heart of Florence for the entire duration of the trip. Dr. Wisse highlighted the advantages of the hotel's proximity to historic sites such as the Duomo and Baptistry. "Residency in Florence is designed to sharpen the students' skills at artistic interpretation and to make them more sensitive to the physical and geographical demands of artistic

production," he said.

Upon their return to campus, the women will be required to submit a research paper detailing their experiences in Florence. They will also keep a journal to record information and their responses to artwork, architecture and celebrated monuments, which will be used to compile a daily blog to share news and photographs of their travels with other students.

courses, both at home and abroad, are offered each summer. She stressed that "even the very, very best of classrooms cannot replicate these hands-on experiences." Dr. Wachtell also cited the benefit of having courses tailored to the religious needs of SCW students, such as accommodation for kosher restrictions and Shabbat observance, which eliminates many of the concerns arising when these women enroll in pro-

The course enjoyed an overwhelmingly positive response far exceeding its 15-student capacity. Adina Hirsh (SCW '08), an art major and one of the fortunate women who will be partaking in the trip, said she is looking forward to the opportunity to explore and to "walk around Florence and experience things firsthand."

"Art and Experience in Medici Florence" was created with the help of SCW Dean Karen Bacon and Dr. Cynthia Wachtell, director of the S. Daniel Abraham Honors Program. Wachtell explained that a variety of interactive honors

grams offered by secular schools.

The art history trip, which will run from May 28 through June 7, is the first of three honors study-abroad programs offered by the college over the upcoming summer. The other two, "Judaism under Greece and Rome: Classical Jewish History" and "Archeology of Israel," will be held concurrently, from July 2 to July 31 and are still open for admission.

"These are wonderful courses and we are very proud to offer these courses," enthused Dr. Wachtell. "I think, for the students, they are phenomenal and very memorable."

## The Ins and Outs of Independent Housing

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According to Schoenfeld, the apartments themselves do not provide the nicest accommodations. "We have people sleeping in the living room," she explained. "That is considered one of the bedrooms." But for her and other women, it is worth it.

"I enjoy the fact that I feel more independent," she continued. "You're not overwhelmed by being in a dorm with tons of other women."

Siegal agreed. "There is just more privacy, and it's easier for me to get my work done," she said. "Also, since it is an apartment, it really doesn't feel like a dorm at all, and it makes me feel more at home."

Another student, who wished to remain anonymous, said that she lives in Independent Housing because she enjoys being somewhat disconnected from the school. "I like being separate and

not really having an RA [resident assistant], and I just enjoy being independent as far as housing is concerned," she asserted. "I wouldn't come to Stern if I was forced to live in a regular dorm."

Although there is a YU presence in the Independent Housing buildings, it is clearly not as dominant as the one of the regular dormitories. While the Brookdale and Schottenstein dorms have an RA living on every floor, there is only one RA assigned to each of the Independent Housing buildings, though students occupy multiple floors in each.

However, Kraut maintains that all the rules and regulations that are enforced in the regular dorms apply to those who live in Independent Housing as well. "Rules like no men in the apartment and no alcohol in the apartment are the same for every student in every residence," she explained. When asked if there had been reports of violations of

those rules in Independent Housing, Kraut refused to provide details. "I can't answer that," she declared. "It's confidential."

"The main advantage of the 35<sup>th</sup> Street building is that it will be a YU building," Kraut explained. She believes that all students should have equal opportunities provided to them, regardless of where they live. "What is different now is perhaps the range of services available to the students in Independent Housing. The internet access is different, and the security of those buildings is not under YU's jurisdiction."

Another factor that affected the decision to purchase the 35<sup>th</sup> Street residence is the increasing amount of students who live on campus. "The numbers are certainly growing, and we would love to be able to accommodate everyone who wants to live here on campus," Kraut confirmed.

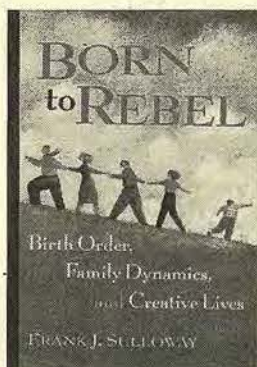
## Birth Order Effects on Personality

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extraversion. Beck considered the research of Sulloway that found firstborns rate high on dominance and later-borns rate high on sociability. A study was done in a within-family design with 96 undergraduate and graduate students who rated themselves and their sociability on a 12 item extraversion scale. The test results confirmed the findings of Sulloway; the firstborns scored higher in dominance and later-borns rated higher on sociability. A casual mechanism of de-identification in the family dynamics model describes younger sibling's efforts to differentiate themselves from the older sibling in terms of their interests, social attitudes, and personalities, as well as the roles that they fill within the family.

Studies that were done by Cecile Ernst and Jules Angst in 1983 have raised doubts as to the effects of birth order. A later study by R.L. Michalski and T.K. Shackelford in 2002 surveyed 277 undergraduate students, and collected their demographic

information as well as self-ratings on items designed to measure the Big Five. Contrary to Sulloway's findings, a positive relationship was found between firstborns and agreeability. Also a study by T. Jefferson in 1998



found no connection between birth order and personality among the 9664 participants who rated themselves.

In support of Sulloway's findings, Delroy Paulhus claims that researchers that failed to find a connection between birth order and certain personality traits all used between-family designs of studies, which means individuals

that were compared came from different families. This type of study does not control for the personality of the parent or for genetic similarities within families. When using within-family designs, Paulhus found that firstborns were high achievers and conscientious, while later-borns were rebellious, liberal and agreeable.

Whatever your birth order status is, you are certain to have an opinion about how it has affected your life. Each person has traits and characteristics that are influenced by both genetics as well as environmental factors, which to an extent are prejudiced by birth order. Every individual needs to look at their strengths and weaknesses and harness the positive aspects of these birth order affected traits to become successful in life.

## Live Longer on Less

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of Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, heart disease, Parkinson's disease and even cancer.

Although calorie restriction has only become hyped up within the last year or so, its effects were recognized as long ago as 1935. That year, Dr. Clive McCay, then a nutritionist at Cornell University, discovered that mice that were fed 30 percent fewer calories lived about 40 percent longer than their free-grazing laboratory mates. The calorie restricted mice were also more physically active and far less prone to the diseases of advanced age. The results of this experiment have been successfully replicated in a variety of species. In almost every instance, the subjects on the low-calorie diets live longer and have been more resistant to age-related ailments.

"In mice, calorie restriction doesn't just extend life span," said Leonard P. Guarente, professor of biology at Massachusetts Institutes of Technology. "It mitigates many diseases of aging: cancer, cardiovascular disease, neurodegenerative disease. The gain is just enormous." We also have data from the study at the University of Wisconsin. Those on normal diets, like Matthias, are beginning to show signs of advancing age similar to what we experience as humans; three have developed diabetes, another died

of the disease, and five have succumbed to cancer. On the other hand, Rudy and the others on the low-calorie meal plans are doing much better; none have diabetes, and only three have died of cancer. The study is still in progress, but the dieters here and at the other labs also have lower blood pressure and lower blood levels of certain dangerous fats, glucose and insulin. "The preliminary indicators are that we're looking at a robust life extension in the restricted animals," one researcher said.

The researchers are finding fascinating indications. But, what do we know about what these results mean for mankind? Researchers at Washington University have been tracking the health of small groups of calorie-restricted human dieters. In 2006, they reported that the dieters had better-functioning hearts and fewer signs of inflammation, which is a precursor to clogged arteries, than similar subjects on regular diets. In previous studies, people in calorie-restricted groups were shown to have lower levels of low-density lipoproteins, the so-called bad cholesterol, and triglycerides. They also showed higher levels of high-density lipoproteins, also known as the good cholesterol, virtually no arterial blockage, and remarkably low blood pressure. "Calorie restriction has a powerful, protective effect against diseases asso-

ciated with aging," said Dr. John O. Holloszy, a Washington University professor of medicine. "We don't know how long each individual will end up living, but they certainly have a longer life expectancy than average." Similarly, researchers at Louisiana State University reported last April in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* that patients on an experimental low-calorie diet had lower insulin levels and body temperatures, both possible markers of longevity, and fewer signs of the chromosomal damage typically associated with aging.

With this said, studies have clearly shown that there are health benefits to calorie restriction. As Americans, we are already quite familiar with the fact that it can help us to conquer "the battle of the bulge." But what's more so, American life expectancy has reached an all-time high. Even if calorie restriction doesn't guarantee an even longer life, it has been proven to give us a healthier life, including benefits such as better cholesterol levels and a decreased risk of getting diabetes. Does calorie restriction really lead to an even more enjoyable life? Well, that depends how much you like your brownies.

## Class of 2007 Commencement

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chief for NBC News and moderator of the well-known program "Meet the Press," was chosen to deliver the commencement's keynote address. Russert was selected as the speaker by a committee comprised of various university officials, with input from YU President Richard M. Joel. The candidates typically suggested and considered by the committee are respected leaders in their fields who demonstrate a commitment to values. Russert fits this bill. Deemed as a respected American journalist, he has interviewed politicians, journalists and celebrities, providing well researched and thought provoking discussions about a myriad of subjects on his show. He is the author of two best-selling books, a biography entitled "Big Russ and Me" and a collection of letters titled "Wisdom of Our Fathers: Lessons and Letters from Daughters and Sons."

Aside from speaking, Russert will also be receiving an honorary degree from YU. Other individuals receiving such degrees are Jacob (Yaacov) Birnbaum, the founder and director of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry and a noted author, educator and activist, Stanley Silverstein, the founder and

chairman of the Nina Footwear Company and Michael Steinhardt, the founder of Steinhardt Partners and a renowned philanthropist. President Joel regrettably informed students at the Beren Campus Town Hall Meeting on April 18 that no woman would be receiving an honorary degree. He was quick to explain that this was not done purposely, but rather, two female nominees were unavailable to attend the ceremony. To ensure a female presence at the commencement, the student speaker will be a female, SCW Valedictorian Shari Shanin.

With graduation rapidly approaching, seniors are busily contemplating their futures while simultaneously reflecting on their past years at YU. "Everywhere we go, for the rest of our lives, we carry with us the light which was kindled here at YU," said SCW Senior Class President Yael Schiller. "This class has among it the future leaders of the Jewish people both here and in Israel. This university has given us every resource and opportunity not only to reach our potential but to surpass it. The undergraduate experience is one of the most formative chapters in a person's life; I cannot imagine having spent mine anywhere else."

## Another Kind of Nuclear Proliferation

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the radioactive waste quite successfully, however the offshoot of this recycling process is high-grade plutonium—the key ingredient for a nuclear bomb. With terrorism at an all time high this raises a serious security issue if someone unauthorized were to get hold of this byproduct.

Do the benefits outweigh the possible costs? Nuclear power plants are environment-friendly (they release no carbon-dioxide) and they are also easy on the wallet. On one side the chances of an accident are so infinitesimal that it might not be worth the worry, but perhaps the potential danger is too great to be tested.

This issue is especially pressing considering the dire threat of global warming. Scientists and researchers are desperately looking for ways to solve the climate change/global warming enigma with a practical solution. But if the issue is truly escalating at the rate that some scientists predict, the world would benefit drastically from the clean air that

nuclear power makes possible.

Other countries have been using nuclear power for over 30 years and are meeting with much success. France made the decision to go nuclear decades ago,



The aftermath of Chernobyl.

and it now has the cleanest air of any industrialized country and the lowest electric bills in Europe.

However, the discoveries of nuclear science have been revealed to the world as a blessing and a curse—nuclear power can be the ultimate killer, but also the saving grace of our planet. The cost of failure in a nuclear power program is so grave, that the gamble is met with an incredible amount of skepticism. It will take time before the world opens up to this nuclear innovation.

## Office of Institutional Advancement

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online community. In the newsletter, one section each month is dedicated to spotlighting one noteworthy alumnus. This way, alumni can keep track of each other and know what their peers have achieved in life.

One such featured alumnus is Sara Gross (SCW '00). She went to medical school at the University of South Carolina and is now doing her residency at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Her husband, Rabbi Jonathan Gross, went to Nebraska on Torah Tours, and they liked him so much that the board of the synagogue, Beth Israel, asked him to come back and be the rabbi there after he received semikha (rabbinical ordination).

"Her life epitomizes Yeshiva University's value of 'Torah u-Madda because she is both a doctor and a rebbetzin," said Schechter. "She's considered a strong religious female role model."

Another major goal of the Office of Institutional Advancement is to connect the alumni to the students. To achieve this, several mentoring programs have been created to bond students to appropriate alumni who may be able to help them, whether by giving advice or by assisting them in finding jobs. One such program is the Yeshiva University Oleh

Network, initiated by Aharon Arazi (YC '08).

"He approached us to connect him to *olim* (immigrants) in Israel," explained Schechter. Many YU alumni have made aliyah, and now reside in Israel. Arazi wanted to be in touch with those alumni and connect them to students "to be a resource for making informed decisions about living abroad, careers, etc."

A junior in the Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB), Meyer Laniado, created a mentor program called BLIT, Business Leaders in Training. It provides SSSB students with mentors who have practical experience in the business world.

The Center for the Jewish Future (CJF), in conjunction with the Office of Alumni Affairs, started the Women's Leadership Fellowship. This past semester, every Thursday afternoon the women of the fellowship met to hear a speech by a prominent woman about careers and life as a Jewish woman in the workforce.

"We really emphasize the sense of community," explained Schechter. "We make people feel a larger sense of community, and they should give back to us in a number of ways—student internships, money, and other ways."

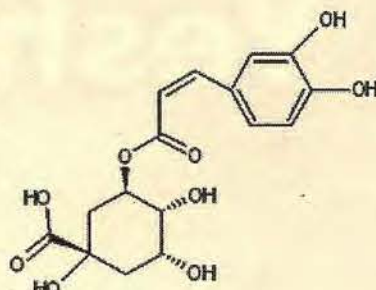
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Researchers then frequently sampled the blood of the healthy individuals over a three hour period. The results showed a higher concentration of blood glucose and insulin in the volunteers who drank caffeinated coffee than in the control group or the decaf group. Researchers concluded that the caffeine and chlorogenic acid in coffee affect glucose transport, reducing blood glucose levels. Therefore, the scientists suggested that drinking one to three cups a day of regular coffee reduces the risk of diabetes.

A lowered risk of diabetes is not the only health benefit of a daily cup of coffee. New research indicates that coffee can have a positive effect on Parkinson's disease (PD) patients. A movement disorder affecting thousands of people, PD causes the sufferer to lose control over his or her muscles. It is caused by the deterioration and death of dopamine producing cells in the substantia nigra region of the brain. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter used by our bodies to control muscle coordination and movement. In order to investigate new methods of treatment, researchers have begun to study the effects of coffee consumption of Parkinson's patients.

In 2003, scientists in the Department of Veterans Affairs of Honolulu, Hawaii studied the relationship between the intake of

caffeine and the risk of PD. The data from the study indicated that the age-adjusted incidence of PD decreased with increased coffee intake. This conclusion has opened up a door in the study of



Chlorogenic acid

one of the most crippling diseases, providing new hope for its many sufferers.

Along with caffeine, the antioxidant content of coffee has lately been linked to the prevention and treatment of PD. In 2001, the Nestle Research Center in Lausanne, Switzerland con-



ducted an experiment which concluded that coffee has high antioxidant levels. Antioxidants are molecules which prevent or

retard oxidation reactions in the body. Such reactions have been linked with the pathogenesis of neurodegenerative diseases such as PD and Alzheimer's. Therefore, in order to prevent or slow the onset and progression of these sicknesses, researchers are investigating the possibility of the use of antioxidants in preventative medicine.

Although these newfound benefits associated with coffee are tempting, drinking three cups a day is not without consequences. The caffeine causes an increase in heart rate, nervousness, and trembling. It can also raise cholesterol levels and contribute to the clogging of arteries. It is left to each person to decide if the benefits outweigh these risks.

For the average college student, coffee is a staple. It serves as breakfast, lunch, or dinner, and sometime serves as a pick-me-up late at night when the studying gets harder. Although that last cup may leave you lying in bed for hours wondering why you cannot fall asleep, it may be helping you live a longer and healthier life.

## Vaccines That Treat Cancer

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with cancer antigens will stimulate the immune system to attack cancer cells. The body doesn't normally attack tumors because they are not seen by the immune system as foreign. Cancer cells also sneak away from the immune system by shedding their immune system stimulating antigens.

Researchers are using their new insights into cancer defenses to stimulate immune response. One technique being researched is combining cancer cell antigens with a substance that triggers an immune response. This way, the immune system responds to the foreign substance as well as the tumor cells. Another kind of vaccine uses specialized white blood cells, or dendritic cells, from the patients' blood. These cells are stimulated with cancer antigens and reinjected into the patient. Once inside they re-activate the

immune system. Additional vaccines being developed are idio-type vaccines, and patient specific vaccines. Idiotypic vaccines use antibody as antigens to trigger immune response, and patient specific vaccines use the patient's own tumor cells to generate a vaccine to stimulate an immune response.

While cancer is a leading cause of death in the United States, progress is being made. The development of cancer vaccines are an emerging type of biological therapy. Although these vaccines are in the experimental stage, they look very promising. Through dedicated research, these ground breaking advances will make many types of cancer medical history.

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different types of allergic reactions. Food allergies are more common in children than adults. Food allergies are most common in those with a history of various allergies. These people are more likely to have asthma and other allergies.

Allergies come in many forms. Insect bites also cause an allergic reaction due to the venom that penetrates the skin upon being bitten. While it is normal to have some swelling, redness, pain, and itching at the site of a sting, an allergic reaction occurs when the body's immune system overreacts to the venom. Allergies to animals are more likely to cause breathing problems than skin problems. One may be allergic to the pet's dander, urine, dried saliva, or hair.

There are those individuals that develop allergies to latex after repeated contact, and espe-

cially to latex gloves. Occupational allergies consist of allergies that develop from exposure to a particular inhaled substance at the workplace. Cosmetics, such as artificial nails and hair extensions, are other common causes of allergic reactions.



Coughing is another common allergic reaction

Seasonal allergies show up at the same time every year and are caused by exposure to pollens from trees, grasses, or weeds. Hay fever is the most common seasonal allergy. Allergies that occur for more than nine months

out of the year are called perennial allergies. Between 20 and 40 million people in the United States are affected by perennial allergies. Chronic allergies are most likely to occur from exposure to animal dander, house dust, or mold.

Allergies are common and usually harmless. However, it is important to remember that sometimes they can be life threatening. Knowledge of what an allergic reaction is and how to treat it once it occurs is critical to dealing with the condition.

## Allergic Reactions

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