



# The Yeshiva University OBSERVER

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## Hardship Away from Home: International Students Struggle to Bridge Cultural Gaps

BY YAFFI SPODEK

Though it may not be evident at first glance, Yeshiva University is a cultural melting pot of students from diverse nationalities and backgrounds. Numbering about 130 women, international students comprise approximately 10 percent of the Stern College population, and hail from France, Morocco, Colombia, and Argentina, among other foreign countries.

Leaving family and friends behind, they often come here alone, barely speaking English and not knowing what to expect. For many, it is their first exposure to a completely Jewish environment, unlike anything they have ever experienced before. Some made the decision to attend Stern because there was no viable alternative in their home countries,

while others came following in the successful footsteps of a sibling or friend who was already studying here.

Regardless of their upbringings and their motivations for coming, these women all made a critical life-altering decision when they chose to attend Stern, hoping to make New York their new home for the next few years. Most thoroughly enjoy the time they spend here and are grateful to Stern for offering them this unique opportunity

However, the experience is not without its challenges. For all college students, Americans and foreigners alike, it takes time to adjust to a new environment, as they are faced with academic and social pressures typical of any

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Courtesy of Shana Maikhor

A foreign exchange: Latin American students Shana Maikhor (left) and Myriam Camhi (right) converse in 35th Street dormitory

## YU Israel Schools to Undergo Reaccreditation Process

BY YAEL WOLYNETZ

As part of an ongoing program of academic evaluations, all fifty seminaries and yeshivot in YU's S. Daniel Abraham Israel Program will undergo a reaccreditation process that will determine whether or not they will remain affiliated with the university.

Dr. Hillel Davis, vice president of University Life, confirmed that he initiated the

process by sending out letters to the Israel program's participating schools, indicating the need for each institution to reassess its relationship with YU.

According to Vice President Davis, the reaccreditation process serves a number of important purposes for the university as a whole. He pointed to the fact that over the years, the number of undergraduate students participating in the S. Daniel Abraham Israel Program has

increased dramatically.

"This means that for a majority of our students, one quarter of their university education is not provided by us," Dr. Davis noted. "If we as an institution are concerned with enhancing the education of our students, we have to ensure that every school in the program is moving in the long step process."

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## Amidst Continued Success, Impact of Honors Program Reevaluated

BY SHAYNA HOENIG

This fall, the S. Daniel Abraham Honors Program at SCW received the largest influx of students since its inception in September 1999. When the program was initially created, the hope was to ultimately have 10 percent of the student body enrolled. With 130 participants currently in the program, founder and director Dr. Cynthia Wachtell says that it is growing exponentially.

"For whatever combination of reasons," Wachtell remarked, "there's an unprecedented level of interest from students on campus in the program."

While most students apply to the program while still in high school, Wachtell reported that close to 15 undergraduates sought admission in the middle of last year.

News of the Honors Program's growth and success prompted The Observer to further investigate its impact on the college and participating students, as well as to ascertain whether both parties stood to benefit equally.

When interviewed, administrative officials affirmed the program's salutary effect, pointing to the more qualified composition of incoming classes and to improved

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## SCW Administration Imposes Stricter Enforcement of Dress Code

BY ESTHER BARUH

This fall, administrators at Stern College for Women have stepped up efforts to enforce the school's dress code guidelines, arranging for the distribution of informational cards on the first day of classes.

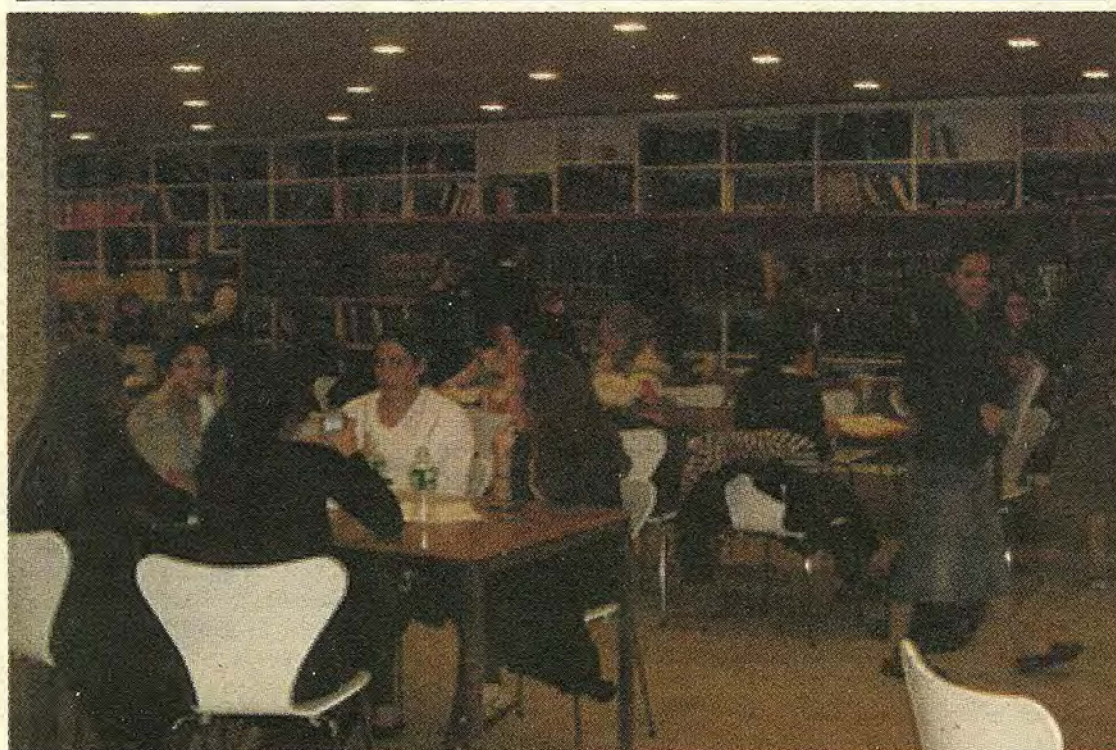
The conspicuously green notices featured a brief message endorsed by SCW Dean Karen Bacon, University Dean of Students Victor Schwartz, and Sy Syms Dean Michael Ginzberg, urging students to observe dress regulations requiring "proper length skirts and tops with sleeves."

SCW administrators said the more rigorous enforcement of the dress code, which dates back to 1972, was not a new initiative, but rather part of the university's larger goal of fostering an atmosphere compatible with the ideals of Torah u'Madda and academia.

"The campus dress code was instituted many years ago to stress the importance of maintaining a respectful and professional atmosphere in the classroom buildings of Stern College, a place of serious learning and a *makom* (place of) Torah," explained Dean Bacon. "The campus dress code is one of the ways that we distinguish ourselves as a community. It is an expression of a Modern Orthodox lifestyle."

Associate Dean Ethel Orlan also cited the tone of professionalism as an important factor. "The concept of a dress code is not unique to Stern College," she remarked. "There are many businesses which require their employees to conform to a dress code which they believe sets the proper

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Courtesy of Shaina Hoenig

Women maximize study at new Eisenberg Beit Midrash

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# STAFF EDITORIALS

## Visibility is Key

In their usual quiet and unassuming manner, the SCW deans have made efforts to increase their visibility on campus, discreetly lunching in both cafeterias during peak hours. Although their overtures may have thus far been overlooked, The Observer has taken notice and would even implore the administrators to make a bigger splash next time around.

While Stern is certainly its own institution, it does hearken to its proprietor, a university governed largely by men. A quick glance at the 16-person roster reveals that only one member of

the administration, YU's Vice President for Communications, is actually a woman. It is therefore not surprising that when students here think of the power-players at Yeshiva, they tend to forget the influence wielded by the female deans of this college.

It is important for all women, especially those attending a single sex school, to be afforded exposure and access to strong female role models. Such figures can be found amongst the faculty and administration, embodied in the likes of Dean Bacon and Dean Orlian, articulate, educated, and talented women laying claim to

an impressive list of personal and professional accomplishments.

Even the most ambitious students could use a little encouragement every now and then. In the face of oftentimes oppressive academic and societal pressures, the undergraduate women confront an array of challenges threatening to derail their greatest educational and career aspirations. The experiences of the SCW deans could shed some much-needed light and help empower students to practically realize their goals.

As such, students should maximize all available

opportunities to speak with the deans on an informal basis. But even formally, why should the use of "town hall meetings" be reserved solely for President Joel, whose busy schedule allows for only one each semester? Perhaps the SCW deans would consider convening a similar forum, allowing students to directly convey their concerns and ideas, yet on a more frequent, say, bimonthly basis.

With free-flowing communication designated as the long-term solution, heightened visibility is a significant and definite first step.

## The Price of Compromise

Last Monday's visit by Sephardic Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar raised important questions about the university's relationship with its undergraduate women's division, SCW. The chief rabbi's brief stopover at the Beren campus, as well as the content of his actual remarks, upset many students and generated debate both in and out of the classroom.

There are a few issues which need to be addressed. First among them is the failure of the event's organizers to adequately inform the women of the day's earlier proceedings. Most Stern students were wholly unaware

that Rav Amar had spent the bulk of his YU visit uptown, as fliers circulated announced only the scheduled 45-minute talk in Levy Lobby. Some attributed the discrepancy in allotted times to the chief rabbi's discomfort with speaking to the women, relating to his fear that they would not be appropriately dressed.

Rav Amar's discrediting of women's learning, the heart and soul of SCW, was another subject of controversy, as was his extolling of the female gender's sole and primary roles as wife and mother.

In truth, the chief rabbi's views should not come

as a surprise to anyone familiar with his cultural background and religious community. Rav Amar is perfectly entitled to his opinions regarding women and although we respectfully disagree, we do not feel that it is within our purview to condemn or criticize.

At the same time however, we do wish to ask the university where it draws the line in inviting and accommodating speakers at the expense of its female undergraduate population. If a distinguished rabbi from the Ashkenazic community promised to speak on the condition of a male-only audience, would YU accede

to the request? Is the apportioning of a mere three quarters of an hour to SCW (as compared with several hours to YC) that dissimilar?

Rav Amar's visit was not an exercise in intellectual freedom. It was intended to afford students the privilege of hearing from a renowned Torah scholar. If this university truly believes in equal opportunity, then is it appropriate to actively extend speaking invitations to individuals who do not uphold this value?

The women of the Beren campus still comprise half of the undergraduate student population, regardless of the issue at hand.

## Stern Through the Ages

Beginning with this issue, The Observer is proud to introduce "Stern Through the Ages," a new feature supplement slated to appear several times over the course of the academic year. Segments will highlight both specific moments and larger trends which have helped shape and define the character of the college since its groundbreaking inception in 1954.

Each edition will include a factual essay describing the historical period under discussion,

enabling students to get a glimpse of events unfolding within SCW and the Jewish and world communities at large. Reflections of alumnae and faculty will be incorporated as additional submissions.

The reason for the project is twofold. The systematic chronicling of Stern's history has paled in comparison to that of Yeshiva College. Though a comprehensive endeavor of that nature is not one which The Observer is equipped to pursue, the newspaper's staff did feel

it was important to provide the undergraduate women, to the best of its ability, with at least a small sense of their school's history.

Moreover, stereotypes regarding provincialism and apathy have long persisted at Stern. However, a closer review of history indicates otherwise. Students at the college were committed to broadening their minds through liberal-arts education and devoted themselves to causes which they felt passionate about. Current undergraduates have a rich legacy

of activism to draw from and build upon.

In the 1950s, Stern was considered a progressive institution, one that was distinctive from other women's colleges of the time. It is no different today. We may just need a reminder of the school's past accomplishments in order to appreciate its unique offerings today.

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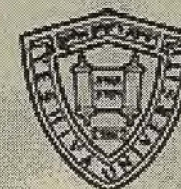
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### Correction

In the September article, "Donors Back New Beit Midrash," the graduation year of Rachel Steinberg Balsam and Judy Rosenberg Feder Rackman was mistakenly noted as 1958 instead of 1962.

All letters to the editors should be sent to  
[scwobserver@gmail.com](mailto:scwobserver@gmail.com)

# Letters to the Editor

To the Editor,

I thought it was interesting that page eight of your newspaper had an article "dispelling myths" regarding SCW, and denying stereotypes such as going to Stern for an "MRS" degree. The main article on the front page (and on your website) was an article about YU's new dating service. Maybe your article about the new Beit Midrash should have been moved from page three to page one. If you want to complain about stereotypes, stop contributing to them.

Shlomo Wadler  
YC '07

To the Editor,

I was very glad to read Jaimie Fogel's intelligent, sharply written, and very true response to Noah Feldman's infamous article, "The Orthodox Paradox."

As a product of the Modern

Orthodox day school system, I, like many others, have seen numerous cases in which the "modern" trumps the "orthodox" in almost every area of life. Examples range from the way general studies becomes secondary to Torah studies, as Ms. Fogel demonstrates, as well as the frequent compromising of halakha as a means of advancing in the secular world.

Additionally, as a proud graduate of Maimonides School, I am saddened by the fact that another alumnus, Noah Feldman, did not come out with the same love and passion for leading a Torah observant life as I did. During my 14 years at Maimonides, I found meaningful religious classes, experiences, and role models to look up to.

Aliza Vishniavsky  
SCW '08

To the Editor,

I was extremely disturbed by the article "Seminary Blacklisting

Policy Comes Under Scrutiny," published in your last issue. Seminaries have every right to offer advice to their students concerning the different courses offered at Stern, as well as those given at any other college which their students might attend.

College is a tremendous transition from seminary and undergraduates are not always prepared for the changes that await them. They come from sheltered environments, in which everything they learn is hashkafically acceptable to them. Although some may argue otherwise, Stern does provide a strong environment which offers a wide variety of teachers to accommodate the religious diversity of its student body.

However, the fact remains that not every class in Stern is acceptable to every undergraduate. There are many women who arrive at Stern, believing that everything they are exposed to is compatible with their personal views and take

everything in with open arms. They are then shocked to find that the content of some classes offend them or conflicts with the halakhic authorities they follow.

Michlala, as well as some other seminaries, try to make the transition to college more bearable and palatable by offering opportunities to find out about courses which are or are not in line with the seminary's hashkafa. These seminaries try to shape their students' college experiences so that they can make the most out of them.

At Michlala specifically, the session which reputedly "blacklists" Stern is in no way mandatory nor is there any externally-imposed pressure to attend. Any student who wishes to have a more private meeting to discuss her course options can take the initiative to do so. Furthermore, Michlala does not force any student to act on its advice; the women are free to take it or leave it. They are allowed to think for themselves and ultimately make their own decisions.

On the other hand, I am thankful that Michlala held the session because I would not have otherwise considered bringing up the topic of my upcoming coursework with a teacher. I was unaware of any such need. If it was not done publicly to some extent, I would not have put much consideration into my choice of classes. I expect that this holds true for some other students as well.

The pre-emptive information I received at Michlala regarding Stern courses and professors allowed me to take classes that aligned with my hashkafa and thus, enabled me to maximize my academic experience here. Instead of taking classes that would possibly cause me to question the integrity of Stern as an Orthodox institution, I have been able to take courses that have enhanced my spiritual growth and to fully appreciate what this college has to offer.

Michal Golan  
SCW '08

## Accepting One's Limits: Permission to Fail

BY OLIVIA WIZNITZER

"Our own era simply denies death and with it one fundamental aspect of life."

-*Escape from Freedom* by Erich Fromm

We live in a world of miracle pills, drugs, lotions and unguents, anti-aging creams, and everlasting youth. The goal of this world is to trick the mind into negating the obvious: people grow older and then, at some point, they die. But we cannot accept this. Instead, we must fight the aging process, fight against the reality that death awaits us all, fight to seem to be what we are not. We are engaged in a battle against the indestructible, and somehow we think our pale mockeries and shams are worthwhile. But this fight against aging and death connotes something darker than a mere obsession with youth and beauty; instead, it is a perfect example of the American mentality; namely, the belief that we have no limits.

There is a peculiar and cruel trick we play upon ourselves; we are taught that we are capable of anything and many of us internalize this message. From the time we are little, we are bombarded by signs, bumper stickers, slogans and mantras that state that "You can do anything!" "Man is without limits!" "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again!" We believe that hard work yields results. If one only works hard enough, it is clear that he will succeed. By default, someone who does not succeed has not worked hard enough; he does not truly want to reach his goal.

It was Marx who first unveiled this as a capitalist lie. This equation, he explained, is a ruse to

enable the rich to become richer and force the poor to become poorer. It keeps the poor in their place because it shames them. If hard work equals success, then clearly a poor person, if he works hard enough, could one day join the elite aristocracy. If he does not succeed in this endeavor, it is his fault. And so man toils endlessly, desperate to reach his goal, believing that he is at fault if he cannot.

Upon further reflection, it is clear that there is more involved in success than simple desire and the will to work hard. Perhaps chief among these other factors is opportunity. A common historical question is whether the men who rise to power do so through their own efforts or through a unique combination of skill and opportunity. The majority agree that people gain power due to economic, social, and political circumstances and not simply their own might. For example, had Hitler been born in another age, there is little evidence to suggest he could have achieved the position and power granted him in his own time.

This question is broached in our own exegesis on the Bible, when the Rabbis inquire as to the status of Noah as compared to Abraham. Would Noah have been considered great in Abraham's generation? There are different answers given, not all of them complimentary.

So why do we persist in this belief of the self-made man, our unique and individual snowflake? Why do we insist that man has the power to be whomever he wants to be, accomplish whatever he desires, fulfill his dreams or otherwise act in a completely unlimited fashion?

It is because we fear the idea of limits. We see limits as inherently bad. If man is limited, he

is unable to do all that he wishes, to fulfill all his dreams. This is viewed as constraining and constricting. Western society does not like such bonds.

But I would argue that it is far more binding to insist that we are unlimited. For what happens if we do fail? What happens when we try our hardest and it is simply not enough? We can only feel a sense of deep and overriding shame. We are the ones at fault, we know, for our society dictates that if we only wanted something enough, only put in enough effort, our dream would coalesce. So perhaps then we lie to ourselves and claim that we did not actually try our hardest. For if we had, a sly voice murmurs in our minds, how could we have failed?

Science permits us to accept certain limitations, namely those dictated by genetics. If someone is mentally challenged, that is not his fault; it is that of his genes. No matter how hard he strains or tries, he will not grasp the complicated subject matter you are trying to teach him. So you adjust your expectations to the individual. One deals with reality, not with what one wishes to be true.

Why is it that we can be so kind to others, but cannot be kind to ourselves? By refusing to accept that we are limited beings, creatures who are products of our environments, experiences, and surroundings, we engage in an act of cruelty. We become angry with ourselves, frustrated when we fail. We view failure as negative; we think in terms of negatives. If we fail, there must be someone to blame. If we are unlimited, we are that person. We engage in such a complicated game of lies and shame and blame, and what does it get us? On the rare occasion, it truly does

push us onward to success. However, most of the time, it only hinders us.

Can we bypass our environments? Cannot the mind surpass every experience and accumulate more information? Yes and no. I used to be intensely frustrated by people who could not see things my way, even if they did not agree with me. I have learned that sometimes people cannot see things my way. They cannot because my way of seeing is so far removed from them, from all they know and all they were taught that it is impossible for them to grasp. Can I truly expect individuals who have been taught certain values all their lives to lay them aside when I ask them to see something differently? It is not a reasonable expectation.

We are limited by the breadth of our experience, our upbringing, our natural talents and qualities, and the opportunities we have been given. We are limited by our social station and by the amount of money we have. Our minds are formed and molded by all these things and so one's mind may also be limited.

But to be limited is not inherently bad. In fact, realizing that one is limited and accepting one's limitations is a good thing, something freeing and beautiful. Because do you know what you have done in accepting this? You have granted yourself permission to fail. I am limited and therefore I need not be perfect; I will not succeed in everything I do. I may fail and it will not be because I did not try hard enough, or did not care enough. I may fail due to circumstances beyond my control. I may fail simply because I am limited.

It is enough to make you

laugh aloud with joy. I can fail, I can fail! And it is not my fault! And I need feel no shame, that crushing and confusing sensation. There is no need to lie and claim I did not try my best, and no need to play mind games. I tried my best, I gave all I could and I still failed. And that is okay. And there is no need to beat myself up about it.

When we accept death and the reality that we will all die one day, life becomes infinitely more beautiful. Each day is a treasure; life is a vibrant and passionate experience. We know there is a limit and therefore each victory, each day we live, becomes all the more meaningful.

It is the same with accepting our own limits. You will be surprised to find that once you have given yourself permission to fail, you will have been granted the strength to reach higher and further than you had ever dreamed. You had never quite dared to do it before because you were frightened of the shame and guilt that might ensue. But if you are a limited human being, what can it hurt? You try! You struggle! You have limits, you accept them and suddenly you fly. Because it is only when we have given ourselves permission to fail that we are truly able to create.

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# YC Men Inconvenience Stern Women

BY ADINA SCHWARTZ

Do not get me wrong; there is nothing I love more than a nauseating romp to Washington Heights on a school bus when I have a great deal of coursework to prepare for the next day. It is just that my frustration mounts when I go to YU events that are purposely on the Wilf campus to encourage the male students to attend, and to my surprise, the women outnumber the men four to one. If YU is trying to accommodate the young men of Yeshiva College, but these men are choosing not to grace us with their presence, then why must we Stern women trek all the way uptown?

It would be one thing if this lack of male presence was a rare occurrence. However, at every single—I repeat, every single—event that I have been to on the Wilf campus, (and I have been to quite a few), the men are in the minority. This is what leads me to declare that there is no point in making future events easily accessible for people who do not even show up.

Now you might say, “It is worth it for the handful of men who do attend to have these events uptown!” I would respond that it is silly to trouble the majority of people coming to the events for a small fraction of individuals. Additionally, if these few dedicated young men are truly interested in the event, then surely they will make their way downtown.

You may also ask, “Shouldn’t you be grateful for this opportunity to ‘network’ with the male student body?” This, of course, would have been a fair question to ask me three years ago when I was young and naïve and thought that going to the Wilf campus would assist me in my social pursuits. However, having grown up a lot in the past three years and having strangled that young and naïve self to death, I now realize that going to the Wilf campus is never going to help me. Going to other parts of Washington Heights just might, but the Wilf campus won’t.

A better question to ask would be, “Doesn’t having events uptown give you a ready excuse to eat at Golan Heights?” While this is true, it is also irrelevant, since I have no qualms about going up to the Wilf campus solely with that intention in mind. Yes, that delicious shwarma smothered in humus enveloped in a soft pita makes my mouth water at the very thought...but I digress.

At the Torah Tours orientation, while waiting in line to pick up my explanatory folder, I heard a young man point out how the women outnumbered the men. He scoffed aloud to himself as he described how these young women were just looking to meet guys and how disappointed they must be to discover how few come to these events. It angered me to hear him describe these women, who are devoted to helping Jewish communities all over the world, as desperate. His sexist slight was both wrong and rude.



But what really irked me about this young man standing behind me laughing at the abundance of females was that I, with vast oceans of homework and a pounding headache that made me imagine little dwarves banging inside my head with hammers, and my fellow Stern sisters had come all the way uptown to accommodate men who shunned the prospect altogether. The Torah Tours meeting had even been scheduled late in the evening so that YC students who learn at night with a *chavruta* could come too. This was an additional

nuisance for the young women who came from other colleges; they were forced to take a subway late at night, posing an additional safety hazard. By the time I got back to my apartment it was past 1:00 a.m. What was the point of exhausting myself for these Yeshiva College students who show no gratitude to their female counterparts who sacrifice time and sleep to make their lives easier?

I think the solution to this problem is evident. We give the men of YC an ultimatum: either their attendance at YU events improves or

all future YU events will take place on the Beren campus. The women of Stern College should not have to suffer the hassle of a long bus or shuttle ride when clearly they are the only ones who possess real school spirit and an interest in what YU has to offer. It is time for us Stern women to take a stand and protest the unfair treatment of the female student body and the chutzpa and inconsiderate behavior the men at YC display.

## A Home Run

BY JAIMIE FOGEL

Crowds go wild at many moments during a baseball game: at times of glory, when a player makes a beautiful catch or hits a home run, and at times of shame, when a player mishandles the ball or strikes out and loses the game for the whole team. Fans immediately begin to scream. They cheer, they jeer, and I'm sure that some of the truly obsessed even cry. That almost instantaneous, powerful response from the crowd, that moment of intense emotional outpouring, was what I thought about this past Yom Kippur as I prayed at Yeshivat Sha'alvim for Men in Israel. As I stood amidst a crowd wrapped in deepest prayer, a crowd that was going completely wild—screaming, crying and smiling all at the same moment—I could not help but recall the familiar scene from the sports stadium.

When I attended Sha'alvim for Women three years ago, as a member of its first class, I was privileged to travel with my entire school to daven in the yeshiva for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. Every year since that first trip, the seminary has sent its students to daven in Sha'alvim for Men for the *yamim noraim* (days of awe) to join in with its powerful congregation and jumpstart an intense, emotional year

with a davening to match.

This concept of a “yeshiva davening” is well-known. Often in synagogues filled with *balebatim*, regular working congregants, the prayer lacks the excitement and urgency that one can palpably feel in a yeshiva setting, a place where people spend years studying Torah on a daily basis for long periods of time. Quite understandably, yeshiva students feel the pressure of the days of judgment weighing heavily upon their shoulders, since they are bestowed with the time to immerse themselves in those topics for hours on end. They are the ones who have the time and energy to contemplate in the days before Yom Kippur whether, based on the past year's performance, God will want to keep them on His team.

Of course this does not mean that those spending their days working do not feel and think about these spiritual matters as well. After all, where would we be in this world if the only pious Jews were the ones who spent all their time learning Torah? But one cannot deny that a person's relationship with God develops more intensely and rapidly when he has more time to sit and learn in the *beit midrash* (study hall) with rabbis at his disposal to instill the necessary intensity and awe one needs to survive as a successful Jew.

This phenomenon of the “yeshiva davening” is what draws the *balebatim* to the yeshivot. And it was for no other reason that this year, three years after my first “yeshiva davening” experience, I decided to fly to Israel (with the consent of my generous parents) to spend the *yamim noraim* learning in the Holy Land, concluding the trip with a second visit to Sha'alvim for Men on Yom Kippur.

This may sound strange, but I had forgotten how much I loved Yom Kippur. In the Bible it is classified as a joyful holiday, and I had forgotten how that title's inherent characteristics cast a completely different light on the experiences of the day. In the wake of the stressful period leading up to it, where it seems the days are consumed with tormenting thoughts about the impending judgment, I forgot that the day itself can be enjoyable. But as soon as I walked into the yeshiva, a completely different feeling overtook me.

Yom Kippur is the happiest day of the entire year, and I have only felt that elation, that excitement of a *chag*, in the yeshiva. Most of the Israelis don't wear white garments (a custom less prevalent in the United States), which makes the collective hope for purification more tangible. People in the yeshiva seem quite happy to be sitting in shul despite the 6 a.m.

start time. I never once looked at the clock hanging on the wall, hoping for an interminable boredom to come to a close.

In fact, it was quite the opposite. I had forgotten about all the *niggunim* (tunes) I had fallen in love with three years earlier. We Sha'alvim women had sung these tunes throughout the year, never finding it strange to be singing Yom Kippur *niggunim* on a regular Friday night. To us, and I think, to the entire congregation at the Yeshiva, these tunes do not symbolize a depressing, hungry day, but a day in which we realize how close the Jewish people are with God; when we can spend an entire day wrapped in prayer and actually enjoy it.

There are many points in the davening at Sha'alvim that I keep reliving and contrasting with the davening back in the U.S. After returning from seminary, I davened in my shul in the States and found the section of the *avodah*, which describes the high priest's duties performed on Yom Kippur in the Temple, to be the most depressing part of that day. The congregation, mostly members who come to shul only for the High Holidays, cannot relate to or understand what the *avodah* is about. They do not see any remnants of the Temple on a regular basis and many lack the Hebrew comprehension

skills necessary to understand the detailed descriptions. So every year, the chazzan quickly runs through this section of the *mussaf* prayers.

This year, when I turned the page and saw the bold black heading announcing the “*seder avodah*,” I was elated. Finally a chance to recite it the way it should be recited! To try and reenact the way our nation behaved and felt as they stood in the courtyard of the *beit hamikdash*, waiting to see if the *kohen gadol* (high priest) would emerge from the Holy of Holies alive, a sign he had completed the *avodah* successfully and that the nation had been forgiven. At those moments when our knees and tear-stained faces fell to the cool, stone floor, I honestly felt like I was in the courtyard of the *beit hamikdash* lying amongst the entire Jewish people.

All of us davening together, bowing together, led by a *chazzan* (cantor) learned enough to be a great leader of the nation, made me feel at one with a much larger unit. As a dispersed people, the feeling of connection to individuals who come from different countries with different customs is quite rare. But at that moment, bent with my face to the ground, I peeked over and looked at

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## Expanding the Definition of Leadership

BY ADINA SCHWARTZ

As Jewish young adults, we seem to hear a lot about leadership. Leaders in the Bible, leaders in our history, but most importantly and most often, we hear about leaders in our future. In particular, about how we ourselves should be leaders. But, what is a leader? What does leading entail? And are all of us young YU students qualified for this mission?

Many of the organizations in which we participate, such as youth groups, the Center for the Jewish Future, and Yeshiva University itself, strive to make leaders out of young people. These groups advocate Jewish leadership because they wish, and rightly so, to ensure a Jewish tomorrow. However, their message of leadership tends to overwhelm Jewish students. There is a sense of awesome responsibility and overreaching expectations that young adults associate with leadership.

In the average YU student's mind (or at least in my mind, as well as many of my friends') there pervades a cookie-cutter mold of what a leader should be: intelligent, resourceful, a skilled public speaker, adept at both religious and secular

subjects, someone who can balance a loaded class or work schedule with *chesed*, a job, and a *chavruta*. Of course, a leader should also have an innate sense of initiative, perform well under pressure, and if he or she is good-looking too, well that is just an extra plus.

This is just not fair. To expect perfection universally is ridiculous. What makes it even worse is that it is just one view of what a perfect leader ought to be. Not every great leader possesses all of these fine qualities. For example, *Moshe Rabbeinu*, the greatest leader of the Jewish people, had a speech impediment and objected to the idea of speaking publicly. Though we've all heard the extensive list of ideal qualities, for most of us, achieving them all is not an option, and striving vainly to do so is merely a waste of our effort and our true potential.

What ought to be emphasized instead is the idea that leaders come in all shapes and sizes. There is no model, archetypal leader. This is evident in the very meaning of the word "leader." The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines a leader as "a person who leads others along a way;

a guide." This broad definition fits anyone who helps others come to a destination physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. It illustrates the fact that many types of people have the ability to develop into leaders.

There are those who lead from the pulpit, who can raise a crowd to levels of righteous indignation so that they are ready to join the stand. But there are also those leaders, of just as high a caliber, who with a pen and a piece of paper raise the alarm and call senators and presidents to action with words of condemnation. Some lead by simply being respectable, honorable people, both at home and in the workplace, so that their families can see and emulate. All of these are excellent examples of leadership.

In our own university, there are numerous opportunities for all different types of leaders—in addition to the conventional forms of leadership through clubs, the Student Councils, and the Torah Activities Council. There are positions of educational leadership, as a tutor or teacher's assistant, of spiritual leadership, as a *chavruta* with a high school student or participant in Torah Tours, and of emotional leadership,

as a peer mentor or resident advisor. Even those individuals who take the initiative to meet with a dean to express disapproval are exercising their leadership muscles.

Last year I had the distinct pleasure of having Dr. Schwebel, *a"h*, for a teacher. She taught me how to be a better writer, and she showed me how to be a better person. For me, Dr. Schwebel was an educational leader. She guided me and other young women along a path that led to open-mindedness, knowledge, and adventure. Though she herself was a gregarious and friendly person, her mission was not worldwide or even Stern-wide. Instead, she touched each one of her students individually.

This past summer I went through a personal crisis of faith in myself. I realized that I do not have all the qualities I imagined a leader should have. My focus was solely on what I could not do. When I told this all to a wise friend of mine, she asked me if I thought Dr. Schwebel was a leader. When I told her I did, she asked me why I could not be a leader the way Dr. Schwebel was a leader. When my friend asked me that question, I felt a tremendous burden lifted from my shoulders. I do not

have to be that leader I was trained to view as the ultimate leader. Gates were opened for me as I realized that there are more ways to help others than through leading them in one prescribed way.

And though there are many ways to lead, still not everyone wishes to do so. This is also acceptable. As one of my close friends likes to say, "It's not about being a leader; it's about knowing when to follow." There must be followers in order to necessitate leadership and being a follower can often be just as challenging as being a leader. The ability to accept not being in control and to take orders from someone else is praiseworthy. Followers have their work cut out for them too.

Every YU student has the opportunity to decide whether to be a leader or a follower, and the choice is never wrong as long as it is one's own. The essential thing to realize is that there are many ways of being a leader, and that being a follower is equally acceptable. Only stagnation is objectionable.

## Dethroning the Starbucks Empress

BY CHANA GILA OVITS

There is an evil empire that exists in the democratic United States of America. It is an empire that controls its subjects through a combination of brainwashing and addictive chemicals. It even has many celebrities in its grasp. Though it has branches across the country, many of them are located right here in New York City. No, not Scientology. Starbucks.

This deceptively innocent coffee chain is in actuality an all-powerful dominion. Through intense caffeination and clever marketing ploys, it has established itself as "cool" and a must-have for all those who wish to fit in. It controls New York culture and owns us Manhattanites, turning us into its drones. We ourselves spread its awesome power by priding ourselves on holding a cup of its "hip" coffee. The coffee inside is irrelevant. It's the logo on the cup that confirms our status as "with it" New Yorkers, completing the look as no other accessory could. But what is the logo? None other than the Starbucks empress herself, the queen bee.

At first glance the Starbucks queen seems serene and beautiful. But her greediness and hunger for supremacy become obvious as you examine her more closely. The self-crowned queen of java looks down at us, smiling knowingly with the upturned corners of her lips. Her rapacious black slashes of eyes have drunk in the good, the bad, and the all of American culture. They have seen human nature at its most base, as sleep-deprived New Yorkers are forced into social interactions before their vital morning caffeine fix. She uses her knowledge and these moments of weakness to take

advantage of the American public and strengthen her empire. Perhaps that's why her smile seems so smug and her crown so sinister. She is aware of her bewitching power and has established her dominance across the country.

This empress has in her power a workforce of enormous size and unfailing obedience. Clad in her uniform, they dispense the empire's seductive elixir to the masses. These enablers are the queen's right hand, supplying the public with their pacifying caffeine. Their eyes are blank as they do her bidding, greeting each customer with a dangerous, "how can I help you," ready to add yet another follower to the crowd.

Most important are the empire's loyal subjects. These Starbucks drones come into the store, pale and shaky as heroin junkies, anxious and cranky before their daily dose. And no one is impervious to the Starbucks's call. The drones are of every gender, race, age, shape, and size. They range from the typical emo guy in skinny jeans and plastic glasses who sits in a corner on his Mac nursing a soy caramel macchiato, to a high-power, high-pressure business woman in a pinstripe pantsuit, screaming into her Blackberry with a triple espresso in the other hand.

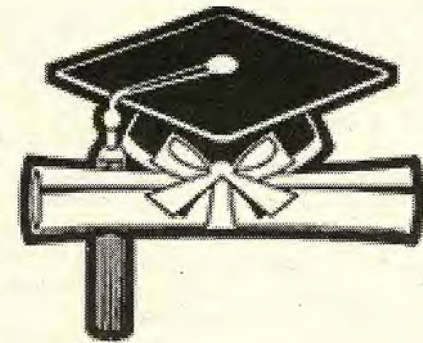
The command of this empire is so complete that it has branches on every block in Manhattan. Sometimes even on the same block. In these stores, Starbucks yanks on the bit between its subjects' teeth with outrageous prices, demanding that they shell out four dollars for a cup of coffee. And they do so without a qualm. The brainwashing is just that thorough.

Let's examine a sample case to understand their methodology. The brainwashing begins before you even enter the store, as you pass dozens

of people on the street holding the signature cup. You need to know what it's all about, so you make your way to a nearby store—and there is always a store nearby. As you step into the store, the heady, mind-numbing smell of brewing coffee washes over you. You stumble to the counter, overwhelmed by the consciously chic surroundings, overly hip elevator music, and dim lighting. The couches and tables are filled with drones, unperturbed by the appearance of yet another follower. You are greeted by a worker for the queen, a man in a green apron who insists on calling you a guest rather than a customer.

Then comes the ordeal: ordering. To your knowledge, coffee never existed in enough varieties to cover three boards. You take a desperate stab, ordering one of the few names on the list you recognize: "A latte, please?" But rather than the familiar "small, medium, or large", you are asked if you would like "tall, grande, or venti." The new and exotic names keep you off balance, making you more vulnerable to the masterful manipulation occurring. You timidly request a tall, hoping that it corresponds to the classical small. You follow the herd toward the lights to wait for your coffee.

When it arrives, you take a sip. The latte tastes like a latte but the fizzing in your veins is unusual. You are supercharged! On a high! Moving faster than ever before! And best of all, cool! Now you too can walk the streets of Manhattan proudly, clutching your entrance ticket to culture. Later, you find yourself missing the sensation, no, needing the sensation once it fades away. So you return to the store, desperate to feel it again. And again. And again. Starbucks has just claimed another victim.



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# NEWS

## OSA Enhances Religious Presence on Beren Campus: New Mashgiach Ruchani, Madrichot Ruchaniot to Mentor Students

BY HILLY KREIGER

This fall, the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) has raised the bar for religious growth on the Beren campus, welcoming several new staff members in an effort to enhance the atmosphere of spirituality and Jewish learning. A second *mashgiach ruchani* (spiritual mentor) has been hired, as well as a cadre of women who will advise students in a less formal capacity.

"We felt there was a growing need for a *mashgiach ruchani* in addition to Rabbi [Shlomo] Hochberg," explained Zelda Braun, associate dean of students.

"Rabbi Hochberg, our highly qualified *mashgiach ruchani* is thank God very busy and we are fortunate to have Rabbi Dovid Cohen here for more hours to address the needs of our growing student body," she remarked. "Since so many of our students come to Stern following a year of study in Israel, they need guidance in the areas of spirituality, halakhic issues, hashkafa, and just personal matters that they wish to discuss with a rabbinic figure."

After discussions with Rabbi Hochberg and administrators from OSA, Rabbi Cohen joined the faculty of SCW after serving as a *s'gan* (assistant) *mashgiach ruchani* on the Wilf campus. An experienced educator, Rabbi Cohen previously taught in various seminaries, including Michlala and Midreshet Tehilla. He also practiced law in the United States prior to living in Israel.

Rabbi Cohen is currently the associate rabbi of the Young Israel of the West Side. This semester, he is teaching a class entitled "Modern Jewish Problems," in addition to contributing to the Torah Activities Council's weekly T-cubed program and other shiurim.

"I think the students at Stern need someone to ask halakhic questions, personal issues that they may want to discuss, different situations they face with dating, things of that nature," Rabbi Cohen said.

"I'm also here to help them with the transition from Israel back to America and all of the challenges that accompany that transition," he added. "There's a very diverse group of

Jewish women here and my challenge is to try and address everyone's personal needs as they arise."

Rabbi Cohen clarified that the main difference between his roles at the Beren and Wilf campuses is the structure of the different schools.

"[At YU] in the main, Beis Midrash, the students knew the rabbanim were there to help them, but it's completely different with the women," he explained. "There is no communal place where everyone is in the same place at designated times. There are no Roshei Yeshiva at Stern, so it becomes the responsibility of the *mashgichim* to show the women here that we're here for support, encouragement, and guidance in whatever area they may need it."

In addition to Rabbi Cohen, SCW has also hired four *madrichot ruchaniot* (spiritual counselors), who will each be on campus a different night of the week for individual and group sessions and activities.

"I feel that there are certain topics that women feel more comfortable speaking to another woman about and that is the gap that these young women will hopefully fill," explained Dean Braun.

"As a result of the recent growth on campus, it has become impossible for my office to address the needs of every student on campus," Dean Braun elaborated. "These *madrichot* will be mentors for anyone who has something they want to discuss in the areas of relationships, spirituality, and life in general. They come from varied backgrounds so as to be able to relate to the maximum number of students we have here."

Three of the *madrichot* are SCW alumni who have also attended YU graduate schools. Dr. Debbie Marton (SCW '00), a recent alumna of the Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology, will be situated in the new Eisenberg Beit Midrash on Tuesday nights.

"I attended orientation shabbaton and really felt the enthusiasm of the students at Stern," Marton offered. "There have been many improvements made at Stern since I graduated. There's a lot more going into building student life on campus, and I hope to be a part of that."

Dr. Annette Berger will

be at Stern on Mondays, Mrs. Shira Salzman on Wednesdays, and Dr. Oshra Cohen on Thursdays. Though each has a unique background, they all share a passion for working with the women of Stern.

"As with all new programs, this one is not defined until the year progresses and we assess the needs of the students," Salzman (SCW '99) said, commenting on her new role on campus. "Students come back from Israel and they have questions about spirituality, life...and there's really no one to speak to on campus. Everyone is so busy running around going to classes, doing work...there are *mashgichim* but no older women with whom to discuss issues."

Salzman described the openness and friendly attitudes of all the *madrichot* and how everyone on campus can find someone to relate to.

"Three out of four of us have been through Stern," she continued, "and we know about the difficulties the students face and we can really identify with the women here."

"We now have a qualified variety of faculty on campus to meet the needs of our varied student body," Dean Braun observed. "We're very happy to welcome these new individuals to our staff."

## English Professor Joins Writing Center as Assistant Director

BY ARIELLA WEINBERGER

CUNY Graduate Center, focusing on Comparative Literature.

Andrea Rosso Efthymiou, first-time SCW Professor of English, has taken the helm of the Writing Center in the continued absence of Director Dr. Jay Ladin. Efthymiou was recruited and trained for the position by the center's previous



Shayna Hoenig/The Observer  
Writing Center Assistant Director  
Andrea Efthymiou

assistant director, Dr. Elizabeth Hollow.

The new assistant director comes to Stern after five years of teaching English Composition and Literature at Queens College (CUNY) in Flushing, NY. She is also currently a Ph.D candidate at the

Located on the tenth floor of 245 Lexington Avenue, the Writing Center is a complimentary service designed to enable undergraduates to better hone their skills at professional reading and writing. Students can sign up for regular weekly appointments or drop in to meet with an available tutor.

Professor Laurel Hatvary, head of the English department at Stern, is confident in Efthymiou's abilities.

"With her own sound training, her easy and gracious manner...she will put her own stamp on the Writing Center," she asserted.

When asked just what that personal "stamp" would be, Efthymiou emphasized the importance of the thinking process in writing.

"I can't exactly say that I have a specific agenda or any implementations in mind," she said. "I simply hope that we, in the Writing Center, continually engage in the process of thinking and writing with students of Stern."

Efthymiou reiterated the purpose of the Writing Center: "We are not an editorial service, in that we don't proofread essays line-by-

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## Mapping out the Future: An Interview with CDC Executive Director Marc Goldman

BY SARA LEFKOVITZ

**How and why was the Career Development Center (CDC) conceived? Was it an initiative of the students or of faculty and administrative officials?**

I believe, having not been there from the beginning, that there was an existing Office of Career Services (OCS) with great professionals who worked hard to assist students with career planning and job hunting. There still seemed to be a lack of awareness about the office and what it actually did, the services it offered. Based on feedback from students, administrators, and alumni, we really wanted to build it up, to increase the scope of the office.

**So is CDC replacing OCS?**

I would call it a revamping and rebuilding of OCS. They won't coexist; OCS is being reorganized into the CDC.

**Then why modify the name?**

"Career development" is included in the new name because we work with students from day one. [We help] first year students explore their career options and teach them how to link their academic life with their career options. We're using something as overt as a name change to reflect the emphasis on that exploration and growth, acknowledging that a career is a life-long process and that it's about educating and empowering students and partnering with them to make these important decisions.

[Moreover], OCS was always under the umbrella of Sy Syms. The perception was that it was an SSSB office, even though it was also working with Stern and YC students. [Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs] Dr. Lowengrub wanted to centralize OCS under Academic Affairs so it could assist and work with students of all colleges. It's really more about awareness and perception, rather than simply improving or expanding existing services and programs that were provided. [The name change] is partly a philosophical shift but also about that perception piece.

**What changes will you implement with your arrival?**

Right now, I'm trying to build and reinvigorate the CDC's staff by adding more staff members. Currently, there are only four professionals and one support staff across the two campuses. The goal is to end up with five staff members on each campus.

We've recently hired a Director of Employer and Alumni Relations. Her main function will be to do job development, to build relationships with employers and alumni to create opportunities across fields for students, for internships and full-time jobs. Another [addition] will be a Director of Counseling and Programming, whose main role would be to oversee counseling and workshops, as well as outreach to the campus community.

**Will the CDC tailor any of its programs to specific undergraduate campuses? For example, let's say**

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## Reslife Crackdown Antagonizes IHP Students

BY YAEL WOLYNETZ

At the beginning of the semester, students were outraged following a meeting held by Stern's Office of Residence Life for all participants in the Independent Housing Program (IHP).

According to Residence Life Director Rachel Kraut, the purpose of the meeting was twofold; to remind students of Stern's housing rules and to provide information regarding the technicalities of living in IHP apartments.

"[The meeting] was meant as an educational tool for the students who live in Windsor Court," Kraut explained. The proceedings were conducted in a question and answer format.

"Students need to know who to call if their toilet is broken or if a light bulb burned out," Kraut said.

Kraut pointed out that the Office of Residence Life usually holds a meeting for its IHP residents at least once every few years. This year's meeting, which students were informed of through a circulated SSTUD email, was mandatory for all residents of IHP, which includes the students who live in the 18 Stern-rented apartments in Windsor Court. While not all of the students were in attendance, there was at least one student from every apartment present.

The Office of Residence Life does not hold such meetings for residents of dormitories other than IHP. Students living elsewhere are expected to read the rules outlined in the student handbook.

During the meeting, Kraut, Shana Glaser, associate director of Residence Life, and Zelda Braun, associate dean of students, gave an

overview of the rules residents were expected follow. These included regulations outlined in the student handbook pertaining to the other dormitories, such as the prohibition of drugs, alcohol (even if students are of legal age), and candles, which present a fire hazard. Men are not permitted in the apartments either.

"While I think it was important to hold a meeting to go through all of the rules and lay it all out there, I did not like the tone of it," remarked IHP resident Sara Schwartz (SCW '08). "Everything was said in a negative tone, and it seemed almost threatening."

Schwartz, along with her five other roommates, lives in a Windsor apartment for the second year in a row.

"We play by the book," she said, speaking for herself and her roommates. "I do not need to hear that the garbage in my apartment will be searched to make sure that there is nothing suspicious in it."

Rifka Siegel (SCW '08) who attended the meeting with her roommates had a similarly disturbing experience there.

"I left the meeting with the feeling that I had done something wrong," she commented.

Rachel Cohen (SCW '08) admitted that some of the topics discussed at the meeting were a bit extreme.

"While I understand the importance of fire prevention, it seems ridiculous to threaten to kick out an apartment if they are found with halogen lights," she noted.

Danielle Siegal (SCW '08) was unsettled by threats that if one person is implicated, the whole

*Continued on next page*

## SCW Senior Honored for Pro-Israel Advocacy

BY ARIELLA WEINBERGER

AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, has recently appointed Jackie Saxe, a senior at Stern College for Women, to its Executive Committee.

The committee, consisting of only four undergraduates nationwide, provides its members with the opportunity to meet with congressional representatives and Middle East experts to discuss and lobby for legislation supporting Israel. The selected students will travel to Washington D.C. four times over the course of the year, where they will be educated and trained to become more effective pro-Israel advocates.

Since she returned from her year abroad in Israel, Saxe has been devoted to working on behalf of the State of Israel in the political arena and is very passionate about the responsibility she feels toward supporting the Jewish state.

"I walked onto campus feeling compelled to do whatever I could to ensure Israel's prosperity and safety," Saxe recalled. "A nuclear Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas pose existential threats to Israel. The state of Israel has given my life direction and meaning. I will not sit back and watch as events around me unfold; rather I will band together with others and be proactive."

Since arriving at Stern, Saxe has been actively involved in both the Israel Club and the Yeshiva University Political Action Committee (YUPAC). She was also a campus liaison for AIPAC and participated in their Diamond Summer Internship program.

When asked why she chose to be a part of AIPAC as opposed



*Courtesy of Jackie Saxe*

*AIPAC appointee Jackie Saxe with Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni*

to other organizations that support Israel, Saxe responded, "I was looking for the most effective way that I can personally work for Israel. This organization is respected among politicians and is a really effective and strong force on getting legislation passed in support of Israel."

"I feel incredibly fortunate to have the opportunity to meet with members of Congress alongside other members of the Executive Committee," she continued. "As a student, I believe that in order to

ensure the future of the U.S.-Israel relationship, we must learn from those who have been working tirelessly thus far."

Saxe recognized the value of being better equipped to raise awareness about pro-Israel issues on and off campus. She said she intended to take advantage of the present opportunity to tap into important

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## Secunda Doubles as First CJF Beren Program Director

BY TALIA WOHLGELERTER

Following a protracted period of vacancy, the position of Director of Programming at the Center for the Jewish Future's Midtown storefront has been filled by SCW alumna, Daphna Fishman Secunda.

In addition to acting as the CJF's point person at Beren, Secunda has also been recruited, along with husband Shai, to create and oversee various community-building programs both during the week and on Shabbat.

Prior to her arrival at Stern, Secunda lived in Israel, where she ran a women's learning program and taught at several seminaries, including MMY and Ba'er Miriam. Before moving abroad, she was a member of SCW's faculty, working as an adjunct professor of Jewish Philosophy.

Secunda refers to teaching as "her most enjoyable employment" and recalled that she "felt sorry to leave Stern and always hoped to return" to her alma mater, where she benefited from a particularly positive



*Courtesy of Daphna Secunda*

*New CJF director of programming,  
Daphna Secunda*

college experience.

As the CJF's new and first full-time Beren campus director of programming, Secunda works at the storefront five days a week, from nine to five.

"I am the on-campus CJF presence for the Stern Women," she explained. "I am the informer. I tell Rabbi Kenneth Brander and the CJF uptown what the women of Stern want."

For example, Secunda heard that there was a strong interest among the undergraduate women in attending the Midreshet Yom Rishon Program, held on Sundays on the Wilf campus. Secunda communicated this request to the CJF who responded immediately, arranging for and subsidizing the cost of van transportation.

Most prominent on her agenda for the upcoming year are two specific programs to be held under CJF auspices. The first is the Women's Leadership Fellowship, open to 15 Stern students and designed to strengthen participants' leadership skills and exposure to Jewish communal issues. The fellows will meet for two hours on a weekly basis, hearing from well-known speakers and following up with group discussion and debate, to be moderated by Secunda.

Secunda has been working alongside Jordana Schoor, director of special projects for the CJF, to select topics for the program, such as "Balancing Self-Esteem, Tzniut,

Power, and being in the Public Eye," an issue that she believes to be particularly enlightening and relevant. The fellowship will commence in the spring semester, but Secunda has already begun interviewing candidates as part of the selection process.

The second initiative spearheaded by the new programming director is a CJF-sponsored pre-marriage course, which will run for 10 weeks and caters to engaged women. It will include an overview of the halakhot of *Taharat HaMishpacha* (family purity) as well as conflict resolution, communication, and financial planning.

"[This is] more than a traditional 'Kallah class,'" Secunda commented, adding that she wished she had been offered a course of a similar nature before she had gotten married.

Secunda's other new position is held jointly with her husband Shai; together they comprise Stern's new "campus couple." Previously, one of several different

couples would spend Shabbat at Beren, as part of a rotation. This year, the Office of Student Affairs made the decision to hire a couple to be situated on campus full-time, as part of the effort to build a stronger sense of community at Stern.

The Secundas live in an apartment in Windsor Court, an IHP building housing other Stern undergraduates. On Shabbat they give shiurim, run a Friday night oneq with homemade baked goods and chulent in their apartment, attend the Shabbat meals in the cafeteria, and open their home to students on Shabbat afternoon.

"My husband, Shai, and myself feel that our job is equally shared," Secunda explained enthusiastically.

The couple also plans to run a number of weekday events in their apartment during the school year. The first of these, a 'Taco Night' which

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## Seminaries, Yeshivot under Review

*Continued from front page*

SCW Dean Karen Bacon reiterated this idea. "Since there are so many more students enrolled in the S. Daniel Abraham Israel Program than before and there are more programs associated with us, we became appropriately concerned with quality control," she remarked. "We felt it would be irresponsible to not update our information by looking closely once again at this experience in which students are awarded a year of academic credit."

For Dr. Davis, the reaccreditation process will serve as a "standard bearer" for the participating schools. "As an academic institution, it behooves us to be assured that we are awarding appropriate credits to our students," he added.

The first area of concern is the number of students who attend the Israel schools and continue their studies at YU.

"Over the years we have had concerns with some schools where virtually no Yeshiva University students have attended," observed Dean Bacon. "In the absence of on-campus students who have studied in these schools, we have no real way to measure outcomes. As we go through this review process, we want to be certain students are actually learning enough to merit the academic course credits awarded."

The second area to be evaluated is the academic and

programmatic quality of the seminaries and yeshivot. As part of the process, administrators of YU will develop a system by which to ensure that participating schools are offering students high level classes that can be considered "university level" and that they are actually spending enough hours in those classes to earn the awarded credits.

In a situation where a school fails to comply with the academic requirements, it will cease to be included as part of the S. Daniel Abraham Israel Program.

"If the schools are on our program, students are eligible for full credit, provided they took the required courses," Dean Bacon explained. "We do not have schools on our program whose curricula do not include enough academics to qualify for full credit."

According to Dr. Davis, another important aspect of the process is to investigate the hashkafa, or philosophical outlook, of the various seminaries and yeshivot.

"If the faculty of the school does not think that the next best thing for their students is to come to YU," he wondered, "then why are we partners with them?"

When asked if there was any particular precipitator for the reaccreditation, Dr. Davis answered that "the timing is right in terms of both external and internal focuses of the university."

He explained that the

external focuses refer to a widely publicized scandal relating to an overseas program of a particular university, which subsequently prompted many institutions to look more closely into their own overseas programs. "When asked the question, 'Have you, YU, done right by your students?' we want to be able to answer with a resounding yes," he said.

"From an internal perspective, we want to present the proper blend of Torah u'Madda," the vice president continued. "This can be ensured only by having extensive knowledge of the programs."

Dean Bacon added that many details surrounding the large-scale reaccreditation were still undetermined.

"The committee meeting is taking place after the Sukkot break during which the committee members will refine their methodology working with the Yeshiva University staff in Israel," she elaborated.

She expanded on the importance of the upcoming gathering, saying that "during this meeting the procedure will be formalized—who is doing what in terms of the faculty and administration and which programs will be revisited."

Overall, Dean Bacon explained that the reaccreditation is a positive step for the university. Nonetheless, she acknowledged that "even though evaluation is a healthy process, being evaluated is no fun."

## SCW Clamps Down on Dress Code Violations

*Continued from front page*

tone and image for the place of employment."

"Students at colleges throughout the country are often very casual about their dress and their speech," added Dean Bacon. "We aspire to a different standard, following in the traditions that most of our students have experienced in their high schools and in the seminaries in Israel where many of our students have chosen to study."

When asked why the college had taken more proactive measures of effecting compliance than in years past, the SCW Dean pointed to the lack of awareness pervading the student body.

"Over the years, representatives from the Offices of Student Services and of the deans of Stern College and Sy Syms School of Business have met to discuss our dress code policy and its implementation," she recalled. "This year we concluded that we needed to take seriously the fact that some students don't have clarity about the policy. By presenting every student with a clear statement in her hand, we felt we could achieve our goal of 'buy in' to this policy that is so distinctive a feature of the YU environment."

Associate Dean of Students Zella Braun suggested that increased campus awareness and education about the specifics of the dress code would contribute to a greater understanding of its importance. She also hoped it would increase the number of students who dress in accordance with its standards.

"There's merit for the growth and development of the community to have an expectation of dress," she offered. "I believe the way that is achieved is through an educational process."

In terms of punitive repercussions for dress code infractions, the notice was relatively vague, merely cautioning that students in violation of the policy would be invited to speak to a member of the dean's office.

"The goal is not to 'punish' violators," stressed Dean Orlian, "but to have them meet with the dean to help them understand that it is important for our college to maintain an environment and atmosphere of learning and respect."

Students shared their opinions on the issue with The Observer. "I think that since the dress code roughly reflects the ideals of halakha and *tznius* (modesty), at least having the students dress that way on campus and in class reflects the message that we as an institution believe in keeping halakha," articulated Jackie Fast (SCW '08). "Whether the students do or not, I think it's very important that YU should try to reflect that."

Fast felt that most students are aware of the dress code, though she conceded that there might be a few students who are ignorant of it.

When asked if she thought that the enforcement would help students who currently do not

follow the dress code to be more compliant in the future, Fast admitted uncertainty. She noted that she "doesn't see much consequences" for students who do break the dress code, which contributed to her sense that increased enforcement might not succeed in forcing greater adherence to the policy.

Gavi Lewy-Neuman (SCW '08) said that while she is in favor of the dress code and its goals, she felt that enforcing it is unnecessary.

"I definitely think [the dress code] is appropriate with the values and the message the school is trying to portray," she said. "We're Modern Orthodox, and it's supposed to be the perfect mix between Torah u'Madda, and in upholding that motto, proper dress would be the most obvious way to physically express that."

However, she was uneasy about the idea of regulating something which she sees as a "sensitive" religious subject.

"I'm not in favor of approaching students and telling them that they're going to be reprimanded for what they're wearing," she admitted. "I don't think they should be punished for wanting to reap the benefits of Stern."

She did not think that enforcing the dress code through dialogue would encourage students to follow it, and that there would always be individuals who would deliberately choose not to follow the rules.

"Not that they shouldn't be, but I don't think they will be," she confessed.

"Stern is a Jewish religious institution and they want to have that image, [so] the dress code is necessary," said Elysia Boris (SCW '09). "Everything they have here, the girls who go here, reflect the university itself."

She noted that the dress code makes the atmosphere at SCW more comfortable for undergraduates and faculty who might be offended by immodest dress. She also echoed the feelings of the administration that a student who decides to attend SCW is also choosing to uphold the values of the college.

"I think [students who don't follow the dress code] won't be so happy about [the enforcement] at first, but by attending Stern, they sign on, and that's what they have to represent," Boris said.

"The enforcement doesn't really bother me, because it doesn't affect me too much, but I guess for some girls who come from less religious backgrounds—they're in college, university, and they're being told how to dress," she continued. "But it's kind of expected that when you come to Stern, things have to go a certain way."

Dean Orlian reiterated her belief that students would not find the stricter enforcement to be onerous. "I do not think that students will chafe at this since they knew of this policy before starting at SCW and SSSB,"

## Students Bristle at IHP Meeting

*Continued from page 7*

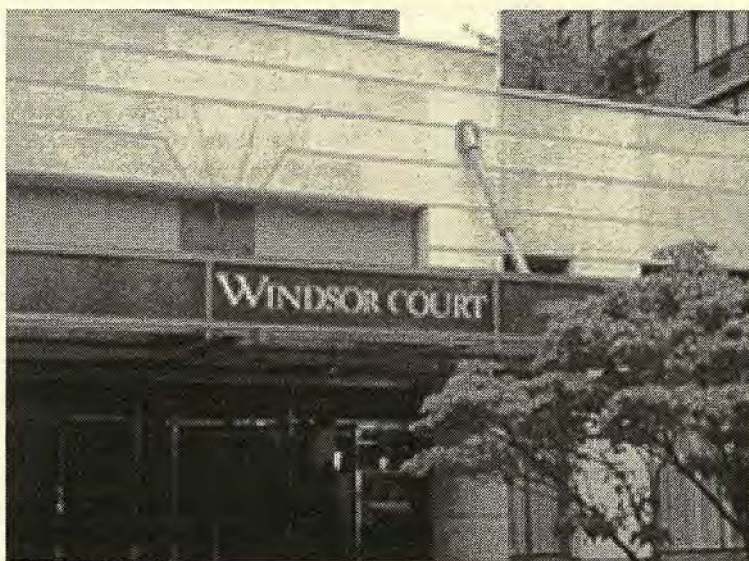
apartment "will suffer and will be moved from Windsor."

"There is a way of saying things and everything in the meeting could have been said in a nicer way," Siegal added. "Most of the residents of Windsor are juniors or seniors, which means that they have been living in Stern dorms for at least a year. We did not need rules to be reiterated like we were little kids."

When asked to comment on students' negative reactions to the meeting, Kraut clarified that "students have the mistaken idea that IHP means more independence." As a result, she said, many students think that the housing rules do not apply to them.

Kraut mentioned that Windsor is unique for several reasons. Students who choose to stay in for Shabbat have the means to cook their own food or host their own meals. Additionally, Residence Life has no control over how late students return to their apartment. While there is a Resident Advisor (RA) who lives in a Windsor apartment, there is no other supervision for Stern students. Nonetheless, Kraut said that the Office of Residence Life is aware that students do not follow all of the expected guidelines. She said that the staff at Windsor often lets the school know if students act improperly.

On the whole, however, "the university's philosophy is that there is no difference between IHP and any other dorms," Kraut



Yael Wolynetz/The Observer

IHP apartments at Windsor Court

stated. "Because of this duality between the students' perspective and the university's perspective, we felt we needed to hold the meeting to clarify the difference."

Kraut also addressed one of the biggest issues of contention amongst IHP students: alcohol. Students feel that since they are legally of age to drink, it is permissible to do so in their own apartments. SCW has strict rules against alcohol in the dorms, including even the smallest cup of wine for Shabbat. Kraut stressed the school's "zero-tolerance" policy.

According to Kraut, the meeting was necessary in order to emphasize the importance of protecting the SCW community.

"Each dorm falls under the

direction of Residence Life and as a result must follow the same rules," she said.

Kraut acknowledged that she often fields complaints from students who are uncomfortable with the behavior of their roommates. She also felt that if all students were abiding by the rules outlined in the student handbook, such complaints would not be relevant. Some of the rules discussed in the meeting were just those of basic human decency.

"Just like students would not blast music in their dorms late at night if they were in Brookdale, the same applies for Windsor," she noted.

*Continued on page 13*



## CJF Beren Storefront Acquires New Director

*Continued from page 7*

they hosted at the beginning of the semester, was a great success. These events will provide students with additional opportunities to become acquainted with the Secundas.

Daphna Secunda brings a lot of enthusiasm to her job. She marvels at the transformation that Stern campus life has undergone since her time here.

"Staying in Stern for Shabbat is now very in vogue," she says with a laugh. "When I was in

Stern, only 'out-of-towners' without in-town friends or relatives stayed in school. Shabbat is the perfect time to really give Stern a sense of community."

One of Secunda's favorite aspects of her new employments is how well her two roles synergize.

"[It is great] to be able to forge relationships with the students and to make the CJF storefront a destination for Stern women to come in and discuss ideas and talk about various CJF programs."

## Saxe Recruited for AIPAC Committee

*Continued from page 7*

resources and personalities.

"I plan on bringing these lessons back to campus and using new strategies to continue the strong pro-Israel activism that exists at YU," she added. "I am extremely fortunate to be a part of a student body that is 100% supportive of Israel. I want to help more of my peers channel their love for Israel through political activism and assist them in discovering just how influential they can be. Every year more YU students are becoming more involved and making a difference."

Associate Dean of Students Zeldra Braun shared in the excitement of Saxe's new appointment. "I

think it is phenomenal for her and for the university community," she said. "Jackie has worked so hard politically and actively for Israel and even received an award with a group of students for their activism and involvement. I think it's fantastic."

"I plan on dedicating my life to the survival and prosperity of the Jewish state," Saxe remarked. "AIPAC has inspired me to utilize my love for Israel and America in an effective manner. I am a proud American and Zionist and I believe that the U.S.-Israel relationship is essential for both countries. Partaking in the AIPAC Executive Committee will be instrumental in implementing the work that I love to do."

## Writing Center Hires New Head

*Continued from page 6*

line; rather, we hope to offer students a community of writers that is supportive and productive."

Perel Skier (SCW '09), a tutor who has been working at the Writing Center for the past two years, expressed her thoughts on the recent change.

"I was a little nervous when I heard Elizabeth had left, because Elizabeth created what I felt to be a very comfortable and fun atmosphere at the Writing Center that helped the students relax and promoted discussion and team spirit among the tutors too," she commented.

"[But] I've noticed that Andrea seems to place the same emphasis on keeping the atmosphere productive and easy-going, not intimidating. There's continuity- it's as enjoyable as always to work there and I always learn something from talking with her," Skier added.

Efthymiou also reflected on her warm reception at the school.

"Although I am new to Stern College, I immediately got the sense of the warm community here," she said. "I hope to foster this warmth in the Writing Center and welcome as many students as possible to use our services."

## Talking Careers with CDC Director

*Continued from page 6*

**there is a profession that holds more interest at Beren than at Wilf.**

The goal is to replicate programs on both campuses. However, there will be special events offered on each campus. There will be a consistent calendar of events and we hope to work with academic advising and specific departments to come up with new events. I am committed, once I have built up the staff on both campuses, to being present on the Beren campus as much as I am on the Wilf campus.

**How will your previous experience at NYU's Wasserman Center for Career Development inform your current position? Do you think Yeshiva's Career Development Center will look different from NYU's?**

I came up with a staff structure that addresses certain needs on Yeshiva's campus. Some of that stems from my experience working with directors of centers from other colleges. It's not just an NYU perspective that I bring, but also an industry-wide perspective.

At NYU, I was heavily involved with the College of Arts and Science and the Gallatin School of Individualized Study, whose students

have a unique curriculum and must be really disciplined and focused. I see a parallel to Yeshiva, where students have a dual curriculum. We need to promote that to professionals and graduate schools; I have some exposure to that kind of thinking.

The Orthodox Jewish population is a change from the more diverse student body where I've worked in the past and that is where the alumni can really play a part. Employers from that community can help educate myself and students about how that plays into working with a corporate population who may not be familiar with [an Orthodox lifestyle].

**Any last advice you'd like to impart to first-time-on-campus students?**

They should visit the CDC of course! Really, though, there are a lot of different pieces of advice I could offer because so many people have varying concerns, experiences, and interests. The first thing I would say is that it's a process and it's okay not to know [your career plan] as long as you're willing to explore and be proactive in figuring it out. This is a partnership; we're here to give students the support they are seeking.

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# FEATURES

## Agunah Crisis Mobilizes Stern Activists

BY ALIZA VISHNIAVSKY

In a program initiated by the Center for the Jewish Future (CJF) and spearheaded by Laura Freiman, LCSW, Stern undergraduates have assumed a leading role in educating students at Jewish day schools about the *agunah* ("chained woman") problem currently facing the Orthodox community.

As part of the halakhic process of divorce, a husband gives his wife a *get*, a legal document signifying the termination of their marriage. If a woman does not receive a *get*, she is prohibited by Jewish law from remarrying and acquires the status of an *agunah*. Since a Beit Din cannot force a husband into compliance, women who are refused a *get* are unable to move on with their lives.

The Agunah Education Program will attempt to alleviate the problem through education, starting with the Orthodox community's adolescent population. Unlike the efforts of other groups committed to addressing the quandary, such as the Organization for the Resolution of Agunot (ORA), the CJF's program works preemptively by teaching students about the issue while they are still in high school. Emphasis is placed on the option of signing a

halakhic prenuptial agreement prior to marriage.

This legally binding contract, which was created by the Beit Din of America and has the *haskama* (letter of approbation) of many YU *roshei yeshiva*, vests the Beit Din with the authority to arbitrate all issues surrounding the *get*. A central component of the contract is a penalty clause that states that if a husband does not give his wife a *get*, he will be obligated to compensate her financially on a daily basis. Since its release in 1993, the halakhic prenup has eased the complications surrounding divorce proceedings and has helped to avoid potential cases of *agunot*.

Unfortunately, most people are only introduced to the idea of a prenuptial agreement when they are engaged. If the idea is foreign to the couple, the prospect of signing the contract can sometimes bring conflict to the relationship.

"People may consider signing the prenup as unromantic," Freiman explained. "They think it seems like you are planning for divorce when you are about to get married, but you are not just signing it for yourself. Rather, you are signing it for everyone, the whole Jewish community. The hope is that signing the prenup becomes as normal and

routine in our communities as signing a *ketubah* (marriage contract)."

Freiman compared the prenup to an insurance policy; one that will hopefully not require usage, but acts as a preventative measure against potential crises.

In order to familiarize students with the notion of a prenup, the undergraduate members of the CJF program travel to high schools in the tri-state area and discuss the issues surrounding *agunot* with their senior classes.

"We think it is very important for Jewish teens to hear about this before they graduate high school, but we keep it to seniors because it is the darker side of halakha so the students need to be mature enough to learn about it," said Freiman.

Talia Kaplan (SCW '07), who became involved in the program during its inception in the spring of 2006, added that "although it is not exactly applicable at this point in their life, they will be dealing with it in the next few years, and they won't necessarily be in an environment where they will be exposed to these halakhic issues. It could be our last chance to educate them in this area."

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## Cheshvan: A Month for Social Action

BY SHLOMIT COHEN

The month of *Cheshvan* earns its appellation "*mar*" (bitter), by its dearth of Jewish holidays. Unlike the other months of the year, *Cheshvan* does not have a specific festival that defines the nature of the month, nor does it have *mitzvot* (commandments) that are uniquely performed throughout its duration. Nevertheless, it is one of the most exciting and challenging times in the Jewish year.

While the time spent in prayer and introspection over the High Holidays and Sukkot allow us to reflect on the past year and prioritize for the one forthcoming, *Cheshvan* is the period when we actually have the chance to implement those goals and resolutions. *Cheshvan* is defined by us. The month is what we choose to make of it. It is both an empowering thought and an incredible responsibility; it is a month to be imbued with the passion and dedication that we have felt and experienced over the past few weeks.

It is therefore most appropriate that *Cheshvan* has been chosen as the international month of Jewish Social Action. The concept of Jewish Social Action Month (JSAM) is important because it not only turns *Cheshvan* into a month of Jewish unity, as Jews of all backgrounds and affiliations come together, but it also brings Jews together for a greater goal: *tikkun olam*. Though JSAM was recently initiated by Kol Dor, a global network of Jewish leaders, it

has now been officially recognized both by the U.S. government and the Israeli Knesset.

In celebration of this exciting and important initiative, the Social Justice Society of YU joined the larger Jewish community in recognizing *Cheshvan* as a month designated for social action and accordingly organized two events. The first, an intercollegiate volunteer day on Sunday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, provided an opportunity for YU students to partner with their peers from NYU, Columbia, and Barnard for a day of service at various target locations throughout New York City.

The second event, which was held on Wednesday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, was the kickoff of the society's ongoing film series, which will continue over the course of the year and will highlight contemporary social injustices in both the Jewish and global communities. "Invisible Children," a powerful documentary that follows three film students as they investigate the brutal abduction and conscription of children into Ugandan militia forces, was screened before a full undergraduate audience. The viewing was followed by a briefing on the current situation in Uganda and opportunities for student activism.

For more information on the JSAM events on campus or about joining the Social Justice Society, please contact Shlomit Cohen at [Srcohen1@yu.edu](mailto:Srcohen1@yu.edu).

## Touro Building's Continued Vacancy Prompts Student Inquiries

BY AVIVA MILLER

It stands at the corner of 30<sup>th</sup> Street and Lexington Avenue, unimposing yet distinctly different from its neighbors. Evidently not of modern design like those surrounding it, the building at 160 Lexington Avenue is designated as a landmark by the City of New York.

Built in 1909, the exterior design is modeled after the Elgin Marbles, marble sculptures that adorned the Parthenon in Greece in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. A bas-relief frieze depicts a line of toga-clad horsemen on horseback, topped by Doric columns, placed intermittently between rows of high windows. As remarkable a building as it is, it now stands vacant, its striking exterior marred by signs pronouncing it for rent.

Located a block away from Schottenstein Residence Hall and in the midst of the Beren campus, 160 Lexington Avenue would appear to be an ideal purchase for SCW, as its current premises have difficulty accommodating an ever-expanding student population.

Most recently occupied by Touro College, the property at 160 Lexington was sold nine months ago to an investor group for \$8.2 million. Since its inception, the building has been used as an educational

facility. Initially housing the New York School of Applied Design for Women, the building was turned over to the New York Phoenix School of Design in 1944, which later merged with the Pratt Institute of Brooklyn. In the 1980s, Altro Health and Rehabilitation Services turned it into a vocational training center until the building was bought by Touro.

Touro's renovations allowed the facility to retain its spacious interior, original skylights, and oversized windows (designed by architect Harvey Wiley Corbett, who was also involved in the design of Rockefeller Center and Brooklyn College), and additionally equipped the building with 10 classrooms, a laboratory, two reading rooms, and a library. Why has this building, already outfitted as a school building, with the additional benefits of "a voluminous interior, high ceilings, abundant light and air, and architectural grandeur" (as noted by its marketers at Eastern Consolidated), not been immediately swept up by SCW?

President Joel's vision of expanding the undergraduate population by a thousand students in the next five to seven years is widely known. The university has already begun its acquisition of additional space, with its purchase of the new 35<sup>th</sup> street dormitory and the clearing of approximately 30,000 feet of space

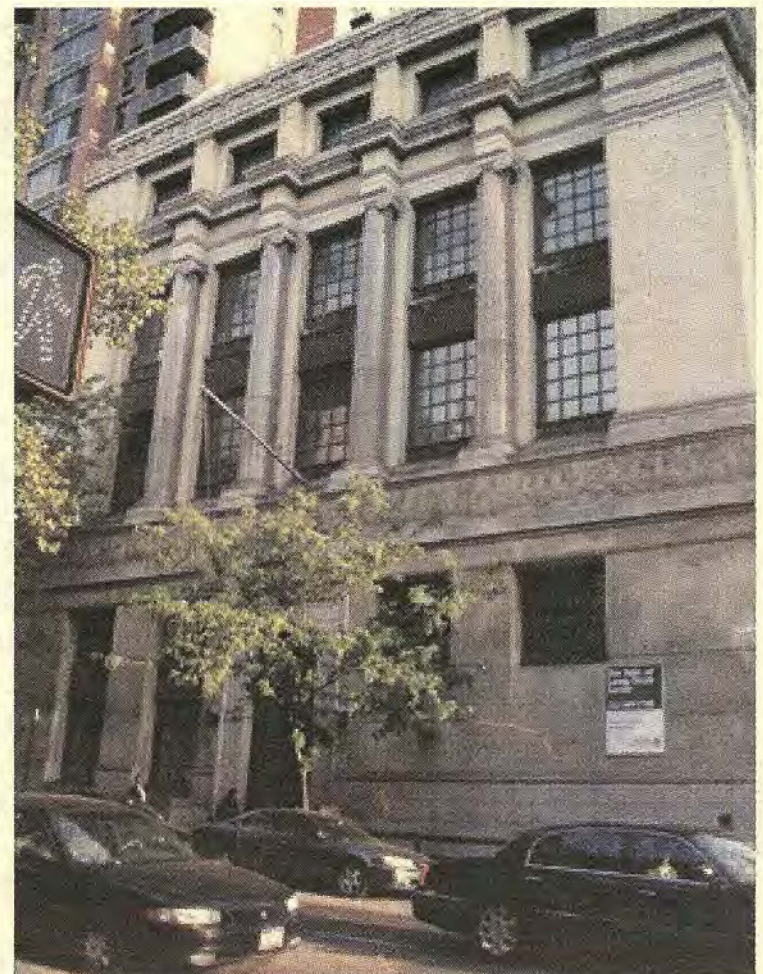
in the Sy Syms building, to be used for classrooms and offices.

When asked whether the university was aware of the former Touro building, Jeffrey Rosengarten, Yeshiva's vice president of administrative services, answered in the affirmative. "We looked at the building as soon as we heard about it," he explained. What he found however, was "a poor layout, awkward spaces, and a badly sized building for our needs."

With the acquisition of the Sy Syms space, classrooms are not really needed at the moment, which is what the 160 Lexington building would be most useful for. To utilize the property for any other purpose, such as for a gym or a pool, would require demolishing the whole building, and even then, the space is really "too expensive and too small" to be of use, said Rosengarten.

The university's response may seem frustrating to many SCW athletes, who must travel to use sports venues at locations off of Stern property, such as at Hunter and Baruch Colleges.

"If we found affordable space for athletic purposes we would certainly look at it—but right now we are selective with what we are taking," Rosengarten assured.



Shayna Hoenig/The Observer

Facade of 160 Lexington Avenue

# Stern Through the Ages

## SCW Beginnings: Liberalism in the 1950s

BY SOPHIE MARMOR

When Stern College for Women first opened its doors in 1954, it was far from a glorified finishing school. In fact, the school was remarkably progressive for the 1950s, an era in American history when most women didn't see the need for an advanced education or profession. Perhaps the president of Mills College adequately summed up the decade's philosophy on women when he stated that their education should consist of "the theory and preparation of a Basque panella or a well marinated shish kabob."

The very concept of Stern College was novel in and of itself when originally founded by Yeshiva University President Dr. Samuel Belkin and the philanthropist Max Stern. Prior to its inception, no Orthodox Jewish institution of higher learning for women even existed. For the young Orthodox woman, Jewish education ended with high school, providing that she lived in an area with a yeshiva. A Jewish women's college was something completely revolutionary and this liberal spirit dominated life at Stern during its early years.

While it still encouraged



Courtesy of YU Productions

Members of SCW's first graduating class

its students to raise strong Jewish families, Stern was one of the few women's colleges in the 1950s that urged its pupils to take their futures as professionals seriously. When YU was recruiting professors to teach at Stern, it only considered young and charismatic academics that showed the potential to become leading experts in their fields. Among this group of young faculty were recognizable names such as Dr. Ahron Lichtenstein and Dr. Louis Feldman.

It was also very important to YU that the students of Stern be exposed to talented working women and therefore, many contemporary

famous women were invited to speak at the college, the most renowned being Eleanor Roosevelt. The students greeted Mrs. Roosevelt with a plethora of questions, most of them regarding the issue of balancing an intense career with a family. Mrs. Roosevelt told the students that they were fortunate enough to live in an age when they were allowed to enter the public arena, but also wittily reminded them that "somebody's got to cook on the stove".

In honor of Stern's first commencement, YU produced a publication entitled "America's Leaders Look at Women's Roles

Today" in which both Mrs. Roosevelt and President Eisenhower had articles published.

However, the most powerful example of how progressive Stern was during its formative years can be seen by examining the courses that it lacked as opposed to courses that it offered. Virtually all women's colleges of the time made some form of a home economic course mandatory for its students. Not only did Stern not require such a course, it did not even have one.

Stern was also quite liberal in terms of the amount of freedom it gave its students when compared to other women's colleges. During its infancy, Stern had no dress code. This is quite shocking given that many of Stern's rival schools featured dress codes that did not just attempt to preserve the modesty of its female students, but also were intended to maintain the feminine appearance of its young women. This was accomplished by requiring female students to wear gloves, hats, and skirts.

Even more radical than the absence of a dress code was the fact that Stern permitted its students to smoke on campus, something which virtually no other women's

college permitted. When the students of Mount Holyoke overturned prohibitions on smoking, the school's president instantly reenacted them, while Wellesley's president burst into tears over a similar request at his own college. This was not the case at Stern, where ash trays scattered all over campus were emptied out by the students each week before Shabbat.

While I don't think it would be a good idea for us, the students of Stern, to reengage in smoking, I do believe that we should look to our liberal founding years for inspiration and guidance. Surely the woman who leaves Stern with no dreams beyond a wealthy husband to idolize and a large amount of adorable children to care for, is not the alumna that the founders of Stern originally envisioned. No, the founders of Stern wanted to produce intelligent women with adventurous spirits who always had their loyal and supportive families to rely on.

*This article was made possible by the research of Atara Lindenbaum (SCW '07).*

## Reflections on SCW in its First Decade

BY GENIA (GINGER) PRAGER SOCOL

It was September 1955, and I was in an elevator in the Duane Hotel (35<sup>th</sup> & Madison Avenue), which was being used as a dormitory for the Stern College for Women out-of-towners. Due to the generosity of Max Stern, who gave the college half a million dollars to help get it off the ground, Dr. Belkin was able to start the school in 1954. Unbeknownst to me, my father had gone from our home in Connecticut to New York to speak to Dr. Belkin about my coming to a new Yeshiva University school called Stern College for Women. So here I was, taking a chance on coming to a new school with only a year of history behind them, and the school taking a chance on me. I think it was a great shidduch. It was a good match.

Another girl was in the elevator with me and looked as totally confused as I was. When we discovered that we were both going to Stern, we decided to be roommates. Her name was Lolet (Batt) Shapiro from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Along the way we acquired three more roommates: Effre (Mayerfeld) Fink from Scranton, Elayne (Mayerfeld) Morris from Pittsburgh, and Martelle (Urivetsky) Berenson from Massachusetts. Fast forward to 2007, and we have remained the closest of friends during the past 52 years, with two of us now living in Jerusalem, one in Los Angeles, one in New

Jersey, while I live in Queens, New York.

When I enrolled, the dormitory consisted of two floors in the Duane Hotel, where we had no phones, TV, or any other "luxuries" that the students have now. The women in the dormitory, which was only for out-of-town girls, formed their own special community.

We had one phone on each floor, and a second phone was added a year later. There were student phone monitors on the floor who answered the phone and timed the girl's calls, limiting each one to 10 minutes, especially on Wednesday and Thursday, so girls could get their dates. We also had a curfew, which the parents wanted. This meant that between 7:30 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. we needed an escort to leave the dormitory, to buy food or go on a date. We had to sign out on a form which included the name of the person we were going out with, the destination, the time we left, and upon our return the time we came back. After 11:00 p.m., we were not even allowed to visit other girls in their dorm rooms. If we violated the rules we received demerits; this meant that we could not have visitors in our rooms after 7:30 p.m. for a certain number of days. However, because I had four roommates, I was able to circumvent that problem.

We were made aware of the dress codes: no sleeveless shirts, and no pants. The dress codes were easy to live with since we all had so few

clothes. All five of us shared a single closet with room to spare.

I was a biology major and the year I entered SCW was the first year in which biology courses were offered. It was very exciting to have only three students in the class with new microscopes. One of my roommates could not handle the frogs, so she switched to chemistry, since everyone had to take a science class. Today, she is a great-grandmother living in Jerusalem.

In one of my classes I had skinned a cat and saved the skin. I put the skin into a bag from the Lerner department store, a place where we used to shop. I left it on a chair in my dorm room. I was in school when my roommate came home and saw the Lerner bag and thought I had gone shopping. I am told she screamed so loud that everyone came running. Upon my arrival at the dormitory, a big note was hanging on the door asking me to never do that again. I didn't.

Although we had very few classes to choose from because the school was small, the majority of the teachers were great. My biology professor, Dr. Beatrice Friedlander, was like a mother figure to us girls. We could speak to her about anything and she always gave us good advice. My first Hebrew teacher was Rabbi Baruch Faivelson, who was both a compassionate person and a great

*Continued on page 13*

## Alumna Reminisces About Stern's Early Years

BY MARGA MARX

On Monday morning of August 27, 2007, I attended freshmen orientation at Stern College for Women to meet the new international students on campus. As I entered through the beautiful new entrance, passing the lounge on the Beren campus, I was reminded of my own freshmen year in SCW many years ago.

Those were the years that followed the tragic times of the Holocaust; needless to say, life was very different. In a way, I myself felt like an international student. Though I was born in Germany, the youngest of three children, I arrived in America at a very young age without any memories of Europe.

My late father, a cardiologist, survived Buchenwald after being released with the other doctors in the concentration camp. We left Germany via England and received our visas to the United States from Mr. Max Stern, the philanthropist and founder of SCW, and a close friend to my extended family in Germany. It was he who brought our loved ones to the safety of the United States.

Thereafter, I lived in Yonkers, New York and attended a public school, with my education being supplemented by Jewish studies outside of school. Attending Stern College was a unique opportunity

for me to receive both a college education and a formal Judaic studies education, something that was quite unheard of at that point in time.

My class in SCW had 28 young women. As the selection of classes to choose from was limited and the classes themselves were small, everyone grew very close. The courses offered included humanities, social science, natural science, and Jewish studies. As the school population expanded each year, the number of classes grew accordingly.

There were various clubs to join and *chagigas* (celebrations) to attend. Yeshiva University's alma mater was written during those years as well. Everything then was similar to the times of today, just on a much smaller scale. Harmonizing voices often could be heard reverberating from the school lounge or lab, and the overall atmosphere was quite relaxed and casual with one exception: our dormitory was in the Hotel Duane and there was a curfew.

For Shabbat, since programming was scant, students typically were invited to the homes of their friends; many young women were commuters from the metropolitan area and there were very few international students.

Society overall was quite different from today's culture. Life

*Continued on page 19*

## CJF Beren Storefront Acquires New Director

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they hosted at the beginning of the semester, was a great success. These events will provide students with additional opportunities to become acquainted with the Secundas.

Daphna Secunda brings a lot of enthusiasm to her job. She marvels at the transformation that Stern campus life has undergone since her time here.

"Staying in Stern for Shabbat is now very in vogue," she says with a laugh. "When I was in

Stern, only 'out-of-towners' without in-town friends or relatives stayed in school. Shabbat is the perfect time to really give Stern a sense of community."

One of Secunda's favorite aspects of her new employments is how well her two roles synergize.

"[It is great] to be able to forge relationships with the students and to make the CJF storefront a destination for Stern women to come in and discuss ideas and talk about various CJF programs."

## Saxe Recruited for AIPAC Committee

*Continued from page 7*

resources and personalities.

"I plan on bringing these lessons back to campus and using new strategies to continue the strong pro-Israel activism that exists at YU," she added. "I am extremely fortunate to be a part of a student body that is 100% supportive of Israel. I want to help more of my peers channel their love for Israel through political activism and assist them in discovering just how influential they can be. Every year more YU students are becoming more involved and making a difference."

Associate Dean of Students Zeldra Braun shared in the excitement of Saxe's new appointment. "I

think it is phenomenal for her and for the university community," she said. "Jackie has worked so hard politically and actively for Israel and even received an award with a group of students for their activism and involvement. I think it's fantastic."

"I plan on dedicating my life to the survival and prosperity of the Jewish state," Saxe remarked. "AIPAC has inspired me to utilize my love for Israel and America in an effective manner. I am a proud American and Zionist and I believe that the U.S.-Israel relationship is essential for both countries. Partaking in the AIPAC Executive Committee will be instrumental in implementing the work that I love to do."

## Writing Center Hires New Head

*Continued from page 6*

line; rather, we hope to offer students a community of writers that is supportive and productive."

Perel Skier (SCW '09), a tutor who has been working at the Writing Center for the past two years, expressed her thoughts on the recent change.

"I was a little nervous when I heard Elizabeth had left, because Elizabeth created what I felt to be a very comfortable and fun ambiance at the Writing Center that helped the students relax and promoted discussion and team spirit among the tutors too," she commented.

"[But] I've noticed that Andrea seems to place the same emphasis on keeping the atmosphere productive and easy-going, not intimidating. There's continuity- it's as enjoyable as always to work there and I always learn something from talking with her," Skier added.

Efthymiou also reflected on her warm reception at the school.

"Although I am new to Stern College, I immediately got the sense of the warm community here," she said. "I hope to foster this warmth in the Writing Center and welcome as many students as possible to use our services."

## Talking Careers with CDC Director

*Continued from page 6*

**there is a profession that holds more interest at Beren than at Wilf.**

The goal is to replicate programs on both campuses. However, there will be special events offered on each campus. There will be a consistent calendar of events and we hope to work with academic advising and specific departments to come up with new events. I am committed, once I have built up the staff on both campuses, to being present on the Beren campus as much as I am on the Wilf campus.

**How will your previous experience at NYU's Wasserman Center for Career Development inform your current position? Do you think Yeshiva's Career Development Center will look different from NYU's?**

I came up with a staff structure that addresses certain needs on Yeshiva's campus. Some of that stems from my experience working with directors of centers from other colleges. It's not just an NYU perspective that I bring, but also an industry-wide perspective.

At NYU, I was heavily involved with the College of Arts and Science and the Gallatin School of Individualized Study, whose students

have a unique curriculum and must be really disciplined and focused. I see a parallel to Yeshiva, where students have a dual curriculum. We need to promote that to professionals and graduate schools; I have some exposure to that kind of thinking.

The Orthodox Jewish population is a change from the more diverse student body where I've worked in the past and that is where the alumni can really play a part. Employers from that community can help educate myself and students about how that plays into working with a corporate population who may not be familiar with [an Orthodox lifestyle].

**Any last advice you'd like to impart to first-time-on-campus students?**

They should visit the CDC of course! Really, though, there are a lot of different pieces of advice I could offer because so many people have varying concerns, experiences, and interests. The first thing I would say is that it's a process and it's okay not to know [your career plan] as long as you're willing to explore and be proactive in figuring it out. This is a partnership; we're here to give students the support they are seeking.

### YESHIVA UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

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WEDNESDAYS MS. SHIRA SALZMAN

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## Honors Program Reassessed

*Continued from front page*

academics on the Beren campus.

"[The Honors Program has] helped the Admissions Office attract a greater number of very high achieving students," confirmed Dr. John Fisher, the university's director of enrollment management. He cited data showing a marked increase in the average SAT score of the SCW student body, which jumped from the 1100 to 1200 range over the last decade.

In order to be considered for admission into the Honors Program, all applicants must earn a combined math and verbal score of at least 1400 on the SAT. Although Fisher had not yet completed his review of compiled data, he estimated that the current average score of a female honors student hovered around the 1500 mark.

Although the average SAT grade of the Honors participants has not changed much over the years, Fisher explained that the program's increased numbers have raised the SAT profile of the overall college. Moreover, for the first time in SCW's history, the average GPA of incoming students has surpassed 90, an achievement Fisher also attributed to the growth of the Honors Program.

"Part of this increase is grade inflation, but statistically, it's only a tiny part," clarified Fisher. "Today, students coming to YU are better students."



*Courtesy of YU Productions*

*Honors Director Dr. Cynthia Wachtell addresses incoming students*

Wachtell also spoke of the program's social contributions. "The presidents of lots of clubs have been honors students," she said. "The honors students are incredibly ambitious and active on campus, willing to take on these leadership roles on campus."

"I think some people are choosing Stern College because of the honors program and those students enhance the reputations of Stern," she added.

Various participants were asked whether their ultimate decision to enroll at the college had in fact been influenced by their acceptance to the program.

"The Honors Program at

Stern was one of the primary reasons I originally applied here," offered Alla Digilova (SCW '10). "Granted, its combination of Torah study and science already made Yeshiva University a unique institution in my mind. However, coming from a challenging specialized science high school, I wanted to have a similar experience in college."

Talia Wohlgelemtter (SCW '08) also considered the academic benefits when applying to the program.

"It is the ultimate in Torah u'Madda, the best of both worlds; the opportunity to be immersed in a comfortable environment of Torah Judaism and yet not to sacrifice any

of the excellence of the ideal liberal arts education," she commented. "I especially enjoy the enriched, intellectual classroom settings of the Honors Program that stress academic and cultural excellence as well as a strong sense of community and social responsibility. These honors classes are particularly unique in that they are comprised of a peer community of highly-motivated and enthusiastic students who value knowledge at its broadest level."

"I applied to the Honors Program because I was interested in the Jewish aspect of Stern, but was worried I wouldn't be challenged academically," admitted Debbie Weinerman (SCW '08). "The Honors Program and the scholarship definitely made Stern a more likable option...I haven't had problems with the honors classes requirement, and probably would have taken the classes even if there was no requirement."

According to SCW Dean Karen Bacon, the program was expressly created to satisfy the academic needs of prospective students. "[We wanted] to give an extra measure of challenge to very high achieving applicants who are comfortable being asked to do independent and original work from day one." She felt that since these applicants had maintained rigorous workloads in high school, they probably "looked forward to a similar pace and intensity in college."

Though many were drawn to Stern specifically because of the Honors Program, some have found that it has not lived up to their expectations.

"Basically the only thing I could say is that I have bragging rights," stated Elana Clark (SCW '08). "I found the fact that I took certain classes to be intellectually enriching, but I don't think that the program overall is."

"I didn't really mean to apply to the Honors Program," recounted Malka Bromberg (SCW '09). "I was applying for a scholarship and honors came free with the deal."

"Have I gained from the program?" she wondered. "Well...it looks good on a transcript, especially the honors thesis. The events themselves I don't particularly care for, nor do I think I gain a heck of a lot from them. But I stick with it, because I think it's worth going to an opera or something of the sort every semester or two."

A common complaint amongst participating students was the meager selection of honors classes offered each semester.

"I feel stifled," complained Adina Schwartz (SCW '08). "It frustrates me how the Honors Program forces me to take classes that I have no interest in, thereby preventing me from taking courses that I would rather take."

Other students validated the prestige element. "I can see why the Honors Program would be an incentive for some students who may not have otherwise applied to Stern," remarked Esther Goldstein (SCW '09). "If someone would have otherwise attended an Ivy League

school, for example, the Stern Honors Program is a great way for her to distinguish herself as a top student."

Wachtell supported this statement. "Being in the Honors Program is certainly more prestigious than not being in the Honors Program. Because of the thesis you will also have a mentor who...has a personal interest in your success and will be able to write you a better letter."

Honors participants have conceded that the inclusion of honors on a diploma is certainly an advantage. But regarding the benefit of writing a thesis with a mentor, Clark countered, "an English or History major or anyone who does research, for example, could have the same advantage since they too have mentors and have to write exit theses."

Furthermore, since the honors label is not included on a student's transcript until graduation, it does not help those students applying to graduate programs during their senior year.

Presidential Fellow Tiffany Unterman (SCW '07) was not a member of the Honors Program. However, she had the GPA necessary to apply mid-year, yet chose not to do so. Unterman explained the reasons for her reluctance, saying that "Stern had so many opportunities to go to operas and other cultural events, so I didn't feel like I was lacking in that. Also, in part it was because the attitude I felt from the Honors Program was that people joined not because of intellectual curiosity but more for the prestige."

"I definitely think that having the Honors Program makes the school look better—and that's fine," commented Schwartz. "I do have a problem, however, in that I feel no incentive to be in the Honors Program aside from how it might look good on my resume. I do not feel special or privileged to be a part of the Honors Program."

Despite these alleged shortcomings, the Honors Program does offer a very important benefit—the community it creates among participants. Most honors students would agree that the various classes and events have brought together like-minded students in an engaging atmosphere.

"A major role that the Honors Program plays, which I didn't even think about before I got to Stern, is that it creates a mini community within Stern," remarked Weinerman. "Since everyone in Stern is Jewish, it's easy to feel lost in a big crowd and not feel any sense of community. The Honors Program formed a group of academically minded girls who, as we're majoring in different things, may not have met otherwise. The program helped create a bond that's often hard to find in Stern."

As the program grows, SCW anticipates its continued success. "I don't at all see this trend towards disinterest. I see a trend towards extreme interest," commented Wachtell. "I think there is a very positive energy and students feel very happy to be in this program together."

## Reflections on SCW

*Continued from page 11*

educator.

The dean of the University was Dr. Daniel Vogel and the dean of the women was Dr. Elizabeth Isaacs. She expected the students to act like highly sophisticated young women, as if we were attending Ivy League schools. When she called us to her office, we were nervous wrecks.

The President of YU at the time was Dr. Samuel Belkin, who had an office in our school building. Max Stern visited often and always spoke to the students he met in the hall. Being the first newly renovated building in the Midtown campus, we were then the showplace for the university.

Shabbos in the dormitory was an interesting experience. We ate in the cafeteria, where it cost \$3.00 for the Shabbos meal. The Semikha students would come down to our school to be the Rabbi for Shabbos. One of my roommates met her husband that way.

For me this was a wonderful

and lasting experience. The town that I grew up in had many Jewish families but only five were Orthodox. Coming to Stern opened a whole new world. Just walking from room to room and wishing everyone Gut Shabbos was awesome.

Stern College provided me and my classmates with a rich, educational experience, a warm nurturing Jewish environment, and solid preparation for the future. Our entire graduating class in 1959 comprised 28 students. However, job opportunities for us were not as promising as they are today. Women in general did not have access to many careers and even fewer options were available for religious women. My first science job was in a lab at Sloan Kettering. That job lasted until the first "short" Friday. Much has changed since then, thank God.

On a personal note, I met my husband Sheldon while I was a sophomore at Stern. We have been married for almost 48 years, have three children (all YC and SCW graduates) and 11 grandchildren

who all attend Yeshiva day schools. I firmly believe that my experience at Stern was an important factor in helping me to stay Shomer Shabbos, while shaping my lifestyle and values as well as those of my family.

I have gone back to SCW during the last few years and have audited classes in criminology, forensic psychology, archaeology, and anthropology. I have really enjoyed the courses, especially since I don't have to take the midterms and finals. I have found the students to be very bright, motivated, and career-oriented. I also have been active in the Alumnae Association and urge all Stern alumnae to spend the time and resources to give back to Stern so future generations can benefit as we have.

It has been a very exciting journey for me, from that first day in 1955 to the present. Stern College, I thank you for the trip.

*Mrs. Socol graduated SCW in 1959 and has remained actively involved through the Alumnae Association. She has also attended various classes at the college over the past several years.*

awareness would yield positive results.

"We prefer to believe that no one would willingly flout the policy of a community to which she subscribes and belongs," she asserted.

## SCW Clamps Down on Dress Code Violations

*Continued from front page 8*

she declared. "In fact, there are many students who are 'chafing' at the fact that some of their fellow students disregard the policy."

The associate dean expressed optimism that heightened

# ISRAEL

## 250,000 Fill Dag Hammarskjold Plaza to Protest Iranian President

BY NINA BURSKY-TAMMAM

"I never thought another man would arise who it would be fair to compare to Hitler," declared New York Congressman Jerry Nadler at a rally across from the United Nations held on Monday, September 24, 2007. "Unfortunately that man is in New York today."

Over 250,000 people packed Dag Hammarskjold Plaza to protest Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presence in New York and to call for Iran to end its nuclear program.

There was unmistakable outrage in the speakers' voices that day, as many of them echoed Nadler's comparison, decrying the Iranian president's repeated threats against the State of Israel and his denial of the Holocaust.

"The real Holocaust is what is happening in Palestine where the Zionists avail themselves of the fairy tale of the Holocaust as blackmail and justification for killing children and women and making innocent people homeless," Ahmadinejad proclaimed at a mass demonstration in Tehran last year. Statements like these have generated uneasiness among Jewish communities worldwide, the echo of the horrors of the 1930s and 1940s still ringing in their ears.

Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, one of the rally's speakers, criticized the UN's hypocrisy in hosting Ahmadinejad, given the insult he presents to the ideals upon which the UN was founded.

"Rising out of the ashes of World War II and the Holocaust, the United Nations was supposed to be a beacon of peace and hope," she said. "How is it possible that this beacon can play host to a man who denies the Holocaust and sponsored a cartoon contest to mock the Holocaust?"

New Jersey Senator Robert Menendez and radio host Curtis Sliwa both fervently warned that the world must not repeat its sin of deafness to this all-too-familiar voice of hate and anti-Semitism. "History teaches us that the only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for men and women to do nothing," preached Menendez.

While the crowd gathered at the demonstration was overwhelmingly Jewish, and the speakers focused heavily on affirming Israel's existence, other groups were also represented at the rally, if sparsely. After all, said Janice Shorestein, president of the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of New York, "A man who said the solution to the Mid-East Conflict is to destroy Israel... whose missiles have killed American soldiers... who sends weapons to militants around the world... who denies there ever was a Holocaust... and who denies his own citizens human rights," should concern anyone who values peace, life, and freedom.

Ilana Snyder (SCW '09) said that "it was extremely powerful to see so many people from so many different organizations with so many different philosophies coming together for a cause that's important to the Jewish people." And, indeed, the podium was graced by representatives of varied political affiliations as well as of various religious affiliations. New Jersey Congressman Scott Garrett specifically thanked those people bearing "Christians United for Israel" banners, of whom there were a significant number. Pastor Victor Styrsky, the California director of Christians United for Israel, apologized for the unforgivable acts of anti-Semitism that Christians have perpetrated throughout history, but pledged, "Today we want to stand with you.... Never again should you say, 'No one is for us.'"

Still, there was a sense that the demonstration did not represent a wide enough spectrum of the world community. Though Senator Menendez adamantly declared that "Iran is not only a threat to Israel but to the US and the world," and though mention was made of the recent Iranian parade of missiles marked with signs threatening "Death to America," world concern seemed to be reflected only on the podium.

YU President Richard Joel, present in the audience, afterwards praised Yeshiva University students for making the effort to be in the area for the rally during their vacation, but also reflected that, considering the total turnout, the number of people from the Orthodox community was disproportionately large. "It is a mistake for Jews to take ownership of this issue... We need to speak as part of the greater world," he said.

Israel's foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, was among the speakers and spoke forcefully of the international community's responsibility to respond. "Where is the world?" she asked, "Where are its values? We are here to demand from the world that it react before it's too late."

Avi Posnick (YC '07), a representative of the Israel advocacy organization StandWithUs, who helped promote the rally, agreed. "We have to speak out about this being an issue that affects the world," he asserted.

Malcolm Hoenlein, president of The Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, the primary organizer of the rally, spoke to The Observer about his satisfaction with the rally's achievement of diversity.

"There were an incredibly large number of non-Jews who came," he said. "People came from all over the United States to support this. They made their voices heard."

When asked if an effort is being made to broadcast the rally's message to the non-Jewish world en



masse, Hoenlein was confident that the message would be spread without his organization's effort.

"The media will do that," he explained. "We don't have the budget to do that."

Disturbingly enough, the New York Times made no mention of the rally held near the U.N., reporting only on the rally protesting Ahmadinejad's visit to Columbia University and focusing mostly on criticism of university president Lee Bollinger's introductory remarks.

Meanwhile, JCRC Director Michael Miller acknowledged in an interview with The Observer that the crowd was in fact, overwhelmingly Jewish, but not necessarily because of non-Jewish indifference. The JCRC was instrumental in reaching out through different religious institutions to a wide range of New Yorkers to publicize the rally.

"[Due to] Ahmadinejad's emphasis on Israel's destruction and his denial of the Holocaust, we in the Jewish community have certainly paid attention," said Miller. "This might lead people to believe that he is only a threat to Jews, but he is a threat to world peace, global stability, and clearly a threat to American interests and the interests of the free world."

He continued to explain that the probable explanation for the small turnout of non-Jews was that the Jewish community is especially accustomed to participating in events like these.

"We have been conditioned to taking to the streets when our interests are threatened or are at stake," he continued. "Many in

the non-Jewish community are not as attuned to the need for public expression as we are."

A consistent theme in most of the speakers' words was outrage at the invitation extended to Ahmadinejad to speak at Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA), expressing dismay that the man who New York Congressman Anthony Weiner described at the rally as a "snake slithering through the streets of Manhattan," should be granted such a courtesy.

"I know what the first amendment says," Rep. Nadler quipped. "You can't deny anyone the right to invite a speaker. But no one says people have to be so stupid as to invite him!"

NYC Council Speaker Christine Quinn admonished Columbia, saying, "There is never a reason to give a hate-monger an open stage."

The same sentiments were echoed by members of the crowd.

"I thought that allowing him to speak at Columbia and at the U.N. was giving him undue legitimacy," commented Devora Tropp (SCW '10). He shouldn't be put on a level with legitimate and sane world leaders."

Richard Holbrooke, former U.S. ambassador to the UN, cited an even more pressing reason to shut Ahmadinejad out. "We should not give him platforms in the U.S. because it strengthens him at home," he said. "Of course no one here would listen to him."

Senator Menendez did not just issue criticism and call for

awareness about the Iranian threat, but called for international action as well.

"We can't stop [Ahmadinejad] by roaring like a lion and then acting like a pussy-cat," said the senator. He called specifically for the UN to pass two acts that would impose further economic and nuclear sanctions on Iran.

AIPAC, a leading pro-Israel lobby, reported that U.S. and international sanctions have already started to affect the Iranian economy, leading some Iranians to wonder if the price of their country's nuclear defiance is too high. AIPAC suggests that further sanctions could convince Iran's leaders that its nuclear pursuit is not worth the sacrifice.

While it is questionable whether immediate international action will result from demonstrations like these, there seems to be no doubt that they make an impact on the world's consciousness.

"You are being heard around the world—make some noise!" Holbrooke called into the microphone.

"Every rally is so important," stressed Marcia Genuth, former president of Emunah of America. "It is both a statement to the world and a chance for people to rededicate themselves by standing together."

President Joel confirmed the importance of making our voices heard, both for our own sake and for others. "We are diminished by silence," he said, "and the world must hear our message."

## Terror Survivor, Shalit Comrade, Shares Story at YUIC Opening Event

BY BATYA MATLA HERZBERG

The YU Israel Club hosted Roi Amitai, an Israeli soldier, for its inaugural event in Weissberg Commons on September 10, 2007. The sole known survivor of the Hamas attack leading to the infamous capture of MIA Gilad Shalit in June 2006, Amitai delivered his first public remarks on the ordeal to an audience of over 300 students.

The story was conveyed largely through a translator, Ariel Kotler, the East Coast executive director of the One Family Fund, a cosponsor of the event.

Amitai recounted the attack in painstaking detail, describing how seven Arab terrorists infiltrated Israel through a secret tunnel and targeted Amitai's tank near Kerem Shalom, a now ironically named kibbutz on Israel's border with the Gaza Strip. Two soldiers, Lieutenant Hanan Barak, the officer of the tank, and Staff-Sergeant Pavel Slutsker exited the tank and were immediately murdered. Corporal Gilad Shalit was kidnapped at the site and remains in the hands of Hamas until today. Amitai, also a corporal, was trapped inside the cockpit of the tank by the force of the RPG missile. The terrorists, who knew that there were four soldiers in every tank, threw grenades and sprayed bullets inside the tank to ignite the ammunition and kill the fourth soldier. The anti-smoke mechanism was activated, saving Amitai's life.

Amitai spent the next seven and a half months in rehabilitation overcoming the injuries he sustained. The army offered him an honorary discharge but he refused it, explaining that "there wasn't a different option." He later rejoined his unit and platoon, albeit not in a combat position.

Amitai proceeded to present photographs of the tank, its soldiers, and the view at the border to the audience. Throughout, he described his deep friendship with Barak and explained that his photos

of Shalit were some of the last ever taken of the missing soldier. He concluded the talk with a prayer for all the missing soldiers of the Israeli Defense Forces.

In response to a student's question regarding the ramifications of a possible prisoner exchange as a means of reclaiming Shalit, Amitai and Kotler described a mentality unique to IDF soldiers. They asserted that it is "a major issue" for them to know that the Israeli government will do all that it can to rescue them in the event that they are kidnapped. Without such confidence, "how are you going to fight? What kind of morale are you going to have if you know you are going to get kidnapped and no one is going to come after you?" It is of critical importance for the people who "risk their lives every single day" to know that the Israeli government values their lives, they explained.

Amitai also expressed his gratitude toward the One Family Fund. According to its mission statement, the organization provides "direct financial, legal, and emotional assistance to victims of terrorism in Israel." Amitai is just one of hundreds of terror victims being assisted; representatives visited him in the hospital, arranged a stipend for his family during his therapy months, and remain in touch with him until today.

"One Family Fund...is good [because] people like me... meet the same [type of] people," Amitai remarked, referring to other terror victims who can relate most intimately to his experiences. "It is better, more comfortable," he added.

In a later interview, Kotler commented on his experience at YU, saying that "we were very happy to see that so many students came to support victims of terror and missing soldiers." He described past student participation in the winter mission to Israel, sporting events, and packing of *mishloach manot* for terror victims, while expressing the hope for undergraduate involvement

in both the U.S. and Israel. He was grateful that YU students contacted him after the event asking what help they could provide. Kotler also said that Amitai was "very excited to see how many people came, showed their love, opened their hearts and wallets." Amitai himself articulated similar sentiments, saying, "we truly have no words. Everyone here is generous, helpful."

Student reactions to the event were overwhelmingly positive. "It's so amazing how he could be friendly and make jokes after such a traumatic experience," said Debra Wiseman (SCW '11). "We should all be inspired by him...he is a hero."

"Seeing him in person made the situation even more believable," added Batya Carl (SCW '08). "These are real people we're talking about."

Jenny Deluty (SCW '10) described the impact the event had on her, saying that "it is easier to comprehend the extent to which each and every tragedy affects people."

"One person can change the world," said Kotler. "Each one of us [can] be responsible for someone, adopt a family."

Giti Klinger (SCW '10), after hearing about the work of the organization, expressed similar feelings, saying, "It makes you appreciate life and everything you have, to realize one small action can change so many lives and help so many people."

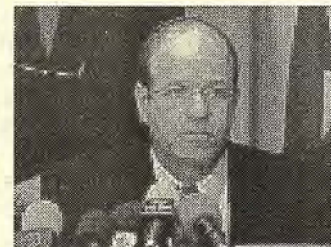
According to YU Israel Club President Rachel Flashner, the program's turnout "might be one of the club's largest." The high attendance, she explained, was encouraging and confirmed the importance of attracting a more diverse range of students than in years past.

"[We want] to keep the student body informed of Israel's current events, provide them with the means to get involved in important issues as well as to celebrate what will soon be Israel's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary," she concluded.

## "Defeating Hitler" Delegitimized: An Attack on Post-Zionism

BY NAVA BILLET

The Jewish people and the State of Israel are constantly challenged by their neighbors and the world, whether socially, economically, politically, or militarily. Today, one of the budding adversaries of the Jewish State is a group started by a number of Jewish intellectuals called the post-Zionist movement. Post-Zionists believe that the State of Israel has fulfilled its purpose as a state for the Jewish people, a state that was clearly needed in the wake of the horrific events that took place in Europe between 1939 and 1945, but whose original character is no longer relevant. Furthermore, they claim that it should now serve as a state to all citizens



Israeli politician Avraham Burg

according to pluralistic democratic values. In short, the movement hopes to strip the State of Israel of its Jewish identity.

This past summer, a well-known and once-respected Israeli politician, Avraham Burg, former chairman of the Jewish Agency, speaker of the Knesset, and potential Labor Party candidate for Prime Minister, published a book titled "Defeating Hitler."

David Remnick, a writer for The New Yorker, summarized Burg's main points in his July 2007 article, "The Apostate." According to Remnick, Burg "describes the country [Israel] in its current state as Holocaust-obsessed, xenophobic, and, like Germany in the nineteenth-thirties, vulnerable to an extremist minority." It is difficult to reconcile this social and political analysis of Israel with a man of Burg's stature, who played such a prominent and influential role in mainstream Israel in the past.

In an interview conducted by Ari Shavit of the Israeli newspaper, Ha'aretz, shortly after the publication of "Defeating Hitler," the journalist accused Burg of post-Zionist ideology. Shavit wrote, "I was outraged by the book. I saw it as a turning away of an Israeli colleague from our shared Israeliness. I saw it as a one-dimensional and un-empathetic attack on the Israeli experience."

Shavit claimed that Burg was not just a post-Zionist, but an anti-Zionist. Shavit not only supported this view with references from Burg's book, but also caused Burg to admit his antipathy towards Israel by questioning him about his recently acquired French citizenship.

Shavit asked, "Do you recommend that every Israeli take out a foreign passport?" Burg's two-word response, "Whoever can," is striking in its implications.

Part of Burg's reason for attaining citizenship outside of the Jewish State was his belief that the Jewish State has no future. As he told Shavit, "Ask your friends if they are certain their children will live here. How many will say yes? At most 50 percent. In other words, the Israeli elite has already parted with this place... We are already dead. We haven't received the news yet, but we are dead... There is no important Jewish writing in Israel... There is no one to talk to here."

Burg is a fatalist; he sees no political or intellectual future for the Jewish people in Israel. Shavit explained that Burg portrays German Jews and American Jews as the ideal, since theirs is "a Jewish experience of integration, not separation." But Shavit refuted Burg's idyllic fantasy by pointing out that German Jewry ended in Auschwitz. Indeed, today's American Jewry is disappearing through the silent destroyers: assimilation and intermarriage.

The only positive aspect of the post-Zionist view is that it raises awareness of the future of the State of Israel, which is indeed in peril. It is threatened by unscrupulous leaders—people like Burg and its Arab neighbors and residents. Also, as Burg pointed out, the number of citizens who leave the country yearly is rising, especially among Israeli youth. But these criticisms are not unique to the post-Zionists. It is their solutions to these problems which undermine the Jewish nature of the State of Israel.

The post-Zionism of many prominent Israelis is an issue addressed by Yoram Hazony of the Shalem Center in his seminal book "The Jewish State," published in 2001. Hazony stressed in the introduction "that those today who explicitly refer to themselves as post-Zionists are a minority even within Israeli academic and literary circles... But I think that by the time a prominent professor, novelist, or politician is calling for the additions of an Arab symbol on the Israeli flag (Eliezer Schweid), for European courts to be given the authority to overturn Israeli law (Amnon Rubinstein), or for Israeli Jews to convert to Christianity or Islam so as to make Israel a more 'normal' state (A. B. Yehoshua) it seems to me that the time has come to point out that they, too, are an important part of the problem."

Hazony concluded this point by insisting that it was these idealists who are "pushing us toward the dismantling of Israel's character



Courtesy of Victoria Stone

Members of the YU Israel Club Board with Roi Amitai (center)

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# ARTS & CULTURE

## YU Museum Presents "Alfred Dreyfus: The Fight for Justice"

BY OLIVIA WIZNITZER

October 14, 2007 marked the opening of a fascinating new exhibit at the Yeshiva University Museum entitled "Alfred Dreyfus: The Fight for Justice." Dreyfus is a name that resounds in Jewish ears, a name that testifies to the might and strength of the Jewish spirit. In 1894, falsely accused of giving French military secrets to Germany, Dreyfus was arrested and tried for



Courtesy of the Yeshiva University Museum

reason. He was originally sentenced to life in prison on Devil's Island, and indeed spent ten years there, although he was subsequently pardoned and knighted. The political scandal had an incredible effect upon the world, fueling political and humanitarian change in addition to increased anti-Semitism.

Organized by the Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme in Paris, and premiering here for the first time in North America, the exhibit is comprised of some 200 objects from the Dreyfus family archive. These range from photographs and letters to the original and notably famous "J'accuse!" newspaper article, written by Emile Zola to the president of France in 1898.

Gabriel Goldstein, YUM curator, explained that he was most moved by "the surviving fragments of ornamental braid which were torn from Dreyfus' uniform at his degradation ceremony. It's a very powerful physical embodiment of his experience of humiliation. In many ways, the exhibition is built around riveting and emotional letters that Alfred Dreyfus and his wife Lucie exchanged while he was incarcerated and in exile; these provide a very personal story to the larger political affair."

It is this personal story that particularly resonates with students. What must it have been like to have been discriminated against in so cruel a fashion, to have found

one's contributions deemed utterly worthless, to have the country one had faithfully served disown you?

According to a press release on the university's website, the exhibition is structured in such a way as to truly impact the viewer. It is organized chronologically in eight sections "beginning before the Affair in 1870; covering the trial and retrial of Dreyfus and the trial of Dreyfus champion Emile Zola in the 1890s, and concluding with a section on how the 20<sup>th</sup> century addressed issues of rehabilitation and the challenge of commemoration." One moves forward through time, realizing how current these issues still are. As Goldstein remarked, "The issues highlighted in the exhibition, such as fair judicial process, military cover-ups, xenophobia and prejudice remain highly relevant."

Of particular interest to Zionist students is the impact of the Dreyfus Affair upon Theodore Herzl. A Viennese journalist at the time, Herzl was horrified by the obvious and undisguised anti-Semitism in France, characterized by mobs shouting "Death to the Jews" during Dreyfus's trial. He determined that the only solution to anti-Semitism was to create a place of refuge, a homeland for the Jews. Spurred on by this firm belief, he immediately dedicated himself to organizing and gaining support for the establishment of a Jewish state with the first Zionist Congress in 1897. The museum exhibit does contain some material on how the Dreyfus Affair was a powerful influence on Herzl and the establishment of political Zionism.

"The exhibition explores Alfred Dreyfus' personal story as well as the broader political ramifications," remarked Goldstein. "It's a fascinating story of one individual, as well as a larger story of the quest for liberty and honor."

It seems clear that this story impacts positively upon Jewish students, who cannot but be moved and inspired by the impact Dreyfus had upon world history. The friendly viewer format can only aid in this endeavor. As Goldstein asserted, "Yeshiva University Museum is eager to present interdisciplinary exhibitions that provide new ways to consider and understand history." The interesting and multi-dimensional approach ensures that no viewer will be left unmoved.

"Alfred Dreyfus: The Fight for Justice" runs from October 14, 2007 until February 17, 2008. The Yeshiva University Museum is located at the Center for Jewish History: 15 West 16<sup>th</sup> Street (between 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues). Please check [www.yumuseum.org](http://www.yumuseum.org) for hours, or call (212) 294-8330.

## Rosh Hashana: The Soloveitchik Machzor

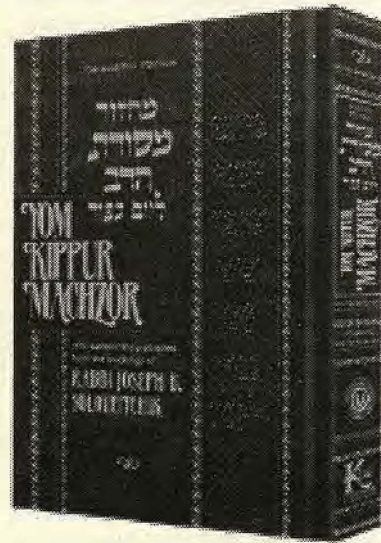
BY OLIVIA WIZNITZER

This Rosh Hashana was unquestionably enhanced by the premiere of a new and beautiful machzor (prayer book for festivals). This machzor is attractive and elegant; its mahogany finish is warm and inviting. Emblazoned with gold, it is a bold rival to the typical navy Artscroll edition. But this prayerbook is special for reasons other than its superior aesthetics. The Rosh Hashana machzor comes with a commentary adapted from the teachings of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik.

The release of this machzor follows the successful Yom Kippur version released last year. Once again, Dr. Arnold Lustiger, Rabbi Michael Taubes, Rabbi Menachem Genack, and Rabbi Hershel Schachter lend their expertise to the project. But this machzor features two new names as well: Rabbis Daniel Besser and Dovid Schreiber. Their combined efforts have truly paid off. In the words of Rabbi Professor Lawrence Kaplan (taken from an online review available at the popular blog Hirhurim), "This Machzor is simply outstanding. It provides an unparalleled way for one to gain a deep and broad and inspiring understanding of the Rosh ha-Shanah tefillot and thereby to experience better the *Kedushas HaYom* (holiness of the day)."

What distinguishes the Soloveitchik machzor from its traditional Artscroll counterpart?

While the English translation used is standard Artscroll and in no way that of the Rav's, the text is much easier to read. The Soloveitchik machzor features a beautiful, clear typeface that is noticeably larger than the Artscroll version. Gone are the small, cramped italics, the tiny footnotes on the bottom. This is especially helpful, as the footnotes here detail



the customs, philosophical insights, and emotions of the Rav.

And what footnotes they are! The breadth of works cited is truly amazing. Ranging from English works such as "Halakhic Man," "Family Redeemed," "Worship of the Heart"

and many more, to Hebrew works like "Nefesh Harav," "MiPeninei HaRav," and "Gan Shoshanim," this is a stunning compilation and introduction to the varied, expressive, and beautiful insights of the Rav. The beauty of his words is not lost in translation; the editors took special care to ensure that the footnotes read like excerpts from his writings. The work is unique in that it skillfully demonstrates the many different sides of Rabbi Soloveitchik. The passion, commitment, and depth of emotion conveyed in these passages are stunning.

As a student, I can attest to the helpful and intriguing nature of the commentary. Rosh Hashana has the potential to be a very long day and it is difficult to focus one's attention on the prayers at hand. The Rav's commentary enabled me to focus upon the words I was saying, secure in the knowledge that if I were to become tired, I need only glance down to read something fascinating, diverting, and powerful. One example is his differentiation between the individual standing before God as opposed to the community as a whole. "The individual, no matter how righteous, has no right to claim anything from God," the Rav states. "The chazzan (cantor), on the other hand, prays on behalf of the entire congregation. He thus has the right to demand that God

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## The Beatles Bonanza: Across the Universe

BY LEA NEW

With a title like "Across the Universe" and main characters named Lucy (Evan Rachel Wood) and Jude (Jim Sturgess), it could only be one type of movie: a Beatles music bonanza. "Across the Universe," directed by Julie Taymor, follows the adventures of lovebirds Jude and Lucy and their companions Max, Sadie, Prudence, and JoJo. Jude has sailed from the wharfs of Liverpool in search of his biological father, and meets class clown Max at Princeton University. Max introduces Jude to his friends, his parents, and most importantly, his sister, Lucy. Lucy's high school boyfriend has been drafted and is eventually killed in the war, and Jude and Lucy become romantically involved. Max, Lucy, and Jude eventually find themselves in New York City's Greenwich Village, where they join with other wandering souls to form a young, hippie, and very "60s" entourage (think Hair) with a penchant for singing songs by the Fab Four. Max is drafted, Lucy becomes involved in anti-war activism, and Jude, an artist, falls into a rut of guilt for his own fence-sitting during an age of revolution.

The events that subsequently transpire are, in fact,

less important than the way the protagonists sing about them. The movie is often propelled forward by the demands of the soundtrack rather than by a strong storyline. Over the course of 131 minutes of film time, we hear the actors belt out old Beatles favorites like "I Wanna Hold Your Hand," "I am the Walrus," "All You Need is Love," "Strawberry Fields Forever," "Let it Be," "Because," "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," "Hey Jude," "Helter Skelter," "Blackbird," and of course, "Across the Universe." The plot acts as nothing more than an outline that loosely keeps things together; the music gives most of the power and weight to the film. Often, songs are included that have little to do with anything happening onscreen, giving the movie a somewhat disjointed feel.

As a whole, the movie isn't very good, but broken down into little musical vignettes it can be quite enjoyable, as the colorful clips are filled with spectacular images and effects. "I am the Walrus" becomes an acid journey with Dr. Robert (a Bono cameo) and his painted school bus. The screen's alternating psychedelic colors are reminiscent of '60s iconography (think lava lamps, Richard Avedon's famous photo of

the Beatles, and Warholian pop art); indeed, this song makes you wonder whether you are actually experiencing an alternate state of consciousness. This movie certainly takes us to the trippy side of Beatles tunes.

"Across the Universe" also engages in some interesting reinterpretation of several Beatles camp favorites by giving characters the chance to "own" the music and use it to express personal meaning. "Strawberry Fields Forever," commonly appreciated as a dreamy and nostalgic tune, becomes, in Jude's hands, an angry diatribe against an unjust war and the decline of his relationship with Lucy, as well as a cathartic expression of his artistic creativity. A frenzied scene of the 1968 Columbia University anti-war protests is set to a passionate rendition of "Helter Skelter" and yields breathtaking results.

"Across the Universe" is set at the height of the '60s, a time rife with raging counterculture, political activism, and a highly controversial war in Vietnam. All these elements find their way into the movie, although they are shown in snapshot-like flashes. We witness

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# SCIENCE & HEALTH

## SCW Participates in National Depression Screening Day

BY MIRIAM MERZEL

Every year, nearly 19 million Americans suffer from depression, and most don't seek any form of treatment. However, clinical depression is a disease and like any other ailment, people should be screened for it regularly. In 1991, the National Depression Screening Project launched National Depression Screening Day to help those who perhaps would not otherwise seek assistance. Held annually every October during National Mental Awareness Week, this day draws attention to the symptoms of depression and the ways to address it.

Depression is characterized by sadness that endures longer than usual sadness or grief. It involves symptoms that are more acute and it affects one's ability to function normally. Some symptoms include changes in eating and sleeping habits, crying spells, loss of energy, restlessness, feelings of worthlessness and guilt, and difficulty in thinking and making decisions. Depression affects not only a person's mental well-being, but also increases the risks of developing medical illnesses such as coronary artery disease and asthma. It can also intensify the severity and fatality of these illnesses. However, depression can be treated with antidepressant medication and

psychotherapy.

Anxiety disorder is a similar disease that is characterized by excessive worry and anxiety about everyday events. People with anxiety disorder tend to worry continuously about normal things such as school, work, money, family, and health,



Courtesy of Yael Muskat

Dr. Yael Muskat, assistant director of SCW Counseling Center

and they typically expect disaster to strike. This disease causes the patient to exaggerate the severity of his or her problems, and like depression, it can prevent a person from functioning normally. Physical symptoms include restlessness, irritability,

muscle tension, headaches, sweating, difficulty concentrating, nausea, fatigue, and trembling. Anxiety can be treated with medication and cognitive-behavioral therapy.

On October 11, 2007, SCW was one of 3,000 sites nationwide conducting mental health screenings. From noon until 3:30 p.m., stations were set up in the lobbies of 215 and 245 Lexington Avenues. At each location, representatives from the Counseling Center were available to give the National Depression Screening Form to any person who wished to participate. Students were encouraged to fill out an anonymous survey to be evaluated immediately, and then to take a few minutes to review it with one of the staff members present. Each station had a cubicle set up to ensure the privacy of the students. Staff members were also available to make appointments for a later date.

In addition to the actual screening and distribution of stress balls and candy, information sheets on clinical depression, bipolar disorder, and suicide were distributed along with information about the Counseling Center. The Counseling Center, which is located on the fourth floor of the Beren Campus's Schottenstein Cultural Center, is in its third year and employs a staff of nine people including psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers,

and counselors. All Counseling Center employees are available for individual or group counseling and to run programs for students throughout the year.

"We had several goals in mind when we became a National Depression Screening Day site," explained Assistant Director Dr. Yael Muskat. "We wanted to increase the awareness about mental health and symptoms of depression and anxiety, and decrease the stigma of getting tested and treated for such symptoms. We also wanted to give people a chance to get to know the Counseling Center, and be able to reach out to people who might not call us on their own. Plus, we were able to join forces with thousands of other people across the country."

The day itself was deemed a success.

"Over 120 women stopped by to be screened," reported Dr. Muskat, "and more took the information sheets about depression and the Counseling Center as they passed by."

"It was very accessible," said one student. "It didn't feel strange or uncomfortable to fill out the screening form since so many other students were doing it and the individual conversations were held in a private area. It also brought the Counseling Center up onto my radar screen." She even felt that the individual meetings were slightly rushed, in part because of the large number of students taking advantage of the opportunity.

## Exploring the Causes Behind Cravings

BY GRACE CHARLES

We have come to expect it: the meal concludes, and though we may be quite full, we wait expectantly for dessert. Our sweet tooth has the ability to override our bodies'

messages telling us to stop eating. As TIME Magazine reported this summer, researchers have identified seven ways in which our bodies are stimulated to eat more, even though we are not really hungry.

In the example mentioned above, our bodies are searching for variety. Your meal of pot roast and potatoes fulfilled your requirements for fat, carbohydrates, and protein, but lacked something sweet. Although you may technically be full, your body signals that you are not done eating because the desire for sweets has not been satisfied. This quest for variety may be the result of how we were brought up, or it could be an innate part of our appetite. Either way, Ann Gaba, a registered dietician at New York Presbyterian Hospital, tells us that we do not have to devour a chunk of cake with a side of ice cream to fulfill the variety quota. Sometimes, she says, all it takes is a little fruit salad during your meal to prevent a sugar craving.

Living in New York City, we are bombarded all day long with two of the other recognized eating stimulants: sight and smell. Try walking down the street without becoming aware of all the delicious foods around you. In the food capital of the world, that is pretty tough. On almost every corner, you will find Rafiqi's delicious gyro cart sizzling away, or you may find the ever-tempting hot glazed nuts for sale. Okay, so maybe it's not all kosher, but it can still make you hungry!

Scent is crucial to alerting our bodies that food is close by. It can stimulate the secretion of insulin, which triggers hunger. Similarly,

## YU Medical Ethics Conference Reconciles Halakha and Infertility

BY OLIVIA MATHIAS

The Talmud tells us that there are three active contributors in the process of creation: man, woman, and God. However, with modern scientific advances such as in-vitro fertilization and sperm injection, creation has become far more complicated. Cases of infertility raise crucial questions regarding the extent to which Orthodox Jews can rely on modern medicine and still remain within the confines of halakha.

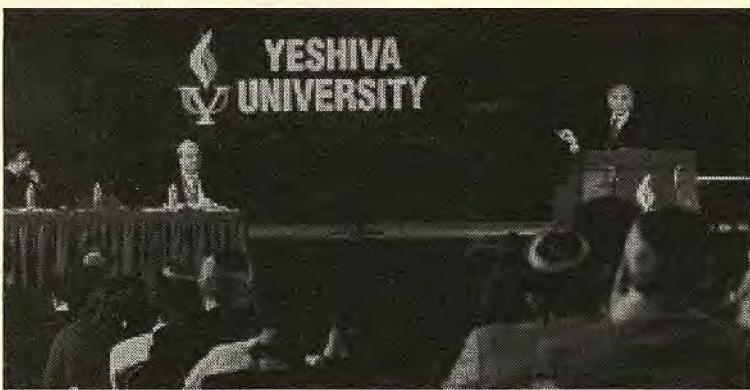
Yeshiva University's Medical Ethics Society answered many of those questions at its second annual conference, entitled "Partners in Creation: Fertility, Modern Medicine and Jewish Law." Prominent physicians and rabbis explained how science and halakha can coexist in the attempt to solve infertility problems plaguing many couples.

The conference, held on the Wilf Campus on October 14, 2007, was an all-day event. A diverse crowd attended, comprised of YU undergraduates and alumni, medical students, and adults from the greater Jewish community.

"I came to the conference last year and really enjoyed it," said psychology major Jackie Shapiro SCW '09, referring to the

symposium on surrogate motherhood that was held last April. "This year's topic is even better because of all of the controversy that comes with

rabbi of the British Commonwealth, opened the conference with a speech highlighting the new scientific era of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



Courtesy of YU Productions

Dr. Richard Grazi, infertility expert, addresses hundreds at medical ethics conference, as CJF Director Rabbi Kenneth Brander looks on

it. It calls for thorough research and analysis on both sides: medical and religious."

The speakers discussed issues relevant to infertility treatment including in-vitro fertilization, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, and sperm injection. They also discussed how these modern technological advances could exist harmoniously with Jewish law.

Sir Jonathan Sacks, chief

"We live in an age where it is possible to re-write the genetic scripts," he articulated. "If you want to understand the universe, witness the birth of one human child."

While scientific innovation has greatly helped those who suffer from infertility, it has also introduced many moral uncertainties, since it is now possible to clone through science. Rabbi Sacks explained that "God created the world in six days, but on

the seventh day He rested to show that there are limits to creation."

Following the opening speeches, Dr. Richard Grazi and Rabbi Kenneth Brander engaged in an interactive session called "The ABC's of Infertility." Dr. Grazi first presented the technicalities of the medical procedures and was followed by Rabbi Brander who countered with the halakhic ramifications of those techniques. Both the scientific and religious approaches were subsequently discussed in depth.

"Halakha celebrates the opportunity to use scientific advances," said Rabbi Brander, "but it must also be within the limits set up by halakha." Rabbi Brander supported his answers with sources from the gemara in *masechet* (tractate) *chagiga*, the *Even HaEzer*, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, and Rav Samuel Fivish, among others.

After lunch, conference participants chose from a variety of specialized session topics such as sperm retrieval, male infertility, multi-fetal reduction, the emotional "roller coaster" of infertility, and egg donation and halakha. The audience broke into smaller groups for these lectures, allowing the speakers to devote more of their attention to individual questions.

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# FASHION & STYLE

## Report: Fashion Week Stern Student Enjoys the Glitz and Glam

BY EFRAT OKRENT

Twice a year under the huge white tents at Bryant Park something magical occurs: New York's Fashion Week, sponsored by Mercedes Benz; one of the most prestigious fashion events of the season. Top American designers come together to showcase their new lines for the upcoming season. If you thought the traffic in the city was bad on a normal day, this week you're better off walking!

Standing at the entrance of the tent, promoters from all different venues—magazines, cosmetic companies, promotional companies—stuff your hands with copies of issues and samples of new fragrances and other miscellaneous lotions and potions. Inside the tent, waiting for the show to begin, hundreds of press agents and fashion lovers rave about their favorite collections and designers.

Fashion Week is a miniature amusement park for anyone interested in anything fashion-related. Celebrities are in attendance en masse and are seated in the front row. At the Betsey Johnson show, I bumped into L.L. Cool J (although I have yet to figure out why he was there).

The Betsey Johnson Fashion Show brought a whole new meaning to the words 'Prom Queen.' The notoriously eccentric fashion designer took us through decades from the 1950s to the present, with over-the-top prom dresses and party ambience, disco ball and all! Though dozens of glittering gowns went down the runway, the real queen of the evening was the tutu-clad Betsey herself, closing the show with her famous cartwheels.

On the runway, each decade inspired ultra glam party

dresses of tulle, glitter, and ruffles, with electrifying colors and flirty details like polka dots, puffy sleeves, and pom poms. Beginning with the decade of her own prom at Terryville High School in 1958, Betsey's interpretation of the '50s strapless prom dress included oversized tulle gowns in bright and shimmering colors.



Courtesy of style.com

tiered layers and alternating colors of satin and lace for the super tight, mini prom dresses of the '80s. A massive bow was tied to the back of one of the



Courtesy of style.com

Models at the Betsy Johnson Fashion Show

The '60s interpretation rendered sleeker, skinnier mini-dresses inspired by the famous British model, Twiggy. These body-hugging gowns were embellished with dazzling rhinestones and enormously puffy sleeves.

Her '70s designs were all about flower power. In keeping with the latest fall color trend, Betsey fashioned a yellow, empire-waist, off-the-shoulder gown paired with a cropped yellow jacket sprinkled with daisies.

Many would agree that the '80s was a terrible time for fashion, but Johnson did a spectacular job capturing and redefining the "punk rock" look. Betsey used her traditional pairing of hot pink and black with

strapless numbers.

For the '90s, Betsey designed a few traditional prom dresses with a hint of Betsey spunk, and a handful of puffy short shorts.

Finally, in the spirit of the upcoming elections and in keeping with the theme of the year 2000, Betsey created the quintessential "Miss America" dress of tiered layers of red, white, and blue mesh with tight red corsets.

The final look on the runway was displayed by four models who stepped out in identical outfits in patriotic colors. On their backs, in silver sequins, gigantic letters spelled V-O-T-E.

## Industry Insider: A Budding Fashionista Shares Her Formative Experience

BY MICHELLE GRUNDMAN

This summer, I began working at TimesSquare.com, an online magazine dedicated to chronicling the events of New York. Whether it's Broadway shows or popular concerts, movie premieres or holiday parties, we're there to write about it. In my position as "fashion editor," I attend fashion events and write about them for the website.

As per one of my assignments, I went to the accessory show at the Javits Center and interviewed designers from all over the world. I met the fashion director of ECHO and spoke with an Israeli designer named Ruth Doron and with representatives from The Mysterium Collection (jewelry designed by Poland's best artists), as well as others. Each designer or representative I spoke to had some unique insight to offer about his or her line of accessories.

One of my favorite designers at the show was Sondra Roberts. I kept in touch with the company and was invited to their showroom to conduct an interview. A little fun-fact I discovered was that their handbags can be seen on television shows such as The O.C. and Law and Order.

In September, I covered the Fashion Couture Show held at the St. Regis Hotel. As I arrived, I was greeted by the doorman and escorted to the elevator. On the 20<sup>th</sup> floor, I checked in and a woman led me to my seat. The models began strutting to the beat of the music.

The whole spectacle was unbelievable. Models were working the runway and the designers were



Courtesy of Michelle Grundman

all there in the flesh; it was all the fanfare I had previously seen only on television. Every dress was elegant, with its own personal flair. I could just picture actresses wearing them on the red carpet.

After the show it was cocktail time, and I chatted with many of my fellow partygoers. I met a commercial producer, a plastic surgeon who works with celebrities, and editors of some great magazines.

I also spoke with one of the designers and asked her how she was able to accomplish such an impressive showing. She replied that she had always loved to sew and decided to submit her gowns to the producer. She received a call telling her that the producer loved the line and was looking forward to seeing it on the runway.

Mingling with all kinds of designers and seeing how successful they are provided me with some much-needed hope and inspiration. I've always wanted to be a designer, but with the competitive nature of the business it's easy to become disillusioned at times.

This experience reaffirmed for me the importance of taking chances. The audience was there to see something novel and unique—not the old, trite styles. Armed with determination and a creative spirit, there is no telling where a young designer can go.

## Style Secrets

BY CHANA FILLER

- **Simplicity is Key:** When coordinating your ensemble, keep it simple. The mismatched styles that seem so fabulous coming down the runway are often challenging to replicate at home. Clean lines and simple sheaths are always in good taste and will never fail to convey a classy impression. When standing in front of your closet pondering what to put on, or if you are suffering from the common ailment of a closet of clothes and

nothing to wear, remember that sometimes simpler is better. \*One tip: black is always sleek, chic and forgiving.

- **Signature Piece:** If there was one thing you could wear every day, what would it be? Find that one signature piece that exudes your personal style. It will bring personality to whatever you wear. Whether it's a piece of jewelry, handbag, scarf, or your favorite pair of heels, this piece will instantly update your look.
- **Find your Attire Arbiter:**

When it comes to our clothes, we always need a second opinion; someone we can trust to answer the age old fashion query, "Do I look fat in this?" For me it's my mom—I find that she is the only one who can be straight with me. It could be a good friend or even a stranger in the fitting room. Whoever it is, make sure it's someone you can trust to give you an honest opinion. If you are not confident about your own fashion sense, find someone with a finely honed aesthetic you admire, and ask her.

- **Wear What You Love:** You know that fuzzy feeling you get when you are wearing your favorite outfit? That's confidence. When you wear what you love, and you know you look good, you radiate a sense of self assurance and poise. So if you don't love it, don't buy it. You'll just end up with a bunch of clothes you never really wear.
- **Trends Aren't Everything:** Trends aside, if it doesn't look good on you, please don't wear it. Need I say more?

## Soloveitchik Machzor

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fulfill his covenantal obligations with that collective. He indeed has the obligation to pray aloud."

An idea more specific to the day itself is reflected in the Rav's commentary on the phrase, "To the One Who tests hearts on the day of judgment, To the One Who reveals depths in judgment." What does this mean? How does God test a person's heart, reveal the depths of his true nature? The Rav explains that one "must be the same person on the street, at home, in the office, in his bedroom, and in shul as he is when he stands wrapped in his *tallis* during *Nei'lah*." There are people who act one way in public and differently in private, people whose *tefillot* elongate in proportion to the number of observers. This is a contrast to the Rav's father and grandfather who "would not stand a minute longer when reciting the *Shemoneh Esrei* in public than they would in private."

The Rav's ideas are further expressed in the interesting and informative essays that preface the actual prayers. In one essay, the Rav explains the difference between man as a sinner and man when he is uplifted by *teshuvah* (repentance). When one sins, "one becomes an object, while *teshuvah* allows one to again become a subject. Through

sin, man is acted upon, while through *teshuvah* man can act once again." The Rav illustrates this by drawing upon the example of Samson and Delilah. When Samson "fell asleep on the lap of Delilah, he was suddenly transformed—he lost his role as subject and became object." It is the ignorance that he has lost a part of his personality that is so saddening; Rabbi Soloveitchik declares that the "lack of awareness that one has lost his dynamic personality is the ultimate tragedy of all sinners." Delilah can take many forms; she may be "a vulgar type of beauty," a community, political system or the search for the hedone. All these things cause man to fall, to transform from subject to object. It is only through *teshuvah* that he reclaims himself.

This machzor is a fantastic contribution to Jewish society as a whole and will truly fulfill the Orthodox Union's mission to "make the Rav's *chiddushei Torah* available to a broader public." It presents the Rav's ideas in an accessible and understandable manner, skillfully demonstrating his many areas of expertise. By turns informative and inspirational, uplifting and somber, this machzor is sure to become a standard addition to Modern Orthodox bookshelves, standing proudly beside "The Lonely Man of Faith."

## Hunger Pangs

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seeing bakery windows bursting with freshly baked pastries or eyeing pizzerias full of slices stacked with mile-high toppings can cause the hunger pangs to roll. Your body starts to anticipate that some of the food will soon be entering your system. Sharron Dalton, a nutrition professor at NYU, says that "smell and sight alone activate the appetite cascade."

While this may be the case, you still have some control over the situation. Dr. Jana Klauer, author of "How the Rich Get Thin," says that a typical craving lasts anywhere from eight to 14 minutes. This means that you can wait out the hunger caused by the sights and smells of the city or distract yourself with another activity. Approximately 15 minutes after you initially feel the craving, it will diminish—and your waistline will emerge unscathed!

The next vice is alcohol. Everyone knows that alcohol impairs judgment. Although alcohol alone has not been scientifically proven to stimulate appetite, the fact that it tampers with our reasoning abilities certainly can have an effect. Randy Seeley, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Cincinnati, confirms this.

"Most people who are on a diet will say it's a lot harder to push themselves away from the table if they've been drinking," he says.

The time of day also plays a big role in stimulating hunger. Over the course of our lives, we condition our bodies to eat at certain times. For most of us, our bodies expect a routine

breakfast, lunch, dinner, and maybe even a couple of snacks throughout the day. As Professor Seeley says, "Part of the reason you're hungry at noon is because that's the time you've eaten for the last 100 days." This means that even if you had a huge breakfast and your stomach is still full, when lunchtime approaches you will be looking for something to eat.

In addition to *when* you eat, *what* you eat also has a great impact on feelings of hunger. Refined carbohydrates, found in processed food such as white bread, cookies, and pasta, stimulate the appetite. Carbohydrates are known for providing immediate energy. They cause your glucose level to shoot up, and a couple of hours later your glucose level comes crashing back down. This will make you feel hungry, even though you ate an entire refined-carbohydrate packed meal a short while ago.

"When our blood sugar is crashing, we're going to be a lot more interested in food in general," reports David Ludwig, professor of pediatrics at Harvard.

Also, our bodies are able to process refined carbohydrates more quickly than fat, protein, and unrefined complex carbohydrates (found in whole grains, fruits, and vegetables). This may also lead to a hungry feeling not long after eating a meal of refined carbohydrates.

Theseventh and final trigger will likely surprise you: temperature. Temperature actually has an effect on our feelings of hunger. You may have noticed that some restaurants like to

## Spiritual Reawakening on Yom Kippur

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the Israeli woman wrapped in white kneeling beside me, davening and crying with her eyes closed, and I could have sworn I was at the Temple in Jerusalem. I could have sworn I could smell the sweet incense of that day's sacrifices burning on the altar.

I also experienced another memorable moment during the *avodah* section. We recite the *tefillah* of "*eileh ezkerah*," the paragraphs which recall in gruesome detail the deaths of the Ten Martyrs, twice a year: once on the Ninth of Av and once on Yom Kippur. Anyone who is slightly familiar with these tragic deaths knows that this *tefillah* is not a pleasant one to recite, but we do so on Yom Kippur for a few reasons. We wish to use the merits of these righteous people in our favor, and also to use their heroic precedent as a way to inspire us to do *teshuvah* as the day's opportunities quickly slip away.

Personally, I have a hard time with this *tefillah*. I find the Hebrew difficult to comprehend during recitation and I find it difficult to connect with these tragedies

that occurred centuries ago. So as I struggled to feel something, struggled with my inclination to skip it and move on, whimpers echoing from the right caught my attention. I looked over and saw a woman reciting this *tefillah*. Crumpled tissues lay strewn on the wooden table in front of her and at each moment she reached for a new one. Tears streamed down her face and the trauma she was feeling, remembering the awful ends of the great martyrs, was evident.

But what was even more shocking and inspiring, was that it wasn't really a woman. She was only a girl, an Israeli girl who looked no more than 13 years old; a child who could feel the sorrows and persecutions of Jewish history searing through her veins so viscerally that in the year 5768 she could not control herself while recalling the deaths of these great men. I was embarrassed for myself, at age 21 finding it difficult even to concentrate, but at the same time I was relieved to know that such a girl exists among us. This young girl's emotional sincerity outshone the bleak prayer highlighting national tragedy.

The singing of *mar'eh kohen*, a time when we remember the sight of the *kohen gadol* emerging unscathed from the Holy of Holies, was a point when the crowd really went wild. You could feel the communal relief at the imagined vision of the *kohen* in his layers of glimmering garments walking out successfully after his most intense day of work in the yearly cycle. I felt ecstatic, and it was at moments like these during the davening that I remembered why Yom Kippur is a holiday. The excitement and elation do not surface in every congregation, but this year I was privileged to be a part of one that could go wild from the mere recitation of words; from the recollection of Jewish history. It felt good to be home.

## Stern's Early Years

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was considerably more conservative with respect to dress, movies, music, and other elements of popular culture. The stores that Stern students frequented were B. Altman and Orbach's. There were no computers, internet, E-mails, or cell phones, and American students did not typically study in Israel post high school, due to the general world situation.

Today's Stern alumnae are the leaders in our communities both here in the United States and in Israel. They are attending excellent graduate schools and entering into many different and high-powered professions. Indeed, SCW has seen tremendous growth in many

respects between now and then, especially regarding the community of international students.

I have been working with the international students for many years. I am proud to be part of their growth in SCW, as the trials and tribulations that many of the foreign students overcome remind me so much of where I myself began. It is truly a wonderful feeling to help these young women broaden their horizons as they study in YU. I know that with education and belief in Torah, all dreams and hopes can be ultimately fulfilled.

*Mrs. Marx graduated SCW in 1959 and currently serves as the college's international student advisor.*

## Burg, Post-Zionism Considered

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as a Jewish state." Hazony, like Burg, is an observant Jew, and yet for him, it would be sufficient if the Jewish State simply lived up to the Jewish ideals of Theodore Herzl and David Ben Gurion. The post-Zionist polemic is not about religion but about the nationalistic ideals of having a Jewish state with Jewish character.

One of the greatest threats of post-Zionism is that it is not posed by an enemy from abroad, but rather from internal challenges made by Israeli Jews who delegitimize the Jewish State. Because these ideologies are espoused particularly by Israel's intellectual elite, an intelligent and well-researched response to post-Zionist attacks is required from within—from Jews who believe that Israel is necessary to secure the future of the Jewish people in a complex world. Post-Zionist ideology should stimulate both Israeli and Diaspora Jewry to plead the case that Israel does have an intellectual, economic, political, and military future, within its very territories and through the vehicle of its own citizens, as a Jewish State.

## Beatles Bonanza

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riots in Detroit and at Columbia, anti-war rallies in Washington, tents of transcendental meditation, and loud music festivals.

Yet the movie's portrayal of the '60s is not entirely authentic. Characters have a Hollywood gloss, and the movie misses the true grit of the period. Jude has the look of an average hipster who would be more at home in Brooklyn's Williamsburg than Greenwich Village. For a more genuine '60s film experience, try the musical "Hair" (1979).

Though the movie doesn't take great pains to dramatize it, "Across the Universe" is also a coming of age story for the characters involved; lovers quarrel and reunite, bonds of friendship are tested and reaffirmed, the lessons of radical political activism are learned, and the characters discover more about themselves in the process.

If you wish to enjoy some of your favorite Beatles tunes along with some exciting and psychedelic visual effects, you will not be disappointed. Although the viewer leaves the theater without serious questions to ponder or strong feelings about a particular idea or political occurrence, "Across the Universe" is an inventive musical experiment in manipulating the Beatles' greatest hits into a film crammed with color and sound.

# yachad

## shabbaton

אחדות

Sign up in the Caf or Le Bistro  
by Wednesday, Oct. 24th

Motzei Shabbos there will be a  
M E L A V E M A L K A

Shabbos Parshas Vayeira  
October 26th-27th  
15th of Cheshvan



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