



# The Yeshiva University OBSERVER

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## Proposal for Women's Hours at Uptown Pool Raised at SLC meeting



Courtesy of Eitan Kastner

Pool at Wilf Campus's Max Stern Athletics Center

BY ESTHER BARUH

a noncommittal response, as have similar requests at prior meetings.

"Women want recreational pool use, and there have been efforts made on behalf of the administration to create a pool on this campus, but that hasn't been possible," explained Zack. "But there has been and I believe that there still is an ongoing effort to make that possible. In the meantime, we've been trying to find alternate options."

Zack noted the lack of clari-

fication from university officials in regards to why the Wilf campus pool is unavailable for women's use.

"Supposedly the response in the past has been a very firm no, but the reasons have not been made clear," Zack reported. "At our meeting [on December 14] ... it was really kind of avoided. No one really said anything. One of my biggest frustrations is simply not receiving a straight answer."

Currently, the women's swim class, which counts towards physical education requirements, is held at the Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School, located at Columbus Avenue and West 92<sup>nd</sup> Street. A shuttle brings students uptown to class and picks them up at its conclusion. Unbeknownst to most of the student body, the time slot during which the swimming class is held is also open for other Stern women to use for recreational swim.

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## Pay Differences Between Beren and Wilf Students Addressed

BY SARA LEFKOVITZ

By the conclusion of the fall semester, discrepancies in salary rates for undergraduate student employees will have been evened out, with males and females no longer earning unequal wages for doing work in similar capacities.

The last of these adjustments, effective November 23, was implemented for tutors at the Stern College Writing Center. Previously, the women had been paid \$10.70 an hour, while tutors at the Yeshiva College Writing Center earned \$12.

Andrea Efthymiou, director of the Beren campus center, was first notified of the salary difference by female tutors, who had heard that their counterparts uptown were making \$13 an hour. She immediately appealed to SCW Dean Karen Bacon, who successfully lobbied for a corresponding increase on behalf of all 10 tutors.

"The moment I told her, she was

completely understanding of it not being acceptable," recalled Efthymiou.

But unbeknownst to Efthymiou, the undergraduate male tutors earn only \$12 an hour, as confirmed by YC Writing Center Director Lauren Fitzgerald. In what she termed a "miscommunication," Fitzgerald explained that the center uptown had pushed for a two dollar raise over the summer. She said she now planned to speak with the YC Dean's Office to add another dollar per hour, thereby reaching a salary commensurate with that of the female tutors.

Prior to the fall, tutors from both campus centers had been making \$10 an hour. According to Efthymiou, the women, who had only had their salaries raised by 70 cents, were now receiving back pay to compensate for their missed earnings for the first half of the semester.

"It's a matter of needing to

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## New Education Minor to Debut in Spring Semester

BY MICHAL GOLAN

Many of these schools have indicated that while the SCW alumnae display an excellent understanding of the subject-matter, they could greatly benefit from courses designed to teach educational techniques and theories.

According to Ethel Orlian, associate dean at SCW, "the education minor is an important and timely addition to our curriculum." She added that "many yeshivot, day schools and high schools, welcome our students as teachers because of their strong background in Jewish Studies as well as their solid foundation in other areas."

Dean Orlian is hopeful that "the education minor will provide a first step in the professional training of students interested in subject area teaching and will make

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## Balancing School and Spouses: Married Women at SCW

BY YAFFI SPODEK

Glancing around Stern College for Women (SCW), you will likely notice students whose fingers are adorned with sparkling diamond rings, and whose hair and heads are covered by wigs and brightly colored scarves, headbands, or hats. These women represent the married population at Stern, a group faced with the unique task of balancing their schoolwork together

with a husband and a household.

"I do not believe that the married woman is representative of the majority of the student body," observed Associate Dean Ethel Orlian.

Her statement was confirmed by the most recent statistics compiled by the Registrar's Office this year, showing that married women comprise approximately 10 percent of the college's undergraduate population, a slight increase over last year's nine percent.

"We certainly don't pressure our students to get married or necessarily expect that they marry during their college years," Dean Orlian commented. "The decision to marry is an individual one and is based on many factors. Pressure in this area may come from the students themselves or other outside forces, and I can safely say that the rest of the administration would agree with me on this matter."

Married students agreed with this viewpoint as well. "I think Stern is supportive of the married women, but they don't want to increase the already existing pressure,"

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Sara Lefkowitz/The Observer

Women board daily shuttle for return trip to Washington Heights

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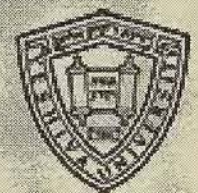
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## Rabbinic Access

Situated in Midtown, the women at SCW often bemoan their lack of proximity to Wilf's most valued assets: a well-stocked library, renovated science labs, spacious athletic facilities, and simply a campus with contiguous streets. However, one of the most glaring deficiencies downtown is the students' detachment from the Torah essence of Yeshiva University, as embodied by the Roshei Yeshiva.

While Stern boasts a vibrant Judaic Studies department with a host of knowledgeable scholars as faculty, it is important for the college to also feel the reverberations of the widespread and intensive

Torah study pursued at the Wilf campus. As members of the same university, shouldn't all divisions be able to appreciate and benefit from the activities of the others?

Please don't mistake us; an acknowledgement of the merits of the learning uptown should not be perceived as a discredit to the rigorous and passionate Torah study undertaken by the women here. However, there is no denying the unique character of the main Beit Midrash, as well as of the rabbinic leaders directing the efforts which are housed there.

Furthermore, these rabbinic leaders often render halakhic decisions for the Beren campus. Any

rabbi will admit that it is difficult to paskin for a constituency unless he is familiar with its views, wishes, and needs. In the past, much contention has arisen over a number of issues, especially the continually refused request for a women's megillah reading. More voluble communication with the Roshei Yeshiva would not only engender greater understanding for their psak halakha, but would also better acquaint them with the religious thought processes of the undergraduate women.

The creation of the Torah Scholarship Series is a significant first step in facilitating this dialogue. Scheduled to begin in Feb-

ruary, the series will invite a range of speakers to address contemporary Jewish topics with the students at Beren. Two of the eight lecturers, Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm and Rabbi Yosef Blau, are Roshei Yeshiva. The hope is that others will participate in subsequent semesters.

While SCW women cannot enroll in RIETS anytime in the foreseeable future, they will at least have a better grasp of and larger role in the Yeshiva's monumental mission.

## A Cause Worth Fighting For

It has been supremely encouraging, if not inspiring, to see the students at Stern take up arms on behalf of Jewish agunot ("chained women"). Following the initiative of SCW's Social Justice Society, hundreds of women have joined the cause, turning out in unprecedented numbers for rallies, lectures, and other related programs.

The campus's increased awareness, aside from more proactive efforts, is simply remarkable. Thankfully, the issue has seemingly succeeded in casting off the illogical stigmas and controversial associations that have long kept it below the radar screen, at least among the un-

dergraduate women. It is difficult to recall the last time JOFA, the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance, was invited to partake in an event at Stern.

JOFA's presence at the screening of "Mekudeshet," a documentary on the trials of Israeli agunot, highlights another important factor. Although the struggle to mitigate the problem cannot be accomplished without the participation of men, as the prominent role of ORA (Organization for the Resolution of Agunot) indicates, this is "our issue," so to speak. If we, as Jewish women, do not advocate on our own behalf, who will?

Even if we are not vested with

the authority to innovate halakhically, as with the creation of prenuptial agreements, we can at least do our part to promote the cause. We can attend demonstrations in front of the homes and businesses of derelict and extortive husbands and can beseech rabbinic authorities to address the crisis. We can participate in educational efforts, teaching high school students about legally unprotected wives. The field for action is wide open.

During the panel discussion following the film, Rabbi Yona Reiss, director of the Beit Din of America, offered a most compelling case for advocacy on behalf of agunot. The plight of the agunah, he

argued, is a humanitarian crisis akin to any other. Would anyone think of canceling a summit on world hunger? Why should a conference on the issue of iggun be any different?

By reminding ourselves of the urgency of the matter, we can continue to effectively push for its resolution. The women of Stern have bravely taken the lead. They can and should empower others to do the same.

## Registration Woes

It's that time of year again.

For Stern College for Women students, it's that frenetic, harried time of year where sleep deprivation meets registration madness. It's the time of hurried schedules put together in a slap-dash manner, green coursebooks carried under our arms as we wait in line to see Academic Advisors, hasten to schedule Senior Checks, and attempt to figure out whether we've fulfilled our requirements so that one day we'll be able to graduate from this estimable institution. Unfortunately, the system currently in place makes this extremely difficult.

Unlike our peers at Yeshiva

College, whose schedules are generally available after the Sukkot break, Stern College insists upon allowing us a scant three weeks to determine which classes we desire to take in the upcoming semester.

This is ridiculous. Assume that students would like to work part-time or perhaps take on internships. At most interviews, potential employees are asked about their hours of availability. This proves difficult for Stern women who have no idea as to what their schedules will look like until the very end of December. In this way, the college actively discourages participation in anything but the least structured

of internships, and fails to understand some students' reliance on part-time work, whether professionally or financially motivated.

While one could argue that Stern and Yeshiva College function independently of one another, Sy Syms is headed by the same dean on both undergraduate campuses. Oughtn't he be able to release schedules for the Wilf and Beren students at the same time? His hands are tied. Women attending Sy Syms must also fulfill certain requirements at Stern, which means Sy Syms cannot release its schedule for its female students until it has access to that of Stern. If it were to

do so, Sy Syms students would already have enrolled in courses that would overlap with essential Stern courses, in addition to the obvious problem of classroom space. And so, Sy Syms is unfortunately a victim of needing to coexist with Stern's eccentric scheduling practices.

It seems clear that a change is needed; if Wilf undergraduates have access to their schedules just after the Sukkot break, should Stern students not be afforded the same opportunity to leisurely and carefully plan their upcoming semesters? Let's create a more logical, structured system, one that is sure to benefit all.

## Correction

The Observer would like to clarify a point which was unclear in the article entitled "Setting the Record Straight: A Defense of Ba'er Miriam" by Batsheva Lipschitz, which appeared in the November is-

sue. The last paragraph of the article stated that "it will also be to the detriment of YU to lose potential students who will now have less of an incentive to attend, as they will not receive credit for their year of study in

Israel." Not being on the joint-Israel program does not mean that a student cannot get credit for her year in Israel. If a Ba'er Miriam student wishes to attend YU, she will not receive YU credits, as she did in the past,

but she can receive transfer credits. The Observer regrets the error.

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

## The Examined Life: Academic Bible at Stern

BY OLIVIA WIZNITZER

"The unexamined life is not worth living." ~Socrates

Dancing through life  
Skimming the surface  
Gliding where turf is smooth  
Life's more painless  
For the brainless  
Why think too hard?

~"Dancing Through Life"  
from the musical *Wicked*

There are two sorts of people in the world. There are those who live examined lives, searching and questing, eagerly reaching to find some sort of meaning. These are the kind of people who cannot lie to themselves; who would prefer the truth, even if it breaks them, even if it terrifies them. These people experience the tremendous grandeur of the problems in religion, all of that which is compelling and worrisome. They are the sort who must know things, who cannot deny themselves knowledge. They are curious and interested in everything around them, in every path to insight.

And then there is another sort of person. This is a person who prefers his illusions or his dreams, who does not need to push so hard, to always be up against the rope. Such a person is content with whatever he has been taught, whatever he has gleaned or learned. He does not lead

an examined life and feels that doing so is unnecessary; he is perfectly content with whatever he has been given and that is the way in which he approaches his service of God. He is curious, but only within the limits and boundaries he has set for himself. He may not precisely dance through life, but he has a much easier time of it than the thinker who creates problems for himself in his zeal to learn.

I think the distinction between these two types of people is characteristic of the distinction between those at Stern who would prefer something more academic and those who are satisfied with the Judaic Studies curriculum as it now exists. Since I fall into the first category of people I described, believing in the power of questions and knowledge above all else, I am saddened by the unequivocal lack of high-powered academic or critical Bible courses offered here at Stern College.

While I have had the pleasure of taking certain courses that do incorporate modern scholars and contemporary scholarship, this is hardly the norm, and even in those courses, it is not the sole focus of the class. I have yet to learn of any one class whose entire purpose is to explore "Bible as Literature" or provide an introduction to the various methods and methodologies employed in modern biblical scholarship. Indeed, there is no class that exists simply to explore

the premise behind this concept, and so there are many who have absolutely no idea what the words "Documentary Hypothesis" even mean.

This is a travesty. Why is it that when we choose to attend Stern College we forfeit our right to academic, high-powered classes that focus on critical Bible study? True, this is a religious institution. But there is something to be gained from exploring the thoughts of those who analyze the Bible as though it were the work of a human being, noting the differing styles used and portrayed. There is value in understanding the work of a contemporary scholar who is not Orthodox. Someone's religiosity does not reflect his or her proficiency within a given field. There is so much to be gained from reading our Bible through the eyes of an onlooker, someone detached who has the ability to point out problems in the text that we do not allow ourselves to see.

Much may be gained from reading the Bible as literature—to remove the Bible, for a moment, from its pivotal role within Judaism and Jewish society and see it simply as a sacred text, something integral and fascinating but nevertheless understandable; something which we too can analyze. While it is important and necessary to make use of medieval commentaries, surely there is something to be said for teaching students to think on their own, to not

simply come up with the explanations already proffered by the commentaries. One ought to teach students to truly read, to see the text they are reading as a text. Understanding literary techniques and applying them to the Bible only aids in absorption and integration of the text, and does not limit it at all. It would also be fascinating to read the Bible in contrast to other literature, and see which texts pick up from, use, or seem to have been included in our Torah.

It is sad that whatever knowledge I gain is gleaned only from scattered references in various classes as opposed to a structured course that offers the knowledge I covet. I was thrilled to learn of Rabbi Mordechai Breuer and his approach to the text and have recently learned of other contemporary Jewish scholars who fit that mold (most of them Israeli). And yet, as far as I am aware, we have no course that focuses even upon contemporary Jewish modern scholarship. Now, why is that? If we offer a *parshanut* (exegesis) class that allows for a study of the different medieval commentaries and methodologies, oughtn't we to be up to date and offer a similar class about contemporary methods?

While we are on the subject of intellectually honest and stimulating courses, is there a reason that we are afraid to offer a Comparative Religion class here at Stern? Is it that

we are worried that people would actually find Islam and Christianity more compelling than Judaism, and we would then be in the position of converting people, causing them to go over to the Dark Side? Christianity and Islam are referenced in enough medieval sources that I think it would be extremely helpful to really understand the distinctions between these religions and our own and perhaps to have a kind of historical overview of them. This could only aid in our other Bible studies.

It seems to me that there is a lot that could be revitalized in the Judaic Studies department at Stern, specifically within the field of academic Bible study. Why not offer a Bible as Literature class? What about a class on Contemporary Biblical Scholarship? If that is too radical, then why not a Jewish Contemporary Biblical Scholarship class?

It seems to me that if we come to Yeshiva University, which ought to be a premiere institution for the pur-

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## Teaching By Example

BY JAIMIE FOGEL

Many diverse events filled the Stern calendar this past Chanukah: a lively *chagigah* (celebration), a night of inspirational song, and *hallel* (prayer of praise) with breakfast, to name a few. Each event was enjoyable and added immense depth to the communal religious environment on campus. But there were two, somewhat private events that I wanted to mention in greater detail, both to inform the entire student body of their occurrence and to bestow credit where it is due.

I attended two faculty-initiated events this past Chanukah that transformed the daily, intellectual learning experience into a home environment. Rabbi Shai and Daphna Secunda, the new campus couple leading the community on campus each Shabbat, opened up their apartment to the entire student body for a Chanukah party. Students were invited to their home in the Windsor apartments for an evening of delicious food, inspirational words of Torah from Rabbi Secunda, and a chance to bond with friends in a non-school environment. What was not advertised in the email notification and could not have been adequately described was the warmth each student felt as they passed through the doorway. Entering a room full of excited children, delicious smells, and sincere smiles from the hosts made this gathering both comfortable and welcoming.

Student-faculty relationships are often difficult to develop in col-

lege. Those who have spent a year studying in Israel can recall that this dimension of the educational relationship—the transference of Torah knowledge and growth into an open home setting—goes hand in hand with the formal classroom experience. While an exact parallel cannot be drawn between the yeshiva experience and university life, the value in developing relationships with professors outside the formal dimension still exists in a university. Specifically in the case of Judaic studies faculty, where there is an obvious value not only in formal learning but also in the actualization of that knowledge into a lifestyle, it is crucial to develop these connections. Professors are a type of role model for students, and therefore the opportunity to see not only the way they teach Torah but also the way they live it is essential to the educational experience.

The evening at the Secundas gave students a glimpse into a life not far from their own. To see graduates from this university only a few years later, raising young families and professionally involving themselves in the development of the Jewish nation, gives college students much to look forward to. That warm, *Torani* environment was certainly a highlight of this past Chanukah, and a source of strength and inspiration for the students who attended.

The other event I wanted to

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## International Student Community

BY SOPHIE MARMOR

Over and over again, I hear my peers complain about the lack of community on the Beren Campus. The popular grievance takes many forms; Shabbatot on campus leave much to be desired, students are not proud to be enrolled in Stern, Stern is nothing more than a stepping stone, etc... While I respect the opinions of my fellow students, I cannot in good conscience agree with them. I firmly believe that there is a community at the college and that one group of students is solely responsible for it. The international students of Stern College for Women form the backbone of the Beren Campus and without them, virtually nothing would ever get accomplished.

To begin with, Stern has a reputation for being a four-day-a-week school. This reputation is justly deserved, and it would be dishonest of me to deny that it is true. This sad reality about Stern is a major reason why many people are under the impression that there is no community at Stern. However, there is one group of students that is here for the entire week (and yes, entire week does include weekends). The international students cannot for very obvious reasons go home frequently for Shabbat. Many of them also do not have contacts within the tri-state area with which they can spend Shabbatot.

Do not misunderstand me; a lack of connections within the area

should not be a negative reflection on the international students. If I were to go to the University of Caracas for a semester, I would most certainly not know a single Jewish individual in the entire country of Venezuela. Given their situation, the international students have no other option but to stay on campus for Shabbat. Therefore, the international students work extremely hard to see to it that Stern Shabbatot are enjoyable experiences.

If you have been on campus for a weekend, you will know exactly what I am talking about. The international students are the ones who plan the weekends, they are the ones who dedicate their time to set up the tables for the meals, and even if they are not in leadership positions, the international students are the ones who attend the Saturday night events which without them would have very few if any participants. I invite anyone who has ever been at Stern for a Shabbat to consider what it would be like without the international students. Very bleak and dull at best.

A false charge that is often made against the international students is that they are extremely divisive and unwilling to socialize with Americans. I have absolutely no idea where this has come from, for it is nothing more than a lie. The international students are probably the most friendly and charismatic group of stu-

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## Letter to the Editors

To the Editors,

Thank you for publishing Bat-sheva Lipschitz's opinion piece, "Setting the Record Straight: A Defense of Ba'er Miriam." Ms. Lipschitz's points accurately express both the hashkafa of Ba'er Miriam and the outrage of all students of Ba'er Miriam, current and former, at the removal of their institution from Stern's S. Daniel Abraham Israel Program.

As an alumna of the seminary and a current student at Yeshiva University, I can only say good things about Ba'er Miriam. Were it not for the advice and insistence of Rebbetzin Orbach and many other instructors at Ba'er Miriam (one of whom was Daphna Secunda, member of the newly arrived "campus couple"), I would not be a student here.

My experience in Ba'er Miriam was nothing but positive. In fact, it was so positive, that I chose to stay there for a full two years. During that time, my love and appreciation for the state of Israel increased, as did my personal commitment to Judaism.

I am appalled by Stern's decision to remove Ba'er Miriam from its list of approved Israel schools. But at the same time, I feel very sorry for the university. As Ms. Lipschitz writes at the end of her article, the Beren campus will likely now be deprived of the unique experiences, opinions and insights that students who attended Ba'er Miriam would be able to offer the YU community. Here's hoping that Stern will reverse its decision and choose to keep Ba'er Miriam on its Israel program, where it rightfully belongs.

Dalia Caplan  
SCW '08

## Shidduch Angst: Are We Selling Our Sanity for a Wedding Band?

BY ADINA SCHWARTZ

"One latent function of universities is to...serve as a meeting ground for people seeking marital partners."  
-Sociology text book by Richard T. Schaefer

"Why are you frowning? Were not women created for marriage with men?"-The Princess and The Suit of Leather (Egyptian folktale, a version of the Donkeyskin fairytale)

"...Since a woman is only for [having] children..."

-Talmud Bavli, Mesechet Ta'anit, 31:1

"You're never too young to get married."

"Im yirtzeh Hashem by me..."  
-Stern women

Women should not want to get married; they should want to find their soul mates. Each one of us Stern women is on a quest to find not marriage, but a person, an individual who completes us and challenges us and helps us. If we would better understand what it is we are truly looking for—human beings to love and respect, who will love and respect us—the atmosphere at Stern College would not be what it is today, a cesspool of tension regarding marriage.

We see it everywhere: posters for Kallah classes, glittering diamond rings flourished by an overly expressive hand, decorated dorm room doors. We hear it everywhere: "What are you looking for?" "I'm taking a break right now...until a guy is mentioned to me..." "Could you have me in mind in your *tefillot*?" "Oh, I wish I was dating someone, too..." We taste, touch, and smell the marital preoccupation of worried young women. Our five senses cannot escape the marriage-centered philosophy that permeates Stern.

The irony implicit in this high-anxiety competition is that un-

dergraduate women are at a juncture in their lives which should actually discourage fixation on marriage. College ought to be a time to focus inward, to examine personal thoughts and beliefs and even to be completely selfish. People do not have the opportunity for as much deep introspection once they marry. No matter how wonderful a marriage may be, both spouses must exhibit a level of selflessness and generosity for the relationship to work properly, thereby making self-reflection difficult.

College is also the perfect time to travel, make friends, and share experiences. With New York City as our playground, we have the opportunity to see myriads of people and diverse cultures. In the close-knit setting of our small university, we could potentially become good friends with fellow students different from us, who we would never meet in a larger social sphere. These prospects will not be as available after marriage.

With all these reasons to avoid serious dating, we must question why Stern students focus so much on getting married. While there are exceptions to every rule, the vast majority of women aspire to tie the knot by graduation. Many attribute this desire to external pressure that surrounds them on a constant basis. These women date not because they feel ready to marry or because they simply want to, but to relieve themselves of the anxiety levied upon them by their peers. I have watched students suddenly decide to date while still admittedly unready to do so. Why would such women, still in college, often underage, wish so intensely to get married, thereby further spreading the anxiety to others?

Some feel that getting married and having children is a woman's ultimate way of serving God. A century ago, this way of thinking made sense. Women were wed as soon as they reached puberty and oriented their



lives around their children and household work. Furthermore, women had little or no role in public Jewish life, they generally didn't learn Torah, and without technology (laundry machines, refrigerators, etc.), didn't have time to do anything other than menial chores. Life was difficult then, but far simpler. Women served God through

their roles as wife and mother.

However, nowadays we cannot say that a woman does not fulfill her *tafkid* (life purpose) if she has no children and is unmarried. Judaism is rich in that there are numerous ways to realize one's potential within a Torah framework. And in our day and age, more avenues are

opening up for women to connect to God and Judaism. If a person observes mitzvot, involves him or herself in kindness and charity, and finds

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## Virtual Communication

BY SHIRA MARGULIES

People often describe the advantages of technology, defending the progression of science. The wonders of technological advances are at our fingertips to enjoy, from digital cameras and Bluetooths to iPods and high-definition television. But are these advances really as wonderful as they seem? There always has to be a catch.

In the November issue of *The Observer*, Olivia Wiznitzer wrote an article about the education she receives from her interactions over AOL's Instant Messenger (AIM). Her article, entitled "Education Via AIM," discusses the various ways she personally gains from the experience of instant messaging her friends. In response to the accusation that AIM, Facebook, and other electronic modes of communication are mere wastes of time, Wiznitzer argues, "I have had some of the most meaningful conversations of my life via that medium."

Just that line alone indicates that there is something to worry about.

Wiznitzer demeans the value of actual face-to-face interaction by claiming that staring at a computer screen and typing, without ever having to look a person in the eye, is on the same level as talking to a real person. As part of humanity, we should be trying to get to know one another more as members of the same species, not distancing ourselves from society by hiding behind a computer screen and only ever having to interpret words, not people.

Wiznitzer claims that virtual communication is important for "people who find it difficult to say what they feel when they are speaking face-to-face, when they must look up at another person and try to read their every expression, determine whether they have offended or pleased, attempt to guess what the other person thinks of them. AIM is an outlet for these individuals, a way for them to communicate and to be instantly validated."

What Wiznitzer fails to ac-

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## Because Stern College Has Leaders

BY LAURA SHUMAN

The Beren Campus has one of the most vibrant and active student bodies, and I would like to share that reality with those who may not have not walked through our halls, and for those here who may not know the behind-the-scenes work. The following is, but a small case study of Stern student leaders.

Exhibit A: A new student approached me on the first day of orientation to find out what she could do to "get involved." Two months later she had successfully organized a Sephardic Club kickoff event with over 60 people in attendance. This young woman, a freshman on campus, had a vision, had concrete goals, and with a little guidance and technical work, was able to put this together. She has made her first step into Stern student leadership and she is on the fast lane to success.

A second student, who spent a year in Israel and is now in her first semester, wanted to create a forum

for Judaic studies faculty from both campuses to have a greater presence with the student body on the Beren Campus. This young woman was not the first to suggest such a concept, but with little hesitation, she is the first to take immediate ownership of the idea and run with it. She is successfully on her way to seeing this project called the Torah Scholarship Series come to fruition next semester.

Exhibit B: Exactly a week before the Annapolis Convention, a young man from a particular outside organization contacted presidents of the various student councils. In a day's notice TAC, SOY, and Israel Club leaders met with this man who presented us with a great and overwhelming opportunity. His organization was prepared to send hundreds of college students to Maryland to protest the Annapolis Conference. Yes, it was Tuesday night with only one more day of classes before the school shut down for the extended weekend, but the leaders did not flinch. Within two hours of a mass text message, a

group of students gathered together, jobs were divvied out, and we were basically mobilized to bring a mass amount of students to Annapolis.

By 9:30 a.m. the next morning, academic deans were approached with the information, complete with handouts and an explanation as to why students felt that it was important to send a large delegation to Annapolis. Later that afternoon, thanks to the encouragement of the deans, faculty were made aware that a large number of students might be participating in a rally the following Tuesday. With academic support and everything ready to go, student leaders waited for the final confirmation of details regarding the rally by the outside organization. By midday, without even sending out an "sstud," halls were a buzz with the rally. Unfortunately, by 3 p.m., this outside organization notified student leaders that they were no longer holding a

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENTS

S t e r n C o l l e g e f o r W o m e n S t u d e n t C o u n c i l



RENA WIESEN

Expressions of shock and horror broke out across the faces of the members of the National Rifle Association this past October when Mayor Rudy Giuliani answered a call from his wife in the middle of his speech. The murmurs were audible: "What in the world is he doing?" Although some believe that the stunt was planned to make him seem more human, most agree that it was just plain rude. Objectively, it seems clear that his behavior was

absolutely wrong. However, stop and think for a second. How many times do we do this very same thing every day, to our own friends?

Answering phones in the middle of a discussion, be it a campaign speech or a casual conversation with a friend, reflects a rapid deterioration of basic respect for our fellow humans. It has become common, and even socially acceptable, to interrupt someone even mid-sentence to pick up a call or read an incoming text

message. Look around the cafeterias: half the women have their phones out on the tables, if not by their ears. What ever happened to spending quality time with a person and focusing solely on him or her? Have we become so A.D.D. or so bored with our peers that we can't survive two minutes in their company without somehow distracting ourselves? Moreover, how can we branch out and make new friends if we can't even devote time to the ones we already have?

Giuliani himself said of his cell phone, at the NRA speech: "This is one of the blessings of the modern age. Or maybe it isn't. I'm not sure." Cell phones make communication much easier, that's certain. But if we don't reassess our concept of respect and take firm control of our cell phone etiquette, we will soon be the ones cut off by our friends. Then we will have finally become the victims of our own insensitivity.

T o r a h A c t i v i t i e s C o u n c i l



LAURA SHUMAN

To capture the essence of what has transpired this past semester To capture the essence of what has transpired this past semester seems almost impossible to fit in this small printed space. The energy on this campus has gone beyond the scope of what we at TAC had ever imagined. As we prepare for another semester we are reminded of where we are as Jewish people. I find it no coincidence that the last week of classes had *Vayechi* as its corresponding parsha. "*Vayechi Yaakov*," and Yaakov, who is our third and final forefather, and is still situated in Egypt, is living! Our campus is so alive!

In an original effort to establish a sense of stability in our very busy week, weekly learning programs

have also set up a committed community of women. The Tanya shiur, T Cubed, Mincha minyan, Rabbi Dovid Cohen's Chabura, Rabbi Hochberg's shiur, Spice it Up, and Chovot Hal- evavot, have exposed people to each other via the common ground of Torah.

Coupled with this sense of stability, we have left our comfort zones to learn and speak about pressing issues in our larger Jewish community. Through pure student initiative and participation, hundreds of students have learned about halachic approaches to bone marrow donations and the agunah crisis, participated in a Yom Iyun, brought a smile to someone's face through simcha deliveries, or simply danced at this year's awesome Chanukah Chagigah.

In the past few weeks alone, the Torah Activities Council has seen the blossoming of the Sephardic club which already had a successful kickoff event, and a new initiative that will begin next semester called the Torah Scholarship Series. Both initiatives, I would like to point out, were spearheaded by new students on campus who simply saw a need for these elements and took it upon themselves to bring their ideas to fruition.

Yes, it has been an exciting year thus far, but the job is by no means done. We have yet more bridges to build and more barriers to break. What is important is to continue to forge ahead and to continue to evaluate and re-evaluate if we are bringing our community in the direc-

tion that we would like to see it going.

First, keep it going! The momentum of the year is incredible. Keep it up. My one request to you the next time you find yourself in a room full of people, perhaps scribbling down words of Torah, or dancing at a chagigah, is simple. Though it requires a little effort, the ramifications can be huge. Here it is: look up! The diversity of our student body, a microcosm of Klal Yisrael, is all around you. You are part of this beautiful puzzle.

S y S y m s S c h o o l o f B u s i n e s s S t u d e n t C o u n c i l



MICHELLE LAUFER

Confronted with the reality that yet another semester has come to an end, I feel compelled to reflect on the last four months of the fall semester. Over the past few weeks, the Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB) has certainly created a tremendous amount of buzz around campus. The long awaited arrival of our new dean, Dr. Michael Ginzberg, has undoubtedly been a contributing factor, with his vast knowledge, impressive vision for the future of SSSB, positive attitude, and nearly constant presence among students and faculty alike.

The SSSB Student Council has acted on its commitment to improving networking opportunities between YU alumni and current undergrads. In an effort to spearhead this project, the SSSB Student

Council partnered with the Office of Alumni Affairs and the Career Development Center to create the Wall Street Connection Series. The two part program entitled, "What is Wall Street?" and "How to land a job on Wall Street", attracted over 250 students and 50 alumni working in the financial services field. Due to the event's phenomenal success, there are many more similar joint projects in the works for the future, which will help facilitate undergrads' connections with former SSSB students and allow them to ultimately learn from their experience and expertise.

I would like to congratulate the SSSB student body for their overwhelming amount of involvement and participation that has filled the atmosphere with school pride and

spirit. You have attended events such as the Religious Women in Business Panel, How to land an Internship in Finance, The SSSB Club Fair, BBQ in Central Park, Bowling at Chelsea Piers, Fashion Marketing Panel, Cosmetic Marketing information session, AC Lion Executive Recruiting Firm lecture, Accounting Internship Tea, Mock-tails, Chanukah Chagigah, and have also joined fellow students, faculty, deans, and an alumni couple for Shabbat. You have raised the bar with your active presence and we expect to see each of you at the events that are in development for the spring!

I would also like to recognize the more than \$500 that the women of SSSB have raised for the Migdal Ohr charity, which will be used to sponsor the entrepreneurial dreams

of a disadvantaged Israeli student.

I encourage all SSSB students to save the evening of Wednesday April 30<sup>th</sup> 2008, for the Annual Sy Syms School of Business Gala Dinner, with more details to follow in the future. As always, I invite and appreciate student's questions, comments, and overall feedback. On behalf of the SSSBSC I wish all students much luck on their finals and a relaxing and enjoyable vacation. Get ready to spend an incredible spring semester at the SSSB!

# NEWS

## Proposed CJH-NYU Merger Faces Obstacles

BY ARIELLA WEINBERGER

The Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University has proposed a union with the Center for Jewish History (CJH), an umbrella of five organizations, including the Yeshiva University Museum (YUM). Dr. Lawrence Schiffman, chair of the Skirball Department, sent an offer to YUM and its four CJH partners, the Yivo Institute, the American Jewish Historical Society, the Leo Baeck Institute, and the American Sephardic Federation. Each partner would have to agree to the plan for it to be implemented.

NYU's growing Judaic Studies department, comprised of 14 full-time faculty members, has been looking for a place to develop a comprehensive Advanced Judaic Studies institute, covering all periods of Jewish history as well as new, expanded office space. Schiffman pointed out that, according to the merger plans, "the conditions would be virtually the same as now."

Schiffman also added that a visible change would be a "transformation in the atmosphere in terms of achieving an academic base." He addressed the fact that the addition of the

NYU faculty to the building would lend major credentials to the CJH in establishing it as a leading center of Jewish academic research, competing with those of the University of Pennsylvania and Hebrew University.

On the surface, except for the arrival of NYU personnel, the merger would appear to maintain the status quo. Nonetheless, the partners of the CJH have thus far, been unwilling to consent. Some worry that the archives will be swallowed up by the mammoth university, with the five partners needing special permission from NYU to look at their own collections. They fear that NYU will control all aspects of the center.

Dr. Schiffman was quick to explain that no such "takeover" would occur. He insisted that NYU would look for ways to cooperate with the partners, and to further develop their relationships with the university. He also added that no one in NYU would be given preferential treatment over the other members of the center; everything would be open to everyone. When asked specifically about the YU Museum, he said it was "ridiculous to think that YU would even allow us to take over."

Most importantly, the merger

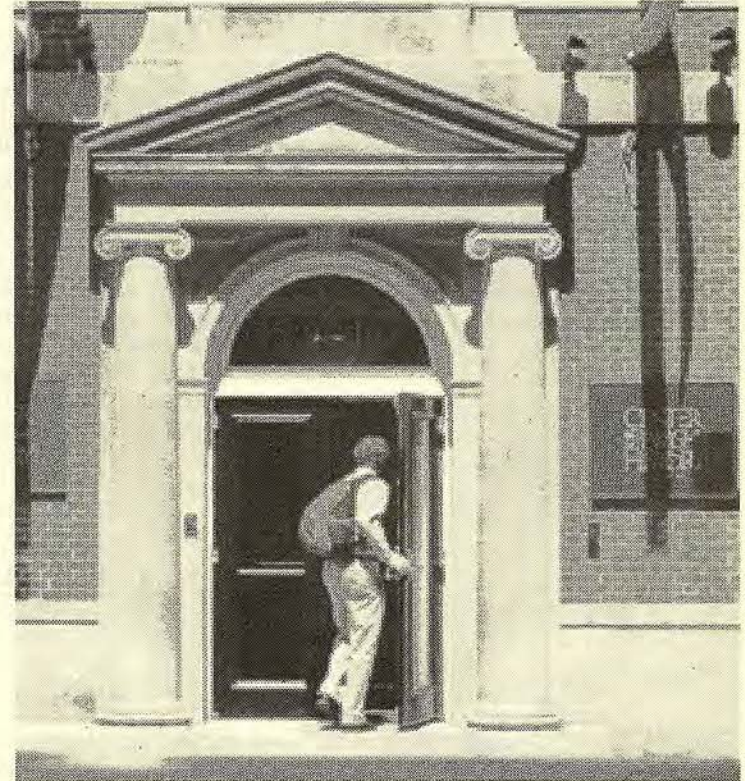
would enable the development of a leading Judaic Studies research center outside of Israel. It would also facilitate better coordination between the Center for Jewish History and NYU, which have collaborated in the past.

The CJH, which struggles financially, would also stand to benefit from the union, for which NYU has proposed 90 million dollars, said Schiffman.

The plan, submitted only a short time ago, is still under negotiation, explained Cathy Callegari, the CJH's media contact. Each of the five partners has two representatives who will form a cohesive board to discuss and negotiate the plan.

Everyone will have a say, and according to an unidentified source within the CJH, some of the partners are prepared to say no. Spokespeople from a number of the affiliates, including the YU Museum, refused to comment on the proposed merger when contacted by The Observer.

However, as of now, the discussions are taking place behind closed doors amid much speculation and doubt. As Schiffman noted, "it's all business as usual" and it is completely expected that some form of negotiation will be reached.



Facade of the Center for Jewish History

## Holocaust Outreach Program Aims to Educate Public School Students

BY HILLY KRIEGER

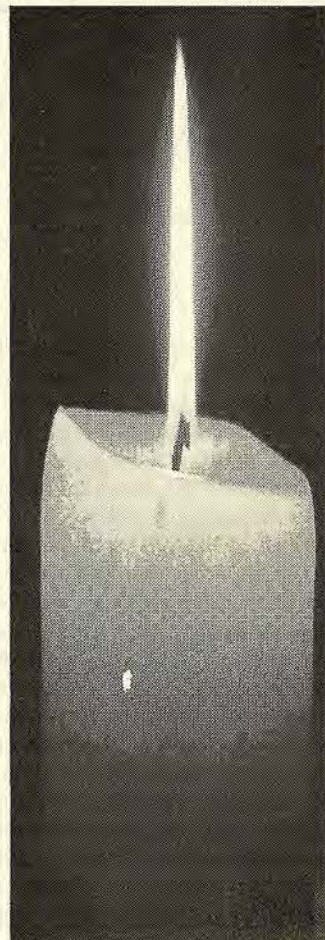
At the start of the spring semester, the Center for the Jewish Future (CJF) will introduce the Holocaust Education Outreach Program, a program designed to educate Stern and Yeshiva College undergraduates to conduct workshops for public school students. Organized by Yudit Davidovits (SCW '08) and Avi Kopstick (YC '08), both from Toronto, Canada, the initiative aims to teach public school youth about the history of the Holocaust.

When asked about her reasons for initiating the program, Davidovits explained that, "during the Holocaust there was no reaction from the world." The goal of the program is "to raise awareness that the lessons of the Holocaust are still applicable to modern genocides occurring throughout the world."

Davidovits and Kopstick, with the assistance of a professor, will conduct training sessions for the 20 students selected. These sessions will focus on the methods which will help them to best convey information, as well as to ensure a deep and lasting impact. The undergraduates will be taught how to address certain questions, especially about Holocaust deniers and anti-Semitism today.

The program's educators will use a combination of historical facts and figures, as well as per-

sonal stories, in their lessons. They will also apply lessons of the Holocaust to contemporary genocides.



At the information session held on December 3, Davidovits and Kopstick explained that public school students spend very little time discussing the Holocaust, the first genocide of its scale and size in modern history. As the number of Holocaust survivors still living decreases with time and a corresponding increase in the ranks of Holocaust deniers, the program becomes even more crucial to implement.

This project was originally developed at the Ulpana School in Toronto, Canada, which both Davidovits and Kopstick attended as high school students. Their efforts in Canadian schools met with great success.

Chana Topek, a student at the Wurzweiler School of Social Work, and the supervisor of the Holocaust Education Program, articulated the goals of the CJF in providing funding.

"Our aim is to reach out to high school students and train young members of the Jewish community to become positive role models and Jewish leaders in the future," she explained.

Topek also expressed the CJF's pleasure when Davidovits and Kopstick approached her about launching the program at the undergraduate schools of YU. "It's really a great program, we want to empower young people, we are so happy that students are showing initiative and are driven to start a new program like this."

## New Midrashiya for Women Enhances Gruss Kollel Experience

BY HILLY KRIEGER

A new Midrashiya Program has been initiated under the auspices of the Jerusalem branch of Yeshiva University. The program, in conjunction with the Gruss Kollel, Center for the Jewish Future (CJF), and the Jewish Agency MASA Israel Program, was developed at the request of the wives of those studying in the RIETS Israel semikha program. Overseen by Rabbi Dovid Miller, Rosh Yeshiva of the Gruss Kollel, the program includes both rigorous Jewish learning, as well as community outreach projects.

Rabbi Miller described the void which the Midrashiya program aimed to fill. Prior to the program's inception, these women had no means of preparation for the leadership positions they would assume with their husbands upon their return to the United States.

"In the past, while the husbands studied in a full-time intense program, it was every woman for herself in terms of use of their year," explained Rabbi Miller. "Some would study, some would teach or tutor, some would work or volunteer in their profession—and they wanted that freedom of choice."

The request for the program came from the women themselves, who wanted a more structured daily schedule consisting of classes, outreach projects, and *tiyulim* (recre-

ational trips). Classes cover topics such as Tanakh and pedagogy.

Rabbi Miller is one of several educators in the Midrashiya Program, along with Rabbi Menachem Nissel, Rabbi Menachem Leibtag, Rebbetzin Miriam Miller, as well as other well-renowned scholars in various Jerusalem schools.

Currently there are 20 women enrolled in the program, including some who have children at home. To accommodate these mothers, the Midrashiya Program provides a stipend for babysitting.

Gila Rockman, the CJF Israel Coordinator, is responsible for directly organizing and overseeing the Midrashiya Program.

"The program features formal classroom training, seminars, *tiyulim* and chessed opportunities," Rockman explained. "It aims to provide the women with a rich learning experience that will empower them with leadership and pedagogical training and strengthen them in their role as rebbetzins, educators and community leaders."

So far, the women in the program have traveled on three *tiyulim*, including tours of the Old City and Rachel's Tomb. They have also taken part in numerous seminars on various matters such as leadership and edu-

Continued on page 7

## Women Benefit from Midrashiya in Israel

*Continued from page 6*

cation, given by visiting guest lecturers. Future plans include two seven-day seminars on leadership which are scheduled for January and May.

The participants also visited a few of the institutions where they will engage in volunteer work, such as Zichron Menachem, Yad Sarah, Meir Panim and Ulpana Neve Ruchama.

The program also aims to facilitate integration into Israeli culture, focusing on Hebrew language skills and interactions with other Americans

living in Israel. The women of the Midrashiya visited the "Kosher Gym," a gym innovated for the Orthodox community with separate hours for men and women, as well as Jewish music and shiurim available on the exercise machines. The purpose of the visit was to speak to the manager of the gym, an Orthodox American woman who moved to Israel, about the philosophy of the gym and her experiences as an American living in Israel with seven children. They also had the opportunity to interact with other Israeli women at the gym.

This program is unique in comparison to other CJF programs, where the couples receive training once they are already involved with a community. The framework of the Midrashiya enables couples to be more innovative and effective, and Rabbi Miller is very proud of the program and its success.

"It is the only framework in YU in which the rabbinic couple [is] simultaneously receiving skills and knowledge before going out to communities," he explained.

## Women's Swimming Hours at Wilf

*Continued from front page*

"Mr. Joe Bednarsh and Ms. Esther Goldfeder [Assistant Director for Women's Athletics] informed us that there is recreational swim time provided for women one evening a week and we expressed to Mr. Bednarsh that the student body is not aware that this opportunity exists," Zack disclosed.

"The first action that needs to be taken is that the athletics department needs to publicize this service to the student body," she suggested. "Once that's been done, then the SLC and the athletics department need to monitor how great the demand really is for such a service or for pool availability. I think that if we do find that there is a high demand for swimming pool access and we are still unable to find other options in the city close to the Beren campus, then we need to at least discuss the possibility of making the Wilf campus pool available to women."

"We rent a pool on Monday nights for the women at SCW," confirmed Bednarsh. "We were only able to get it Monday nights... with no other people in the building so that women can be comfortable swimming. I think it's fair to say that we've called every single facility with a pool and tried to find a way to work it out that we could have the pool to ourselves."

Bednarsh expounded on how a lack of a pool and larger gym facility on the Beren campus has affected women's athletics over the years.

"Since 1991, we've doubled the size of the women's programs," he pointed out. "I think we have a long way to go. A facility for the women that would include a gym and a pool would really even the playing ground in terms of a competitive equality."

Bednarsh cited the undergraduate basketball teams as an example. Whereas the men practice four nights a week at their own campus facility, the women, who must travel to Baruch College, practice only three nights a week. Though he did acknowledge that the trip to Baruch was not a lengthy commute, he referred to it as a logistical "nightmare."

"I think a solution is to find a facility that Yeshiva can either purchase or work out an agreement with—that's a momentous project," he said.

"I know that in the past 10 years or so, several facilities were examined and looked at—at least one was structurally very unsound," con-

tinued Bednarsh. "I wasn't involved... in the selection process. Finding anything in midtown is very difficult. Mr. Jeffrey Rosengarten [Vice President for Administrative Services] is actively looking for a facility for the women. It's a function of not just a pool but also for the athletic teams—we rent space for women's basketball, tennis, soccer, volleyball. Women's fencing practices and competes in the 11th floor gym."

Various structural and situational issues have prevented the Wilf campus pool from opening up women's hours, and Bednarsh termed the structural issue a "legitimate problem."

"The front of the pool has these opaque glass blocks and right above that are 45-degree angled windows," he explained. "So anytime it's dark outside, you can see straight into the pool from Furst Hall, or the library, or any of these other buildings that are around."

With regards to situational issues, Mr. Bednarsh theorized: "I would guess it's something to do with the rabbinic side of the institution being uncomfortable with it. I've always been given that rule as a protocol to be followed."

YU Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Yosef Blau clarified the reasoning behind the lack of women's swim at the Wilf campus pool.

"I was not part of the decision process and can only speculate," he cautioned. "I think that the issue has not been formulated correctly. The problem is that the women at Stern do not have a swimming pool available for their use. It was apparently felt that using the pool at the Wilf campus is not the best solution."

"There is no halakhic prohibition for a swimming pool to have separate hours for men and women," Rabbi Blau continued. "However, changing the current policy on use of the pool with a secular graduate school and a mixed staff of employees on the Wilf campus will raise questions that may complicate maintaining the balance that marks Yeshiva University."

Rabbi Blau also mentioned concerns about ensuring privacy, as well as disputes which may arise if available hours are taken away from YC students.

"Understand that they were trying to avoid all kinds of potential issues that might come up by making it limited to the students who were [on the Wilf campus]," noted Rabbi Blau.

"We have graduate schools on campus that are secular, where religious restrictions were not appropriate. So if they restrict [pool use] to undergrad students, it's not a problem."

Rather than place restrictions on women attending graduate schools based on the Wilf campus, some of whom may not ascribe to religious rules, YU administrators decided to limit the pool patrons to the students of YC. If women from SCW were permitted to use the pool, argued Rabbi Blau, female graduate students at Wilf would feel as if they were being unfairly treated.

Another factor in the decision to limit pool use to undergraduate men is that of scheduling women's hours and monitoring that only people allowed to be in the pool at a given time are present during their allotted slots. Even with strict regulations in place, there is the possibility that students would choose to disregard them, thereby undermining the modesty of having separate men's and women's hours at the pool.

"In all honesty, I would like to believe that I have greater respect for students to understand decisions,"

*Continued on page 8*

## Joint YU-NYU Master's Program in Formative Stages

BY TALIA WOHLGELERNTER

The administration of Yeshiva University has proposed the creation of a joint YU-NYU undergraduate/graduate program with certification in secondary school teaching in the areas of math and science. This program would allow participants to receive both a master's degree in education and the provisional New York State certification, after one additional year of undergraduate study.

The new initiative targets students interested in the fields of math and science and who are eager to pursue a career in education. The rationale behind the program is that it provides students with better financial prospects after receiving teaching certification, in a subject matter that they enjoy.

According to Edward Berliner, executive director of Science Management at Yeshiva College and coordinator of the program, "there currently is a huge gap in salary and benefits between teaching in an environment where certification is not required and in an environment where certification is required." Berliner feels such a discrepancy served as a major instigating force behind the joint degree program's development.

Parlor meetings have already been held on both campuses to gauge the level of student interest. Berliner reported that there seemed to be greater demand for the program among the undergraduate women than the men.

Debbie Weinerman (SCW '08), double majoring in math and computer science, attended the meeting. "I would definitely have been interested, and very possibly would have participated in this program if it had been started earlier," she said.

Working towards a master's degree in math education, Weinerman

felt that this program "would have been ideal." Nonetheless, she had already applied to other programs which had earlier deadlines, before she even learned of the proposed initiative.

The program as outlined consists of 13 credits to be taken as an undergraduate at NYU, followed by an additional 30 credits over the course of two semesters in the NYU Master's Program. This structure would serve as a substitute for NYU's normal 44 credit Master's Program.

Berliner feels that "a key advantage of this program is that the student could sample this career before making a hard and fast commitment to graduate school." A decision to join the program would need to be made by the spring semester of the student's penultimate year of undergraduate study.

Currently, the program is still in its planning stages and has yet to be approved by the faculty at YU. A key problem that is being dealt with is that for the majority of Stern students who spend only three years on campus, an additional 13 credits at NYU is hardly feasible. Therefore, if the program is approved, its popularity may rest on the number of students who to choose stay on campus for a fourth year. It may also depend on how many of the NYU credits can count as SCW requirements and how the administration may adjust CORE requirements to accommodate the program.

Weinerman echoed this statement. "The only hard part is that it requires a very open schedule for the last two semesters, which isn't practical if you are trying to finish in three years, especially not for science majors because they have so many labs," she explained. "Right now I think it would really only work for people staying on for a fourth year, as super-seniors."

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## Women at Wilf Pool

*Continued from page 7*

said Rabbi Blau. "The people who are more suspicious of students probably have some argument on their side too."

Batsheva Lipschitz (SCW '08), who was enrolled in SCW's swim class last year, dismissed suggestions that women using the Wilf campus pool would exit and enter the premises improperly attired.

"First of all, they could have a way to enforce that people would be dressed appropriately to attend the swim class, just as they would be to go to any other event at YU," she explained. "There is no reason to assume that girls would dress any differently for a swim class held at YU, especially since it wasn't a problem when we were all girls [at Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School]. They could have security guards by the pool, and ... you would have to go out the same

way you came in. I think most people wouldn't have a problem with that."

She also described the frustrations of having the swim class at an outside facility. Though the van that shuttled the women to Columbia Grammar was "reliable," the students enrolled would often be locked out of the pool when the professor was absent, which did not occur infrequently. Since the van had already returned downtown, the women would have to wait until the end of the scheduled class to be picked up again, during which time they did not have use of the pool.

"My guess is that if the pool was owned by Stern ... then we might have been more in contact with Joe [Bednarsh] to know who to speak to when there was a problem," surmised Lipschitz. "If there was a pool closer to Stern, we wouldn't have had to waste that hour."

## Ed Minor Slated for Spring '08

*Continued from front page*

them an even more valuable asset."

The minor will focus on the principal ideas of educational theory and trends in contemporary pedagogy. It is geared toward students interested in teaching in a range of disciplines, including business, the fine arts, Judaic studies, English, and the sciences. Educational leadership, management, and training will also be incorporated.

Hirsch anticipates collaboration with other departments of study at SCW, with the goal of providing a flexible, well-rounded curriculum that will adequately prepare students for future careers in education, regardless of the form of teaching they will pursue.

As a result, the minor, consisting of 18 credits, will encompass a broad range of topics such as special education, educational psychology, as well as a series of elective courses. "Classroom instruction and management," a required course for minors which will be offered in

the fall, combines both classroom learning as well as exposure to field-work. However, the minor will not award students the teacher certification that education majors receive.

"The minor will enhance our education courses for our education majors," explained Dr. Elizabeth Lazaroff, professor of education at SCW. "The minors will learn from the education majors, a group of students who are more steeped in this field."

Lazaroff also commented on the value of having a diversity of perspective in the classroom, to which the development of the minor will contribute, by opening up the department to students from other majors.

"In the courses I have taught where I've had non majors and majors, there has been a much richer dialogue," she said.

While it remains unclear how many students intend to declare a minor in education, given the interest which has been expressed in the past, it is likely to become a popular area of study.

The Observer is still seeking photographers on the Beren campus.

Please contact [scwobserver@gmail.com](mailto:scwobserver@gmail.com)

## With Writing Center Changes, SCW-YC Salary Rates Equalized



Yaffi Spodek/The Observer

Tutors Chava Zakharevich (left) and Lizzie Bentley (right) at work in the Stern College Writing Center

*Continued from front page*

communicate," explained Eftymiou. "It was not meant as a deliberate slight to the women here."

However, the Writing Center director did emphasize the need for some overarching mechanism of oversight and for "creating a standard."

"My sense is that although both campuses are under the Yeshiva University umbrella, we operate individually in many respects," she said. "With this said, on the one hand, each campus is responsible for maintaining its own employees' salaries since each campus operates differently. On the other hand, all pay is gener-

ated from one central payroll office."

"While it would be nice if payroll could ensure the equity of student pay across the board, the fact that many satellite campuses exist with varying needs makes this challenging," Eftymiou continued.

Chava Zakharevich (SCW '09), a tutor at the Stern College Writ-

ing Center, expressed her frustration at the "bureaucratic oversight." "I really didn't think that the university would purposely discriminate against us," she said. "I just thought it was ironic that such a mistake would happen, with all the talk of creating equal opportunity on both campuses."

Eftymiou related the mixed reactions of the female tutors. "Some were appalled and some were understanding that it was an oversight," she said. "[But] even that was disheartening in terms of realizing that they were overlooked by the university."

Shabbat waitresses on the Beren campus also had their salaries increased mid-semester. Although the women earn a composite sum of \$85 for their labors, it is based on the assumption that they are working 10 hours each Shabbat. Formerly, the waitresses had been paid \$75.

Male waiters also received a raise during the fall semester, bringing their salaries to the same \$85. However, their wage increase was not as steep, as they had been earning \$77.50 per Shabbat for the past two years.

"We got a \$10 raise after Sukkot," confirmed Laurence Suissa (SCW '08), head waitress at the Beren campus. "Mr. Singer just told us that we are getting raises. I didn't ask him [why]. The waitresses didn't know about it either."

Suissa explained that she and the other waitresses have directed prior complaints about salaries to Moshe Singer, manager of Food Services on the Beren campus, but never as relative to the male waiters at Wilf. For example, the waitresses had lobbied for higher wages for heavily-

attended Shabbatonim, during which they have to work longer hours.

"We'll go to Mr. Singer to complain, but he tells us that he doesn't deal with the money," she said. "It's payroll."

Suissa, who has worked as a Shabbat waitress during all four undergraduate years on campus, told The Observer that she had known about the previous salary discrepancy for some time, yet had more pressing issues to deal with, which prevented her from taking action sooner.

"Of course I knew the men uptown were making more, from talking to the head waiters," she said. "Waitresses who came every Shabbat for sure knew about the situation, but I'm not sure whether the rest of them knew."

"But we don't care about the men making more than us," Suissa continued. "We just want to get paid on time."

According to Suissa, the failure of the Payroll Department to compensate waitresses for their work in a timely manner has been particularly acute this semester.

"This year, it's been the worst year," she asserted. "I got paid for my August Shabbatot in October. Some waitresses don't want to work for us anymore. We now have fewer waitresses because of that."

Shawna Joyce (SCW '08), another Shabbat waitress and manager of the Schottenstein "C-Store," affirmed Suissa's grievance. "I've gotten two paychecks since the beginning of

*Continued on page 9*



## Salary Discrepancies

Continued from page 8

the semester and the checks say they have a two-week period," she said.

Joyce also commented on the previous salary difference between the undergraduate waiters and waitresses. "For all intents and purposes, we are one school," she remarked. "What they get paid, we should get paid. It has to go back to the same source. There has to be one person designated for giving raises."

However, when Payroll was contacted, Manager Abe Inocentes insisted that salary determinations were beyond the purview of the department. "Payroll does not have any decision responsibility regarding employment of students," he said. "We're not in conversation with the different departments. We will pay the student as soon as we get authorization from HR [Human Resources]."

Although Inocentes placed partial accountability for the pay delays on students' negligence in compiling the appropriate paperwork, he explained that pay cycles were ultimately decided by Human Resources. With respect to salary discrepancies, Inocentes exempted the department from any form of liability.

"It's a dilemma for us," he said. "We're the ones handing out the paychecks so are the first to be blamed. By the time it gets to Payroll, we just process the information that's given to us."

"We are just a processing unit," he emphasized.

Associate Director of Human Resources Michael Sica corroborated these statements, verifying that HR retains control over student salaries. Sica, who oversees all activities for the Manhattan campuses, including student employment, explained that the department's Office of Compensation evaluates current wage rates each semester and decides whether to recommend changes, applying equally to male and female undergraduates.

"The Compensation Office makes one wage recommendation for a position, regardless of where the position is located or the gender of the student employee," he said.

When university departments decide to offer a rate different from the one recommended, they are asked to first consult with HR before taking further action. Even so, acknowledged Sica, such divergences rarely occur.

Sica additionally outlined the

process by which undergraduates are compensated for their work within the university. In order to be approved for work eligibility, students and their employing departments must first submit a host of necessary forms, which then allows them to be entered into the payroll system. As the students work, they fill out time cards which are sent to Payroll, usually through the department head, or in some cases, the college's Dean's Office. Only then can students be remunerated for their efforts.

When questioned about the responsibility of the colleges to confer about student salaries, Sica affirmed HR's role in serving "as the central contact and information point for student employment." "There is no requirement that they coordinate anything between them; rather that they coordinate through us," he added.

He said that student wage rates were generally equal across the campuses. "If there are differences between salaries, there might be a reason for it," he said. As an example, he pointed to the difficulty some departments experience in recruiting students at the recommended rate. Such departments usually seek higher salaries as an incentive for hiring.

However, when asked to account for the recent discrepancy in Writing Center wages, Sica could not elucidate. "I can't tell you now [that] I know how that came about," he remarked.

Jane Galland, assistant to Dean Bacon, processes the time cards for the nearly 60 women working as course assistants, colloquially known as "TAs." Though the bulk of these student employees offer assistance in the natural sciences, a handful are assigned to service other disciplines, such as Hebrew, political science, and statistics.

According to Galland, course assistants received salary raises of 75 cents, increasing their hourly wage from \$9.50 to \$10.25, as of the fall semester.

"Salaries went up across the board," she said. "As of now, the salaries are all up to date."

Galland had also been involved in negotiations to equalize the wages of female Writing Center tutors with those of the male tutors, after learning of the discrepancy from Efthymiou.

"My understanding was that the Writing Center director up-

town had advocated for a salary increase," she clarified. "But we didn't know; we simply didn't know."

The assistant to the dean said she was unsure of whether the salary rate for course assistants at YC had also been changed, but assured that if last year's rate had been different from that at SCW, "we would have known."

Ultimately, however, she assigned accountability to HR. "Human Resources makes those determinations as to what those salaries are. We get a list and are told what to pay."

Until this semester, YC TAs were in fact earning a higher wage than their female counterparts. Baruch Jakubovic (YC '08), worked as a biology TA last year and earned \$10 an hour, 50 cents more than TAs at the Beren campus.

According to Presidential Fellow Noam Joel, who is involved with student employment at HR, TA positions at Wilf have been replaced with one-on-one tutoring jobs.

Jakubovic, who now works as a general chemistry tutor, earns \$15 an hour. So does Yair Shachak (YC '09), who assists students with their Hebrew courses.

"I've tutored anything and everything Hebrew this past semester, and will in all probability, continue to do so next semester," Shachak offered. "I've been paid \$15 an hour since I've started. I believe all YC tutors get paid this amount, [but] I'm not sure about SCW tutors."

Nava Billet (SCW '09) was hired as a course assistant for Hebrew and gives two classroom sessions a week, which students in less advanced levels are required to attend. However, if women request additional one-on-one tutoring, she will be paid at the same rate, \$10.25.

"The standard fee for any hour that a Hebrew TA puts in on the Beren campus applies to class time, private time with students, and marking papers," she explained.

When told that YC students earned \$15 for personal tutoring, Billet said she would inquire about the possibility of a salary adjustment.

"If students have a problem with a wage rate, they should first have a discussion with the department [employing them]," said Sica. "They should first work through their own hierarchy."

The associate director affirmed HR's willingness to collaborate with undergraduate departments to determine if a salary change, as a result of inter-campus discrepancies, is warranted. "If there's a difference, let's evaluate [whether there is] a rational reason for that difference," he said. "If there isn't one, we may have to rectify it, but I can't say anything without the facts."

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# FEATURES

## How Much Do They Know? An Analysis of the Parent-Student Relationship

BY AVIVA MILLER

Chilling incidents at several colleges across the nation in recent months, such as the student shootings at Virginia Tech in April and at Delaware State University in October, prompt an abundance of questions. How much do parents really know about the lives of their children in college? How much should they know, or be told, either by the student or by the university? If a college guidance counselor is aware that a student is having emotional issues, or has suicidal tendencies, does the college have the right to tell a student's parents, or is this a breach of privacy for someone over the age of 18 who is legally considered an adult?

It is a fine line for universities to walk when it comes to handling students' privacy. While trying to guarantee confidentiality to students, universities also run the risk of being held liable for failing to prevent a suicide or murder. On the other hand, universities could also fall into the same trap as Hunter College did in 2006. Subsequent to barring a student from her dormitory room following a suicide attempt, the college agreed to pay a \$65,000 settlement agreement after the student sued the university.

At the SCW Counseling Center, all students are notified before their meeting that all information disclosed to the counselor is strictly confidential.

"Unless it is clear that the student has an intention to hurt themselves or others, then all services are confidential," reported Yael Muskat, assistant director of the Counseling Center. "We specifically tell them that in the rare case of a psychological emergency or hospitalization, we may notify key university personnel and/or family members, depending on the situation."

According to the Active Minds at YU website, a student-run mental health awareness, education and advocacy organization, young adults aged 18-24 have the highest incidence of diagnosable forms of mental illness, at 27 percent. Half of all adults with depression report onset before age 20. Furthermore, suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students. Undergraduates are of an age at which they are at risk for all sorts of mental illnesses, ranging from anorexia to schizophrenia. How much jurisdiction does a college have to deal appropriately with these very serious issues?

In terms of taking disciplinary action against a student for emotional issues or attempted suicide, Dr. Vic Schwartz, dean of students, explains that "in the rare case that we felt that someone might be an urgent risk to themselves or someone else, we might remove someone from housing or the university until we can get a clearer sense of the situation or until

the person gets some help and is doing better. This is an extremely rare event and would not happen without careful consultation among senior university administrators and clinicians."

When asked how often they speak to their parents, many students responded that they do so on average about three times a week. On the issue of privacy, Arielle Frankston-Morris (SCW '09), believes that "there does come a point when parents should be informed."

"If there is a real risk, parents need to be told, although, I do believe, that when living away from home, in college, above the age of 18, 'children' gain independence," she continued. "Counselors should try to facilitate communication between the student and her parents before contacting parents."

Muskat also commented on the significance of parent-child relationships, especially during the college years. "Research does indicate that strong and positive family relationships, especially those with parents, are a protective factor and contribute to positive mental health and adjustment," she noted. "That being said, relationships between parents and their children change dramatically during the initial college

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## Uncovering the History of Housing

BY SHAYNA HOENIG

Applying for housing is often a stressful process for students. As application deadlines loom at the end of every semester, conversations abound regarding roommates and dormitory options. Some women choose their on-campus residences based on practical considerations. Many apply to live in the 36<sup>th</sup> Street dorm and the 35<sup>th</sup> Street apartments because of their proximity to Stern's main building on 245 Lexington Avenue. Others, however, may rely on popular lore, rejecting certain dormitories because of rumors surrounding their histories, such as Schottenstein Residence Hall, which is believed to be a renovated insane asylum.

Today, Schottenstein is the first-choice destination for many Stern women. Nevertheless, many still wonder about the origins of the building and the other Beren campus dormitories, before they were acquired by Yeshiva University.

Brookdale Residence Hall, home to all first year students, as well as a handful of upperclassmen, is the oldest dormitory on the Beren campus. Purchased by the university over 40 years ago, the dormitory located on 34<sup>th</sup> Street between Madison and Park Avenues was originally the home of a Midtown hotel. Prior to the acquisition of Brookdale, the first classic college dormitory on Stern's campus,

undergraduate students were housed in several hotels in the vicinity.

According to Associate Dean of Students Zelda Braun, Stern moved its students into Brookdale in the middle of midterms in 1966, though the students did not occupy the entire building. Dean Elizabeth Isaacs and her family occupied one of the upper floors, and Mrs. Milner, the beloved housekeeper (for whom the popular store in Brookdale is named), lived on the first floor in what is now part of the gym.

Chronologically, the next acquisition made was Schottenstein Residence Hall, located on 29<sup>th</sup> Street between Park and Lexington Avenues. Purchased approximately 10 to 15 years ago, Schottenstein was previously home to a women's shelter. Owned and operated by the Salvation Army, the building served as a mid and short-term space facility, with leases lasting no longer than one year. Close to 150 women paid subsidized rent to live in this building. According to Jeffrey Rosengarten, YU's vice president for Administrative Services, the building was occupied by women who could otherwise not afford proper housing. Some of these women were in between countries, using New York as a temporary refuge while raising the necessary funding to return home, and others

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## Mekudeshet Screening Sheds Light on Agunah Crisis

BY GABI GOODFRIEND

The Social Justice Society recently screened "Mekudeshet: Sentenced to Marriage," a documentary produced by the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance (JOFA). The harrowing film features an in-depth look at the plight of three Israeli *agunot*, women whose husbands have denied them a halakhic divorce, a *get*.

There are a number of reasons for which a husband may refuse to grant his wife a divorce, including spite. But in the film, the motivations depicted are mostly financial, with men attempting to extort money from their wives with help of a corrupt judicial system. In Israel, the *batei din* (rabbinical courts) are vested with control over matrimonial issues and as such, a woman cannot obtain a civil divorce, without first acquiring a *get*.

The audience watches as the three women struggle to care for their families, while their husbands cavort with other women and refuse to pay child support. One of the *agunot* even attempts to bribe her husband for her freedom, but is ultimately unsuccessful.

Two of the women in the movie were forced to wait five years

to obtain a *get*, while the third is still waiting. She must manage her resentment of her husband, her anger at the courts, and her own forced passivity. She watches her friends move forward, while she remains motionless. She must subsist in her

set, replacing self-pity with resilience. She paints, she plants, and she smiles. Yet the strength to adopt these actions took five years to muster.

Today, the dominant means of preventing a woman from becoming an *agunah* is a halakhic prenup-

These participants travel to high schools around the city, informing students of the benefits of a halakhic prenuptial agreement. These activists appease doubts and answer questions. They provide a way of avoiding potential disaster, by creating monetary disincentives for husbands to withhold *gets* from their wives.

Following the film screening, the crisis was discussed at greater length by a panel of speakers: Rabbi Yona Reiss, director of the Beit Din of America, Michelle Greenberg-Kobrin, dean of students of Columbia Law School, and Josh Ross, founder of ORA (Organization for the Resolution of Agunot). A JOFA representative, Audrey Trachtman, acted as the moderator.

One point illustrated by Greenberg-Kobrin particularly resonated with the audience. She spoke about a survey taken at Stern College, inquiring about the willingness of the women to sign a prenup before marriage. Everyone in the audience expected a resounding "yes" from all in question. But according to the survey, most women said they would decline, dismissing the contract as too unromantic or feminist.

Yet some people have a differ-

ent motive for abstaining. They believe the contract suggests that halakha is not an inherently perfect system and that it creates a venue for demeaning rabbis. Many see rabbinic authorities as lofty, infallible individuals, and therefore fail to recognize that some of them do play a role in this tragedy.

Acknowledging the difficulties of the *agunah* issue may challenge one's religious notions. But most people grapple with at least one halakha within Judaism, a concept that seems just out of grasp. For many, the *agunah* issue rings the "faith is compromised" alarm.

However, to put it into perspective, one must consider the faith of these actual *agunot*. They sacrifice their sense of self in order to follow halakha. Yet after a few years, they may get tired of this tunnel vision. They may be weakened until the point that the need for self empowerment supersedes any halakhic requirement. If our contemplation of this halakha and rabbinical interpretation of it can somehow contribute to *agunah* prevention, then we can mend the faith of *agunot*, a faith broken by desperate pain. Or better yet, we can see to it that their faith will never be compromised from the start.



Courtesy of the Social Justice Society

Panel discussion on the *agunah* crisis, led by (L-R) Josh Ross, Michelle Greenberg-Kobrin, Rabbi Yona Reiss, and Audrey Trachtman

new reality, but can she really live? Towards the end of the film, this *agunah* is able to adjust her mind-

tial agreement. A few SCW students partake in the Agunah Prevention Program to champion this solution.

# Poli Sci Students Raise Global Awareness Beyond the Classroom

BY GAVRIELLA PIKE

Juggling papers and exams for their other courses, the students of Professor Elizabeth Radziszewski's Civil Wars and Conflicts class had a new kind of assignment to tackle. The undergraduates were asked to design a program, through a medium of their choosing, that could be used to raise awareness of various conflicts occurring around the globe.

"I wanted to give them something that they could take outside the walls of the classroom," said Radziszewski, professor of Political Science at YU. "I also wanted to give them the

opportunity to think outside the box." Challenged with this interesting task, students developed a range of innovative ideas. Devorah Stechler (SCW '09) decided to design a lesson for a high school class. She presented the class with several famous quotes and asked each student to pick one that resonated with them. Next, she presented them with pictures of scenes from civil wars, refugees, and peacekeepers, and asked each student to select a picture that was somehow connected to their chosen quote. Finally, she asked them to discuss why they picked their particular quote and picture, and

how the two related to each other. "I realized how little I knew or thought about [these conflicts] myself until now," Stechler commented. "I thought really hard about the best way to get others thinking, discussing, involved, or even active. Thought-provoking discussion can really get people to forge a connection."

Michael Goon, (YC '08) a student in Professor Radziszewski's class on the Wilf campus, designed a game as his project assignment. The game was structured like the board game "Diplomacy" in which the players need to resolve the conflict in each of their five given nation states. The situation of each state is determined by a given GDP and population. The players need to use given money for economic development, and need to reach a certain minimum of U.N. peacekeepers in order to pacify the conflicts in their states. The moves they can make are determined by rolls of the dice; one dice multiplies the number of militants, and the other corresponds to acts of violence, which can range from attacks on officials to outright genocide. As the amount of peacekeepers increases, the amount of militants decreases. The player that reaches the minimum amount of peacekeepers needed for pacification in each of the five states wins the game.

"I've never actually managed to play a whole round of the game," said Goon. "I am still fixing up some minor points, but I eventually hope to market it, and have it written up in an educational journal, as it is meant for educational ends."

"I always wanted to create a board game," he added. "This one focuses on the educational message of awareness. Hopefully we can move towards better educating the public about these conflicts that occur in these far-off places like Africa, or the Balkans."

Other projects included a book drive for refugees in Sierra Leone, the flyers for which can be seen hanging around the Beren campus.

"I expected my students to be capable of such an undertaking, but I was surprised and very impressed by their commitment, and they seemed quite pleased to have been presented with a different kind of assignment," remarked Professor Radziszewski.

"It was definitely more challenging than a paper, which has a set formula and you know what the professor is expecting," she continued. "But at the same time, this was something the students could be passionate about, not just to write about abstract ideas, but to get involved, to make the material real and practical. I told the students to use their hobbies—if they liked art, to make a painting, if they were business-oriented, to make a slideshow. I think it also allowed them to really develop their critical thinking, creativity, and effective communication skills, all of which are important, useful skills."

Through the project, Stechler realized that as students, "you can use your creativity and talents to get ideas out there and make others aware of what goes on in the world, in other people's lives. Beyond just knowing a subject, you make it personal."

Nonetheless, Goon acknowledged that the project was not "all fun and games."

"[It] was definitely difficult, and there was no research, no looking for new information," he said. However, he was thankful for the opportunity "to think critically, to be creative and do something unique."

"I had limitless possibilities, but the passion to raise awareness and to create something to call my own mitigated the difficulty," Goon reiterated.

Professor Radziszewski, a new faculty member at YU who previously taught at Seton Hall University, said that she was very happy with the success of the project and the enthusiasm of the students. "Overall, each of them came up with very clever ideas," she observed. "They've really done something amazing."

## Married Students at Stern

Continued from front page

confirmed Rayla (Guber) Rappaport (SSSB '08). "When I got engaged during finals last year, the teachers were really supportive, but they were not obviously projecting the outlook that they necessarily support or encourage marriage [during college]."

In addition to the numerous responsibilities that a marriage entails, some challenges that married students struggle with come from the fact that they can't dorm on campus and have to commute to and from school each day. Though many live in Washington Heights and take advantage of the daily shuttle service that is provided, others do not have this luxury, and must rely on other forms of public transportation such as buses or trains. Since all these students live off campus, it is harder for them to participate in extracurricular activities.

Despite these obstacles, some are still motivated to stay active in campus life. Sara (Rubenstein) Bochner (SCW '08) travels from Riverdale every day, yet still manages to maintain her position as vice president of the Pre-Health Club. But Bochner represents the exception rather than the rule, since for many, the most difficult part of being a married student is that they miss out on lectures, programs, and other events that take place after school.

"I am definitely less involved than I was when I was single, because I am not living on campus," remarked Rappaport, an accounting major. "I can't stay for any of the night programs, especially because I live in Queens, and not the Heights."

"I wasn't so involved before I was married, but sometimes it's frustrating that now I can't go to shiurim and other things that take place on campus at night," commented Sarah (Singer) Baruch (SCW '08).

For others, such as Rikki (Guttenberg) Ambinder (SCW '08), it is the daily commute that causes the most aggravation, because of the travel time which can take over an hour when there is traffic. "I take the express bus in every morning from Queens, and the subway back," she said. "But, once you get used to it, it's really not so bad."

Although Dean Orlian acknowledged the difficulties that

married students may face, she also explained that their status does not guarantee them any special treatment, and that she views married and single women equally.

"The marital status of a student is not necessarily relevant in determining academic policies or in responding to individual inquiries," she noted. "It may be more difficult for them to juggle school and marriage, but we have the same expectations of married students as we do of the rest of the student body."

Ariella Ross (SSSB '08), a marketing student, feels that none of her teachers act any differently towards married students. "I've never had an experience where I felt that engaged or married students had an advantage over others," she reported. "They are treated exactly the same."

This may not always be the case, however. Some professors are incredibly flexible when it comes to students who have recently gotten engaged or married, often permitting them to hand in assignments late or not at all, and excusing them from missing multiple classes, when they otherwise would have been penalized for excessive absences.

"One of my teachers actually announced at the beginning of the semester that it is her policy to excuse students from class and assignments for the entire week of *sheva brachot* immediately following their wedding," recounted Rena Wiesen (SCW '08), president of the SCW Student Council.

"Ideologically, I disagree with this policy," continued Wiesen, "because they are students just like the rest of us, and they chose to get married mid-semester."

"But on the other hand," she conceded, "practically speaking, it's a big deal to get married and you can't expect people to keep up with their work."

In fact, many of the married students don't feel as if they are entitled to any special treatment; therefore, they specifically choose to tie the knot during vacation, when there are no classes.

"I didn't get married during school for that exact reason," recounted Bochner, who was wed in

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# Stern Through The Ages

## 1960s Youth Protest: Jewish Activism at SCW

BY SOPHIE MARMOR

When most people think of American college campuses during the 1960s, they think of tie-dye, The Beatles, and massive demonstrations. But when people think of how Stern College for Women fit into that context, they are clueless as to what to imagine. Did the counter-culture movement somehow find a way to seep into the halls of Brookdale? Did the religious authorities recoil in horror as they watched millions of young people challenge "the establishment?"

History indicates that the women of the college also left their mark during that decade of protest, advocating for the release of Soviet Jews trapped behind the Iron Curtain.

Founded by Jacob Birnbaum with the help of students from Stern and Yeshiva College in 1964, the

Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ) was the only national organization dedicated solely to the cause. Comprised of campus chapters from across the United States, the SSSJ organized hundreds of demonstrations on behalf of oppressed European Jews, most notably the Passover Vigil of 1967 and the Chanukah March of 1966. These rallies were as lively as the protests of other movements during the 1960s, and featured large banners and songs composed by none other than Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach. His "Am Yisrael Chai" melody was a staple of SSSJ events, much the same way in which "We Shall Overcome" became the official anthem of the Civil Rights Movement.

Given the prominent place that Yeshiva held within the SSSJ, the women of SCW were often asked to take leadership positions at rallies. It

is somewhat hard to imagine a Stern student today shouting into a bullhorn in front of a massive crowd, but such was the norm in the 1960s. Although the SSSJ was a conglomerate of many university chapters, the YU community always comprised 25 percent of the organization's membership. Given the relatively small size of the college, this is a truly spectacular statistic.

However, the greatest testament to the university's role in the SSSJ is not a mere number. In December of 1969, the SSSJ held its largest national conference at YU. The SSSJ invited other organizations to participate in the famous meeting as well, including the American Jewish Congress, United Synagogue of America, and the National Council of Young Israel. Not only did the conference help to mobilize support for the SSSJ, but it also bolstered YU's prominence

in the American Jewish community.

The mission of the SSSJ focused on awareness; chapter presidents published extensively in their universities' newspapers on the issue of Soviet Jewry. The Observer gave the fledgling organization complete support, with SSSJ Stern President Lenore Wolfson writing an article for almost every issue.

While the students of YU certainly devoted much time and energy to the success of the SSSJ, certain members of the YU community were not always helpful to the cause. The Roshei Yeshiva of the 1960s respectfully disagreed with the energetic organization's grassroots tactics. While sensitive to the issue of Soviet Jewry, they were concerned that the SSSJ was too reminiscent of other more radical student groups that were making headlines across the United

States. It was not until 1965, when Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik officially endorsed public action on behalf of Soviet Jews, that the SSSJ lost its controversial stigma on campus.

The great English playwright George Bernard Shaw once wrote, "Most people see the world as it is, and ask, 'Why?' I see the world as it should be, and ask, 'Why not?'" With their tenacious resolve and tireless dedication, the founding members of the SSSJ certainly rank among those brave enough to challenge their society's conventions, daring to ask "why not?" and thereby changing the course of history.

*This article was made possible through the research of Sara Lefkowitz (SCW '09).*

## Stern SSSJ President Recollects

BY LENORE RICHTER

I graduated from Stern 40 years ago. In many ways it seems like yesterday and in others, like a very long time ago. Since the Six Day War of 1967 marked the awakening of Soviet Jews' desire to reconnect to their people and to their land, Israel, the movement to save Soviet Jewry is being commemorated this year, both in Israel with a major exhibit at the Diaspora Museum, as well as in the U.S. through newspaper and magazine articles, and with an important documentary film.

Wow! As a Stern College student involved in the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, who could have imagined what would transpire in 40 years?

Some perspective about my involvement: I was born in the Bronx, lived in Brooklyn to age three, then moved to Omaha, Nebraska. My father was born in Lithuania, went on aliyah with his parents in the mid-1920s to Palestine, rejoined his father who had become a traveling rabbi in North Dakota, then moved with his parents to Council Bluffs, Iowa and Omaha. My mother was from a Turkish Jewish family living on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx.

I grew up in Omaha until my father passed away. My mother and her eight children—I'm the oldest—moved to St. Petersburg, FL where I attended high school. Since I wanted to be with other Jews and become

more knowledgeable about Judaism, I attended Stern College. However, it wasn't easy. In addition to scholarships, I received work-study loans and worked at jobs such as babysitting, waitressing in the student cafeteria, teaching in Sunday school and working in the school library. Sometimes I felt that I was working more hours than I was in classes. Fortunately, I'm a "night owl" and had lots of energy.

When I was a freshman in 1964, one of my senior friends ran the Stern chapter of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ). I attended meetings and read booklets by individuals such as Moshe Decter, who described the dire predicament of Jews in the Soviet Union.

At the end of my freshman year, my friend asked me to become the chapter chairwoman since she said no one else was willing. I was really in a quandary because I was already quite overloaded. However, she persisted, and I felt one should take responsibility for our fellow Jews, especially those in such dire circumstances: "Kol yisrael areivim ze l'ze." This feeling of responsibility relates to my personal experiences in life. I decided that I could cope by blending in this cause with my school experiences. As an English major, whenever I had to write an essay, I'd do research on Soviet Jewry. If I had to do a debate, it would be about Soviet Jewry. If I wrote articles for The Observer, they'd often be about Soviet Jewry.

I remember going to the SSSJ office, which was then in an old building uptown owned by The Jewish Theological Seminary. That's where I met my future husband Glenn, who was SSSJ's national coordinator. When marches at the So-

some "leaders" might not be happy with what we were doing, we had to act publicly to show our brethren in the USSR that we cared about them. We felt that bringing their plight to the media would help galvanize the powers that be to help them.



*Courtesy of yu.edu*  
YU students demonstrate at 1960s SSSJ rally

viet UN Mission were planned, I'd put up flyers throughout the Stern dorm (there was only one then), under doors and on hallway bulletin boards in very early morning hours.

At our demonstrations, fellow students from Stern, YU and New York area colleges would discuss amongst ourselves, whether our actions were approved by the Jewish Establishment. We felt that although

At Stern I also became involved in the dorm committee. I became a floor captain, then, in my senior year, vice-president. I was also the head waitress on Shabbat which made my Shabbatot very special because I worked with Rabbi Joshua Shmidman, z"l, the Shabbat rabbi, and a very dynamic personality and teacher. June 1967, the time of the Six Day War, was very momentous for us at Stern.

When Israel's very existence was in peril, we stood on streetcorners and raised thousands of dollars. We rallied in Washington in support of Israel. As student activists we felt that we could and were able to make a difference.

Within days of my graduation, Glenn and I married. He devoted his life to Soviet Jewry until the gates began to open in 1990. I was supportive of his efforts and remained active in the Soviet Jewry movement and Jewish communal life in general.

Recently a documentary film, "Refusenik," previewed. It will soon be shown around the U.S. It presents a wide-ranging background on the drive by Soviet Jewish refuseniks and prisoners for their freedom, and on American activists who took up their cause. I was fortunate to attend the preview. I told the audience that the American Soviet Jewry movement began with a handful of activists who believed that they needed to try to make a difference. Today, with Hashem's help, we still need to make that difference for our brethren in Israel and Jews in danger throughout the world.

Last, but certainly not least: Thank you Stern College, for the Jewish education I received and for the friendships that have lasted 40 years.

*Lenore Wolfson Richter graduated SCW in 1967.*

## Bridging the Gap Between Parents and Students

Continued from page 10

years, as both parties are trying to adjust to the developmental changes that take place at that time, in which students are attempting to achieve independence. This may put a strain on a previously harmonious relation-

ship, but can also deepen the relationship if the balance is achieved."

A new initiative called the YU Parent Task Force hopes to enhance communication between with parents of undergraduates, allowing them access to the details of their children's day-to-day lives. Several offices have

been collaborating to make improvements such as enhancing the YU website, and using email as an effective means of communication. In addition, different parent-focused programming options are being evaluated.

Currently, SCW staff members and students are available and

on the lookout to ensure student health and well-being. Along with the counseling center, groups such as Active Minds and Peer to Peer are continually organizing events to promote physical and emotional wellness and awareness on campus. These events include a nutrition night, and a "Just

Relax" event, featuring free massages, yoga demonstrations, and dance classes. Peer-to-Peer is also hoping to bring a Mental Health Professional to speak to students in the near future.

## Dorm Origins Revealed

*Continued from page 10*

were simply older singles who could not afford standard living conditions.

How YU acquired the building is perhaps the most intriguing part of Schottenstein's rich history.

"I know the history of many of the women who lived there because when we agreed to purchase the building, we were told that the Salvation Army would only sell it if we got the women out," explained Rosengarten. "They did not want to be directly involved in emptying the building, but they did offer some assistance."

To secure the building, Rosengarten retrieved a detailed outline of all the residents of the 29<sup>th</sup> street hostel. Together with Dean Braun, he proceeded to work with each woman to determine how they could be helped and relocated.

"Nobody was threatened or kicked out," assured Rosengarten. "We tried to help them achieve what they wanted to do. For those who wanted to go to a different country, we maybe could help them pay the ticket. Perhaps if it was an elderly woman, we could help her go to assisted living. Whatever it was, Dean Braun and I worked steadily on it and within a month and a half, we were able to move each person out of the building."

Once the building was secured by YU, it was completely remodeled; ceilings, pipes, walls, and floors were replaced, as was the kitchen on the first floor (currently used by food services) to enable its kosher status. Named for the Schottenstein family, the residence hall currently accommodates close to 200 women.

While Schottenstein was being renovated, it was not usable as a dorm, and YU realized that they had insufficient housing for their students. As a result, the Independent Housing Program (IHP) was created. Rosengarten explained that at this time, the real estate market was in a lull and several apartments were available for inexpensive purchase. YU took advantage of this opportunity and leased Windsor Court and 164 Lexington Avenue. Though IHP is presently one of the most popular dormitory options, there was initially a lot of negative feedback about the prospect of these apartments.

"Gals didn't want to live there...they thought they would be taken away from the Brookdale excitement and on campus on-goings," commented Rosengarten. "Parents weren't happy. Judging by the initial reaction, we would have thought it was a major failure, but we knew it was a great idea and ultimately, by the second and certainly by the third year, those became the hottest rooms."

The history behind the 36<sup>th</sup> Street dormitory is comparable to that of Schottenstein. A non-profit Catholic organization ran a low cost living facility there, akin to a hostel, but almost exclusively for young female students. In addition to its location on 36<sup>th</sup> Street, this Catholic organization owned and operated a hostel in the Village as well. When the organization folded, they needed to vacate their

tenants. This was accomplished with much less difficulty than the evacuation of the women from 29<sup>th</sup> Street.

Thus, towards the end of the spring semester approximately 10 years ago, the women knew that they needed to move elsewhere, and since they were vacating anyway, YU easily acquired the building and began renovating immediately. Renovations lasted for two years, and after redoing the old and decrepit building floor by floor—recreating the entire interior of the building—the 36<sup>th</sup> Street dormitory was finally ready for use, housing approximately 100 women.

YU's latest acquisition, the new 35<sup>th</sup> Street dormitory, has actually been owned by YU for over 10 years. It was purchased from someone who had planned to renovate the then rundown apartment complex into a building of high-end studio apartments. When the owner tired of the project, YU expressed interest in purchasing the building from him, hoping that it could provide the much-needed classroom space for Stern, since at that point, YU had not yet purchased the building on 215 Lexington Avenue, and there was a pressing need for more classrooms. After determining that legally, the zoning laws prevented the building on 35<sup>th</sup> to be used for anything but residential purposes, YU decided that spending the finances necessary to renovate the building was not a sensible business proposition. Rosengarten divulged that many began to feel that it was a mistake on YU's part to purchase the building at all, and there was discussion about selling it. After four years of debate, a compromise was reached to negotiate a net lease to a private builder and developer. Essentially, YU would be paid a certain amount of money by the buyer per year, and an evaluation at the end of each billing period would be done in order to determine the ownership of the building.

However, a year later, student enrollment increased, and YU was unable to secure an alternate dorm location which was financially and logistically feasible. Consequently, Rosengarten suggested that YU develop the 35<sup>th</sup> street building into a viable dormitory.

"As expensive as it was, it made the most sense," explained Rosengarten. "About a year ago we got approval. We needed to change the building to make it legally usable, and during spring and summer time, that happened."

An email advertising the availability of the new dorm option was dispatched to students in the middle of summer vacation and was met with an overwhelming response. The 35<sup>th</sup> Street dorm presently services approximately 130 students.

"Yeshiva University has consistently looked to meet the growing need of the Beren campus and the growing housing need by finding buildings that are both interesting and compelling," remarked Rosengarten. "With a lot of support from the leadership, we've really accomplished a lot over the past 10 to 15 years."

## SCW Married Students

*Continued from page 11*

June 2007. "I would never miss an entire week of school and I wouldn't feel comfortable asking a teacher to make an exception for me."

Baruch, who also got married in June, expressed similar sentiments. "I have mixed feelings about it, but you really can't expect everything to be pushed off just to accommodate your schedule," she said. "That's life."

On the opposite end of the spectrum, are professors who show no leniency whatsoever and may even treat married students more harshly. "I was just signing up for a class and I heard that the teacher discriminates against married people, so I switched classes," related Rappaport.

Professor Laurel Hatvary, head of SCW's English department, is among the majority of teachers who do not provide preferential treatment, but will make reasonable allowances for students who get engaged or married mid-semester, by permitting them to hand in an assignment late if it coincides with the date of their wedding. Having taught at SCW for over 40 years, Professor Hatvary made a fascinating observation about students who get married during college.

"I used to find more of a distinction between married students and single ones, but over the last few years, I don't think it's true anymore," she remarked. "Today, there seems to be less of an insistence on difference, from the part of the married students themselves. However, I find that people who get married in the middle of the semester are very serious about

their school work to begin with."

Perel Skier (SCW '09), who works at the Writing Center, has tutored many different types of students, and, like Professor Hatvary, she has found that married women are likely to be more conscientious regarding their schoolwork.

"The married students move past the point where they treat school as a thing to get over with, and they seem to actually care about the assignments," Skier noted. "Many other students don't really care about the work and they just want to get it done so they can go out and play. But, the married people are more willing to sit and think and they have more patience and get more out of the courses in general."

Skier also perceived that the married women tend to be more active in class discussions than other students. "In my Bible and Judaic studies classes, most people take them because they have to fulfill requirements, but the married people are more involved and participate and ask questions," she said.

Even though married students constitute a clear minority within the overall population, some feel that they are still an integral part of the SCW community and should be treated as such.

"I've noticed that on all the promotional banners and signs hanging up around Stern, I have yet to see a married person in those pictures," noted one married woman, who spoke on condition of anonymity, and distinguished married women as those wearing head coverings. "Our com-

munity encourages people to marry young and especially in Stern, where there are a lot of married people, they [the administration] should really put our pictures up there because we are a part of the Stern population."

"But for some reason, they're not using our pictures to promote the school because they don't want people to get the wrong idea about Stern," she continued. "They want to project the image that they are focused on careers and academia, but there is something going on beneath the surface here."

The administration dismissed such accusations, countering that this was certainly not something which was done deliberately. Furthermore, they explained that the issue never even arose as a determining factor when deciding which students to feature on the school's promotional materials, particularly since it is not always evident from the pictures which students are married.

Though everyone agrees that it is difficult to be both a student and a wife, getting married during college was a conscious decision which they were happy to make.

"Although at times it's a struggle, it is definitely worth it," concluded Bochner. "It's hard to balance school and marriage, but if you want to make it work, you can. You don't have to give up one for the other."

## Leadership at Stern

*Continued from page 4*

rally due to internal miscommunication in their own organization and all mobilization had to be put to a halt.

There are several lessons to be learned from this true story, yet there is one that stands out. Stern College has leaders! Does this even resemble apathy? I think not.

Exhibit C: This coming March, SCWSC, SSSB, and TAC are joining together to hold an inter-council Shabbaton. The stages of planning this Shabbaton are not simply three presidents sitting around and deciding on a menu. Rather, it is being organized by a diverse group of women who are in the process of creating an atmosphere in which everyone can take the opportunity to get to know their peers around them in a relaxed setting, while stimulating their minds with various sessions, and break out groups.

The year for Stern College started out with a zest and has largely seen growth. Even as mid-terms and papers escalate, we boast nightly programs of all sorts. Now

that we have established that Stern does have leaders, and that contrary to some opinion, Stern is not an apathetic establishment, there are several areas that can be bolstered for more strides to be made forward.

As with many areas, a lot of what I am about to suggest is a two sided issue. Let us start with the leaders themselves. The student councils must have a vision. The vision or overarching idea behind a council is imperative for its subsequent success. I would also like to point out that a successful event is not necessarily on the turnout. Many good programs simply need time to grow.

Student leadership on both campuses is by no means perfect and by no means ideal. Many student leaders come in with the energy to build a greater sense of purpose and community on campus, but are lacking the tools that are needed as presidents to turn that idealistic goal into a reality. Officially, all councils meet once over dinner in the spring semester preceding their term. This is certainly a good start to letting students meet their future colleagues,

but in order for student leaders to be fully invested in their positions, they must feel a sense of ownership.

If Yeshiva University is the hub of future leaders, and I believe that we have this potential, then the official titled positions must come with training. Some time between when students are elected and when they start organizing, there needs to be preparation for the year ahead. Simple things such as how to communicate effectively, or how to run a meeting, could change the face of student leadership and the student body for the best. Once this type of system is established, student leaders and even club presidents will feel that they are entering into an established and organized framework.

The coin is two sided, and with more rigorous training comes increased responsibility. It is imperative that those assuming positions of leadership listen very carefully to the pulse of the student body, while at the same time inspiring the women of Stern to take the lead themselves, improving our campus for the future.

# ISRAEL

## YU Students Rally for Israel at Annapolis Conference

BY ERIT STERLING

The Annapolis Conference, which commenced on Tuesday November 27, aimed to forge a new peace plan between Israel and the Palestinians. The conference in Annapolis, Maryland, was attended by representatives of 44 nations, and was intended to resolve issues such as the future status of Jerusalem and the possibility of Palestinian statehood.

It has been suggested that President Bush's motives in convening the conference were to repair his damaged legacy in the Middle East, especially in regards to the much-criticized war in Iraq. With goals laid out for enabling the implementation of a peace plan before the end of 2008, the conference concluded with plans for Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to meet again on December 12.

The location of the conference was kept secret until the last minute, in hopes of limiting the number of protestors. Despite these efforts, demonstrators from both sides succeeded in congregating at the site.

At the start of the rally, the two conflicting groups of protestors—people for a united Jerusalem and those for a divided one—stood at odds with each other. After a short

time passed, Rabbi Eli Kohl, of the University of Maryland, arose and quieted the crowds. "We are here for a united Jerusalem," he said encouragingly. Subsequently, he led the crowd in psalms of prayer and Jewish songs.

Several Yeshiva University students traveled to the conference



Courtesy of israelnationalnews.com

from New York on a bus sponsored by Americans for a Safe Israel and the Zionist Organization of America, to rally in favor of maintaining a united state.

"It was interesting because after a while of continuously singing

songs that have been sung by generations of Jews, all the other side could do was be quiet," reflected Ayala Kurlander (SCW '10). "What else could they say after that? We just continued singing and it was wonderful."

According to Mollie Sharfman (SCW '10), the protestors hoped to demonstrate that they also want peace. "We would love to live in our land without the roadmap," she declared. "Dividing our land is not the solution."

The meeting on December 12 took place at a hotel in Jerusalem. Though the initial goal had been to discuss the issues of Jerusalem and Palestinian statehood, the Palestinians opened the meeting with an entirely different issue. They demanded the cessation of "settlement" building, specifically Har Choma, a recent building project that the State of Israel has commissioned in East Jerusalem. Palestinians claim that the project zone is the planned site of their capital.

The aims of the conference were further hindered by continued violence in Israel. On the previous day, December 11, Palestinians launched rockets from Gaza, prompting IDF tanks to retaliate.

Gaza represents an obstacle for the peace process, as it is controlled by Hamas and not by Abbas's political party, Fatah. Because



Courtesy of israelnationalnews.com

he has no control over Gaza, Abbas cannot promise that Hamas, who is opposed to the peace talks, will comply with whatever agreements are reached. Both sides have consented to meet again in the next few weeks in hopes of establishing further arrangements for the future.

The Annapolis Conference left people with mixed feelings. While both sides are frustrated with the ongoing violence, it is difficult

to set any goals without the compliance of Hamas. Still, students remain hopeful. When the permit for the rally expired, Jewish students departed, arm in arm, singing songs of the Jewish return to Jerusalem.

"Our goal is [to promote] the peaceful life of our nation," concluded Kurlander.

## Picturing Jerusalem

BY BATYA MATLA HERZBERG

On December 3, 2007, the Center for Jewish History at the Yeshiva University Museum (YUM) launched its premiere exhibition of "Picturing Jerusalem," a collection of century-old photographs captured by photographer James Graham and his pupil, Mendel Diness.

The exhibition displays the first-ever collection of photographs taken of Jerusalem by residents of the ancient city.

A program held in honor of the event featured welcome addresses by the director and by the vice chair of YUM, greetings by various persons involved in the procurement and display of the photographs, and finally, a musical tribute, "A Journey in the Land of Israel."

"We are looking at a miracle," proclaimed Nissan N. Perez, a senior curator at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

The saga of the discovery of these photos began in 1989 at a garage sale in St. Paul, Minnesota. The sale yielded a most valuable collection of items: dusty wooden boxes of glass plate negatives, silver prints,

notebooks, and other photographic material. Once the negatives were developed, it was apparent that a real treasure had been discovered, as these newly-found photographs of the Holy

The photographs portray countless aspects of Jerusalem, from the old city's four quarters to the surrounding hills, from its biblical sites to its diverse human population. They are



Courtesy of YUM

Land and Near East represented "the vernacular of a newly discovered image making medium," related Perez.

especially significant because the photographers were "residents of the city and knew what life was like, dif-

ferent than the occasional tourist or traveler," Perez explained. "They understood the essence of Jerusalem."

Perez also commented on the photographers' emphasis on Christian holy sites. The photographer, James Graham, was a missionary from a wealthy Scottish family who viewed photography as an art. He enjoyed "unparalleled access to the holy sites because of his relationship with the British consul," explained James Garfinkel, a YUM board member and avid collector of Holy Land photography.

Graham's student, Mendel Diness, was a young Jew sent to learn in yeshiva in the Holy Land. However, disenchanted with Judaism, Diness converted to Christianity. As a result of his decision, Diness was shunned by the community, and subsequently turned to photography as a means of livelihood. These two individuals captured Jerusalem with their cameras realistically, "as it is. Not as people would like it to be," remarked Garfinkel.

The wall-to-wall exhibition contains tens of black-and-white and sepia-toned photographs taken by Graham and Diness, as well as a glass-enclosed album of another 87

photos taken by Graham alone. Included in the display are the boxes in which the negatives were found, as well as the photography equipment. Interspersed between the wall-hangings are paintings of Jerusalem landscapes by Orientalist painters, "to add color," explained Rhoda Seidenberg, the assistant curator of the YU Museum and coordinator of the exhibit.

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at Yeshiva University Dr. Mort Lowengrub invoked President Richard Joel's inaugural address in relation to the exhibit. In his address, President Joel stated, "The land of Israel and the State of Israel are central to the future vision of the Jewish people, and have always been central to the reality of the Yeshiva University community." Lowengrub averred that, true to its mission, the Yeshiva University Museum "Picturing Jerusalem" exhibition "highlights and reinforces our unique connection to Israel."

## Aliyah Shabbaton: Learning How to Live the Dream

BY ESTI ARFE

The second annual Aliyah Shabbaton, aiming to empower and assist young adults planning to make aliyah, was held from November 30 through December 1 in East Hanover, New Jersey. Sixty-five college students and young professionals attended the weekend retreat, which was sponsored by five Zionist organizations: United Student Division/Hagshama, Bnei Akiva of the U.S. and Canada, Israel Aliyah Center, Nefesh B' Nefesh (NBN), and the Jewish Agency.

Despite the fact that the shabbaton's participants came from varied backgrounds and had different long-term plans—some wanting to join the army this summer, with others considering graduate school in Israel—they felt at ease spending the weekend with peers who shared a common goal. The shabbaton was filled with song, words of Torah on the importance of living in Israel, and information sessions. Some of the highlights included a Bnei Akiva Friday night *mifkad*, (a traditional

ceremony where the movement's theme song and Israel's national anthem are sung), a Friday night tisch, and Carlebach-style havdala.

The Shabbat sessions dealt with both the ideal and practical aspects of aliyah. Speakers addressed issues like the Jewish obligation to return to the land as a people living in a historic era. Dyonna Ginsberg, former director of Yavneh Olami, shared her personal aliyah story. She became a citizen of Israel six years ago, shortly after graduating from Columbia University. She described her thoughts at that time, saying that "pre-graduate school is a [transitional] point [in life]...and aliyah is something achievable." She also stressed the importance of summer internships in Israel, since networking through internships helps to ensure job opportunities, and considerably facilitates the aliyah process.

Indeed, many shabbaton participants walked away surprised by how many years of planning are needed for a successful aliyah. "I didn't realize how much experience living in

Israel I would need prior to aliyah," noted Niva Gurewitsch (SCW '10). "Internships and summer programs that integrate you into Israeli society are vital parts of the aliyah process."

Ginsberg also offered helpful tips on how to get parental approval for making the move. Following Ginsberg's talk, Daniel Kronengold (YC '02), currently enrolled in RIETS, summarized, "If you do research, parents tend to be more agreeable."

Ginsberg also shed light on the sensitive topic of whether to move while single, as she did, or wait until after marriage. She offered the following insight: "People assume it will be more limiting [when you make aliyah as a single] but it's a country filled with Jews, so odds are better in Israel if a person wants to be in Israel."

Robin Berman, an Employment Counselor at NBN, joined the shabbaton on Saturday night. She told participants that she became an *olah chadasha* (new immigrant) two weeks after her Barnard graduation. She offered advice on how to prepare for a job in Israel: "Market research, learn

Hebrew, and learn anything and everything about the field you're thinking about going into, then research how the field may differ in Israel."

She emphasized that NBN representatives are available to assist in any way possible. They stay committed to NBN members even after the aliyah process is complete, helping new Israeli citizens with issues both big and small, even offering fashion advice to North Americans wondering what attire is appropriate for job interviews. The various aliyah organizations are all committed to making each person's *klitah* (absorption) into Israeli society as smooth as possible.

Akiva Werber, a senior *shaliach* (messenger) of the World Zionist Organization at the Israel Aliyah Center added some practical advice to guide prospective olim. "It's most important to live the life you want the way you want to live it. And since you're the one living your life, understanding what you're doing in the process is very important," he encouraged. Werber also explained the various *zechuyot*, or benefits, that a

new immigrant to Israel is entitled to.

While it was easy to get lost in many of the details highlighted throughout the shabbaton, some pieces of information were particularly striking. Since BA and MA degrees are intrinsically connected in Israel, it makes sense for many students to achieve an MA degree in the U.S. before they make aliyah. The government of Israel will assist students with tuition for either degree. Additionally, the government pays for an intensive Hebrew *ulpan* course upon arrival in Israel.

Participant Jaimie Fogel (SCW '08) plans to make aliyah this coming summer and attend graduate school in Israel. After absorbing the various facts and tips presented throughout the shabbaton, she realized that "one has to think of long term goals, such as how you would want to affect Israeli society beyond individual absorption. Aliyah is a means to a larger future."

## Whose Land Is It Anyway?

BY NAVA BILLET

Since the start of the new Jewish year, 5768, there has been much tension in the Land of Israel regarding the laws of *shmita* (the agricultural sabbatical year). For the first time since the establishment of the State of Israel, the Chief Rabbinate did not fully accept the *heter mechira* (permission for sale of the land). However, this decision did not go unchallenged.

"In a move that threatens to split the Chief Rabbinate, a group of Religious Zionist rabbis rebelled against the state's supreme rabbinic authority and announced...that they would set up an alternative kosher supervision apparatus during the *shmita* (sabbatical) year," reported Matthew Wagner in the Jerusalem Post in September. The dissenting rabbinic group, Tzohar, set up their own system of kosher supervision for restaurants and stores who wanted to rely on the *heter mechira*.

The source of this conflict has strong and ancient roots within the holy Jewish texts. There is a biblical law in Leviticus 25:1-7 that delineates the standards of *shmita*. The cardinal rule is, essentially, that a Jew cannot work the land in the seventh year. The land has a special sanctified status and must remain fallow for the duration of the seventh year. According to biblical law, all fruits that grow in the seventh year may be eaten but not sold. The Rabbis further elaborated upon the biblical law in tractate *Shvi'eth* of the Talmud. They added the prohibition of *sifkhin*, a decree that vegetables grown in the land of Israel in the seventh year may not be eaten. The biblical punishment for disobeying these laws is exile (Leviticus 26:34). In Chronicles II 36:19-21, the Prophet Jeremiah records that such an exile occurred with the destruction of the first Temple.

In the late nineteenth century, after close to 2,000 years in exile,

Jews started to return to the Land of Israel. Many of the pioneers who came established themselves as farmers, living on the fruit of the land. In 1888, a *shmita* year began. The new immigrant farmers in Israel faced a dilemma: should they ignore the laws of *shmita*, or observe them and suffer severe financial loss? Struggling farmers turned to Rav Naftali Hertz, the Rabbi of Jaffe, and asked for his advice, taking into consideration that this was a matter of survival.

Given the severity of the biblical consequences of not observing *shmita*, Rav Hertz felt uncomfortable making such a decision himself. He therefore consulted colleagues in Europe and Jerusalem. European rabbis Rav Yitzhak Elchanan Spector, Rav Yehoshua Kutna, Rav Shmuel Mohiliver, and Rav Shmuel Kleppfish came up with an innovative idea which has become known as the *heter mechira*. They proposed that the land be sold to gentiles, so that the Jews could work the land. On the other hand, Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin (Netziv) and Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (Beis Halevi) and Jerusalem rabbis Rav Shmuel Salant and Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin insisted that the *shmita* laws be observed.

The reason for the proposed loophole of *heter mechira* was based on several factors. First, the observance of *shmita* today is only a rabbinic requirement. Second, selling the land to a non-Jew removes the sanctity of the land. Third, the sale would be done in a limited way to avoid violating the prohibition of permanent sale of the land to gentiles. The opponents of the *heter* were concerned with the severity of this prohibition and its punishment. They saw the return to Israel as a unique opportunity for the Jewish people to atone for mistakes of the past.

In the end, the Jewish owned lands were sold that year to non-Jews. Such a transaction was not

unprecedented in Jewish tradition. Other examples of similar leniencies include the sale of *hametz* before Passover, *pruzbal* at the end of the *shmita* year, and *heter iska* which circumvents the prohibition of Jews charging interest to other Jews.

With the conclusion to temporarily sell the land in 1888, the authorities added a clause to the edict. It called for the reevaluation of the above decision before every seven year *shmita* cycle, in order to keep the less-than-ideal solution under constant scrutiny.

By the time the next *shmita* cycle came around in 1895-1896, the rabbinic authorities had joined a united front permitting the sale of the land for that sabbatical year. The rabbis concluded that reality dictated a need for such action because the people could not observe the laws of *shmita*. In the years of 1910 and 1911, Rav Kook allowed for the sale of the land as well, reaffirming that although it was not ideal, it served an important purpose.

In the years that followed, the decision to sell the land was re-evaluated before the arrival of each *shmita* cycle. Once the State of Israel was established, the *Rabbanut* (Chief Rabbinate) accepted the sale of the land every year until 2007-2008.

Today the opponents of the sale say that it is no longer necessary to rely on the *heter mechira*. Firstly, agricultural technology has enabled vegetables to be grown hydroponically, in large planters without holes on the bottom, severing the connection with the soil of the land and avoiding the difficulties of *shmita*. Furthermore, there is the possibility of importing large quantities of produce from Arab farms in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as from overseas. In addition, there is concern that some of the nonobservant farmers are not really serious about the *heter mechira* sale.

There is one other option

available today, called *otzar beit din* (treasury of the court). In effect, a Jewish court purchases the farm lands of Israel. This assumes that the prohibition to work the land only applies to individual owners and not to a public entity, like a court. The *beit din* hires the Jewish farmer to work the fields on its behalf and then makes the produce available to the consumer in the marketplace. This alternative is limited by the amount of capital the *beit din* can accrue before the *shmita* year. The amount of land that they can work is based upon the funds they have to cover expenses.

The proponents of sale of the land argue that the option of *heter mechira* should be made available to the Israeli public because the alternative methods drive prices too high for the average Israeli consumer and severely hurt the income of the Israeli farmer and the wholesaler middleman. Furthermore, they argue that importing produce from Arabs in Gaza and the West Bank supports terrorism. Therefore they aver that the *Rabbanut* should continue to provide the possibility for *heter mechira* for those who want it.

Recently, the Haredi community in Israel has had a strong influence over the appointment of the Chief Rabbi of Israel. From the beginning of the establishment of the State of Israel, their community has been vehemently against *heter mechira*. When the *Rabbanut*, under great pressures from the Haredi community, decided for the first time this year not to fully embrace the *heter mechira*, they gave license to each city's rabbi to make his own decision. The net result was that in many cities the consumers were not offered the option of stores and restaurants that utilize the *heter mechira*.

Wagner reported in September that, "in several [large] cities--including Ashdod, Bat Yam, Petah Tikva, Rehovot, Hadera, Afula, Kfar

Saba, Jerusalem, and Herzliya--the local rabbis refuse to recognize *heter mechira*. Instead, they demand that their produce be Arab grown or imported." Therefore the Tzohar rabbis initiated an independent kashruth supervision system in those cities in order to give people a fair alternative.

Subsequently, the Tzohar rabbis challenged the *Rabbanut's* decision in the Supreme Court. On October 24, 2007, the court decided in favor of the Tzohar rabbis. The *Rabbanut* has now been compelled to offer the *heter mechira* option all over Israel, as they did in the past. Consequently, the Tzohar rabbis have dissolved their efforts to create an alternative kashruth certification organization. Tzohar Rabbi Benyamin Lau, of the Ramban Synagogue in the Greek Colony in Jerusalem, explained to The Observer the ramifications of this judgment. If there is a city rabbi who continues to refuse to give kosher approval to restaurants and shops in his jurisdiction, the *Rabbanut* must appoint a replacement rabbi who will give such franchises the proper kosher certification.

Yair Sheleg, a writer for the Israeli newspaper, Haaretz, quoted Rabbi Rafi Feuerstein, head of Tzohar, who explained his organization's motives in the pursuance of the *heter mechira*. "Our goal is not to replace the *Rabbanut*, but to influence its methods," he said. "We all believe in the importance of an official rabbinat." According to Sheleg, Rabbi Feuerstein concluded his comments with an expression of "Tzohar's readiness to adhere to a more lenient halakhic policy on issues where the *Rabbanut's* officials are afraid to do so."

# ARTS & CULTURE

## Ezrat Nashim: Transcending Traditional Barriers

BY LEA NEW

Ezrat Nashim, Miriam Stern's exhibit currently on display at the Yeshiva University Museum, is a daring feat in Jewish art. The exhibit offers the viewer a chance to join a women's *minyan* (quorum of 10), albeit women created of an artist's materials, and explore some of the issues behind the *mechitza* (physical separation between men and women) and Jewish femininity.

The display is comprised of 10 life-sized plexi-glass figures, which are silhouettes of Stern and nine of her female friends. Propped up on bases like giant paper dolls, they are grouped together at the far end of the room, allowing visitors to weave in and out among them.

The front-facing sides of these silhouetted figures are covered with enlarged prints of *mechitzot* from synagogues across the world, from New Jersey to Jerusalem. Each woman wears the print of another *mechitza*: some are wood, in latticework or thick planks, while others bear the heavy lace often found in Old City Jerusalem shuls.

The *mechitza* stands for a great deal in Judaism. To most it means the simple separation of women and men during prayer, but for others it also signifies the shunting aside of women, relegating them to a minor role away from the main action of the synagogue. This exhibit explores the dual aspects of the *mechitza*: female mystery and anonymity behind the barrier on the one hand, and individuality of spirit on the other.

From the front, a cluster of 10 anonymous "women" stands before the viewer, with nothing to distinguish one from the other save differences in the patterned *mechitzot* they wear. Yet, moving around to a different vantage point, a sense of the identity and uniqueness of each of



Courtesy of YU Museum

these 10 "women" is revealed. On the back of each silhouette, the artist describes herself and her friends using colorfully painted images and symbols. The struggles and ambitions of each member of this unusual *minyan* are illustrated through Stern's brush.

For example, on the rear side of the figure that represents herself, Stern has painted a plate and spoon that slowly morph into a paintbrush, highlighting the inner tension between her role as a domestic wife and mother and her aspirations as an artist. Other themes expressed in these painted

biographies include love of Israel, artistic creativity, and motherhood.

There is a strong sense of self among the "women" of this group. The paintings on their backs reveal a set of mature and accomplished individuals who work hard to synthesize home, work, art, and Zionism. Addi-

tionally, their belief in a place for femininity within Judaism is underscored by their affirmation of the *mechitza*. As they form their own *minyan* beyond the *mechitza*, they embrace a domain that belongs entirely to women, where ideas of nurturing and creativity may be freely expressed.

A text affixed to the wall (copies of which are available to carry throughout the gallery) helps visitors navigate the exhibit and de-

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## Glitzy Little Shop of Horrors

BY OLIVIA WIZNITZER

(This review is based upon attendance on opening night, December 16. On December 17, the lead role of Seymour was played by Tiferet Weiss, while the lead role of Audrey was played by Liat Tretin.)

December 16, 2007 boasted a new and exciting theatrical milestone, the unprecedented and thrilling premiere of the musical "Little Shop of Horrors." Performed by the women of Stern College, this colorful, hysterical, vibrant show took off at 7:00 p.m. after a few brief announcements by director Sharona Motkin. Motkin counseled the audience to be actively involved. "We want your laughter or your tears," she said pleasantly, and we sank back in our chairs, ready to be entertained.

And what entertainment ensued! Confronted by the presence of three dazzling women (referred to as Doo Wop Girls) in slinky sequined red dresses, their foils, three street urchins named Ronnette, Crystal, and Chiffon, an overweight shop owner, dancers in black with glittering overlays of colorful fabric, a sweet boy named Seymour, and his love interest, Audrey, the audience hardly knew where to look first. A feast for the senses ensued as we were gleefully welcomed to the sad tale of Seymour (played brilliantly by Esther Baruh), who acts as drudge and almost-slave to the proprietor of a failing flower shop, mustard-suited Mr. Mushnik (played by the show's producer, Dana Adler, who does an

incredible job filling in for Rebecca Gotlib, who came down with mono right before the show). Seymour is hopelessly in love with Audrey (Dalia Caplan), a young woman in revealing clothes who has a tragic tendency to be abused by her boyfriends.

Mushnik, a disgruntled Jewish shopkeeper, complete with Yiddish accent and expressions, has given up on procuring any business and has all but decided to close his shop when Seymour offers an alternative. Supported by Audrey, he proudly unveils a recent acquisition, a strangely disturbing piece of vegetation which he has romantically named Audrey II. Seymour suggests that they display the plant at the front of their shop, where it is sure to attract many customers. Mushnik scoffs at first, but soon finds that Seymour's prediction is correct. Customer One (Yaelle Frohlich) is particularly entertaining as a slightly odd elderly British woman who purchases \$100 worth of dead roses, while Customer Two (Alisa Ungar) demands "perky daffodils" to great effect.

Though the plant generates new business, Seymour soon finds that it refuses to grow, and searches desperately for the substance that it needs to flourish. To his shock, he inadvertently discovers that the plant demands human blood, which he provides by giving himself small cuts on his fingers. Audrey longingly sings of her desire to go "Somewhere That's Green," while dancers in black leggings and mint tunics evoke images of sleep and therefore dreams. In the meantime, Seymour has become a botanical prodigy due to his frighteningly ugly plant. The plant grows and thrives on its ghastly food, and acquires the ability to move (a feat accomplished by the puppeteering skills of Shira Margulies, who also moonlights in this production as a Radio Interviewer, and Aliza Greenland, one of the show's talented Musical Directors).

The flower shop has soon become so successful that it must be closed for renovations, allowing the audience to observe the cleverness of the Set & Scenery crew, composed of Ayala Kurlander, Barbara Laniado, and Adina Brizel, when a section of the set is undone to allow for the appearance of a drawn-on refrigerator. Next, we are stunned by the triumphant appearance of an evil and demonic dentist Orin Scivello, who is high on laughing gas, and is exquisitely played by Adina Schwartz. Dressed in black leather, Orin interacts with the street urchins and then elatedly tears off his jacket to reveal a dentist's uniform. The crowd laughs hysterically as Schwartz sings of Orin's decision to become a dentist because "people will pay you to be inhumane!" After completing his intensely evil solo,

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## On "Flipping Out"

BY JAIMIE FOGEL

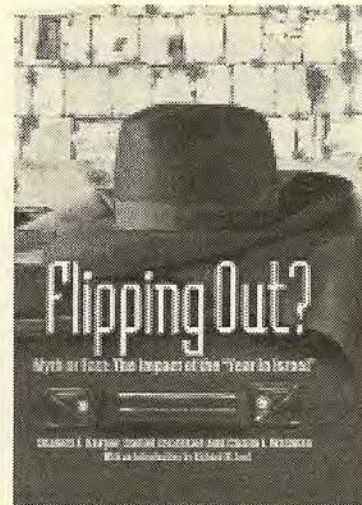
Yashar Books recently published a promising collection of studies entitled "Flipping Out? Myth or Fact: The Impact of the 'Year in Israel.'" The book is divided into three independent sections. The first section, titled "Engaging the Ultimate: The Impact of Post-High School Study in Israel," is written by Rabbi Shalom Berger, a well-known educator, currently on the staff of Bar-Ilan's Lookstein Center for Jewish Education. The second section, written by Dr. Daniel Jacobson, a faculty member at an American men's yeshiva in Israel and a clinical psychologist, is called "In Search of Self: Psychological Perspectives on Change During the 'Year in Israel.'" The final section, written by renowned sociologist Chaim I. Waxman, is "American Orthodoxy, Zionism and Israel."

The book's title, a reference to the popular song by Jewish band Blue Fringe, raises high expectations in the reader. The post-high school year that many Modern Orthodox students spend in Israel has had a large impact on the religious sect as a whole.

This book is a brave attempt to begin answering the plethora of questions that students, parents and observers raise about the seeming dramatic effects of the experience. Just a few of the looming questions include: "Are students being brainwashed?" "Has over a decade of schooling failed them so dramatically that a year in Israel can have a stronger influence than the first eighteen years of their lives?" "How strongly is this contributing to the perceived Modern Orthodox 'shift to the right?'" The list of questions is endless, and this book attempts to answer some of them from three different angles.

Shalom Berger conducted his research for the first section of the book based on surveys handed out to students at the beginning of their Israel year, the end of the year, and a follow-up survey administered one year later. The questions ranged from the ideological to the ritualistic to the moral—dealing with topics like aliyah, one's adherence to *hilchot negiah* (touching members of the opposite sex), and feelings about cheating on tests. This type of survey research was the also the basis

for Berger's 1996 dissertation on the same topic, from which his section of "Flipping Out?" is mainly drawn.



Courtesy of yasharbooks.com

Rabbi Berger's general conclusion is that during the "year in Israel" students do experience changes in their views, thoughts, and practices, but these changes remain consistent with who they were when they entered. Students change within their

context and "are building on their previous beliefs and knowledge to reach another place" (Berger, 57). He also concludes that the claim that the "year in Israel" is contributing to a fundamentalist Judaism is false and not supported by any evidence. Do more people in the Modern Orthodox movement nowadays adhere to halakha? Yes, but that is not a negative outcome. Just because one adheres more strictly to halakha does not make him a fanatic. Rabbi Berger acknowledges the effect this system has had on our society but asserts that it is not affecting it for the worse.

The main issue I take with this section of the book is the research method employed. I admittedly have limited knowledge of methods of educational research, but it seems that such a survey is not the most accurate way to obtain results for this particular study. Rabbi Berger himself questions the validity of his results for a number of reasons. Some of the follow-up surveys were completed by students

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## Dutch Masterpieces on Display

BY LEA NEW

What do nineteenth century American industrialists and the art of the Dutch Golden Age have in common? More than one would initially think, according to a current exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art entitled "The Age of Rembrandt: Dutch Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art."

The exhibit, running since September and until January 6, features the entirety of the Met's Dutch Golden Age holdings, open for public viewing for the first time in history. The work of famous masters is represented, including five paintings each by Johannes Vermeer and Jacob von Ruisdael, 11 by Franz Hals, and 20 by Rembrandt, as well as others by great or lesser known seventeenth century Dutch artists.

The artwork is organized in the galleries according to the means by which it came into the Met's possession (the categories are "bequests," "donations," "gifts," and "acquisitions"). "Bequests" form the most prominent part of the exhibition, featuring a series of galleries that house the formidable collections of major American industrialists, such as Benjamin Altman, Michael Friedsam, Henry Marquand, H. O. Havemeyer, and J. P. Morgan.

The exhibition thus functions as a celebration on several fronts. Firstly, by offering to the public the whole of their collection of Dutch

art, traditionally prized by collectors, the Met makes a statement of pride in their status in the art world today. The museum's humble origins are mentioned in the show, implicitly inviting comparison between their start in 1871 with only a kernel of



"Young Woman with a Water Pitcher"  
Vermeer, 1662

a collection to their current treasure trove of 228 Dutch masterpieces.

Through the exhibition of the vast quantity of expensive and much-coveted Dutch art collected by American businessmen, the exhibition also celebrates the Gilded Age of the 1870s through the 1890s, a period of American prosperity and progress. Lastly, the show highlights the productivity and virtuosity that characterized the art of the Dutch Golden Age, as the walls are filled with masterful paintings and prints that would draw crowds even if displayed alone.

By organizing the artwork under the rubric of collectorship, the exhibit displays the meaning of the works of Dutch art as perceived by the American collectors. Through the separation of artwork into disparate galleries named for the donor or group of donors, the exhibit endeavors to show that wealthy American collectors felt an affinity for the values of the art of the Dutch Golden Age. In Dutch art they saw ideas of democracy, free market, and a strong work ethic, values they inherently prized in an age of laissez faire economics and ascent of the middle class.

But herein lies the exhibit's greatest weakness. By grouping the artwork in rooms whose single binding factor is a common collector, no coherent sense of the art's social or biographical context is demonstrated. These works have been divorced from their biographical or chronological framework, and organized to emphasize the collecting habits of Gilded Age industrialists and acquisitive Met curators.

Since it is arranged in this way, the art featured in this show has no opportunity to speak for itself and to offer a chance for viewers to formulate their own ideas about Dutch art in the seventeenth century. The viewer finds him or herself traversing the galleries in an attempt to gain a picture of an individual artist's development or to trace a distinct civic style. For example, three of the five Vermeers on view are situated in

the Altman and Marquand Galleries and the Acquisitions room, respectively. This makes any comparison within Vermeer's work or with that of his contemporaries difficult.

An arrangement with a more systematic rather than theoretical structure might have afforded a better means of inviting viewers to draw conclusions about the nature of art in the Dutch Golden Age. A chronological organization would emphasize the social, political and cultural



"Flora"  
Rembrandt, 1654

conditions under which these works were created, while classification according to civic location would have questioned ideas of a distinctly civic style in Dutch art. Similar issues of artistic style and development might have been raised through a biographical or genre-based organization.

Although "Age of Rembrandt" suffers from some pitfalls in its concept and design, this show is not to be missed. On view are a multitude of masterful and well-known paintings by Rembrandt and others, such as Rembrandt's "Aristotle with a Bust of Homer" and "Man in Oriental Costume," and Vermeer's "Young Woman with a Water Pitcher." Additionally, the Met's exhibition of the entirety of their collection of seventeenth century Dutch art is unprecedented and should be recognized for its value as a total unveiling of their marvelous collection, including rarely exhibited minor works.

Finally, although it may inhibit multiplicity of viewer interpretations, the thesis set forth by the curators of "Age of Rembrandt" brings an interesting twist to the ideas of collectorship and curatorship in art. By highlighting the meaning and utility of Dutch art as seen through the eyes of American businessmen, the exhibit questions our own notions of how we as a society use art to construct meaning.

"Age of Rembrandt: Dutch Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art" will be on display through January 6, 2008. The Met is located at 1000 Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street. Museum hours are Sunday, Tuesday - Thursday, 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. and Friday - Saturday, 9:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

## Music Makes Magic in August Rush

BY ALISA UNGAR SARGON

For many, music is only accessible and truly appreciated on a lofty, elite plane reserved for those who have the ability to understand its abstract language. It is never an easy task to enlighten the uninformed, yet "August Rush," directed by Kirsten Sheridan, attempts to describe, if not reveal, the hidden messages of its music. The tale of a young musical prodigy, it is a story of everyday magic.

A family drama of sorts, the story opens on 11 year old Evan Taylor, played by the irresistible Freddie Highmore. The chronicle of his parents' lives comes to light in flashbacks, showing the two contrasting worlds from which they come. Eleven years previously, Louis Connelly and Lyla Novacek (played by Jonathan Rhys Meyers and Keri Russell) were both musicians, he a wild rock guitarist, and she a prim concert cellist. Their subconscious sense of each other drew them together at a party one night, but Lyla's father, insistent that she not destroy her career, whisked her away the next day. Once gone, she discovered that she was pregnant with Louis's child. Toward the end of her term, an unfortunate accident rendered her unconscious, and she gave birth while still comatose. Her father took the opportunity to put the child up for adoption, telling her she had lost the baby in the accident.

The baby, Evan, grows up in an orphanage. At age 11, he de-

cidates to run away, convinced that his parents will be able to find him if only they can hear his music. He reaches New York City, where he stumbles across the Wizard (Robin Williams), a maniacal fast-talker who makes a business of turning urchins into street musicians. Realizing Evan's capabilities, the Wizard gives him the tools to actualize his potential and presents him with his stage name, August Rush. After exploiting August's talents for some time, the two are separated, and August wanders the streets until he enters a random church and is once again recognized for his skill. The Reverend arranges for him to attend the Juilliard School of Music, where he is lauded and given prospects that change his life.

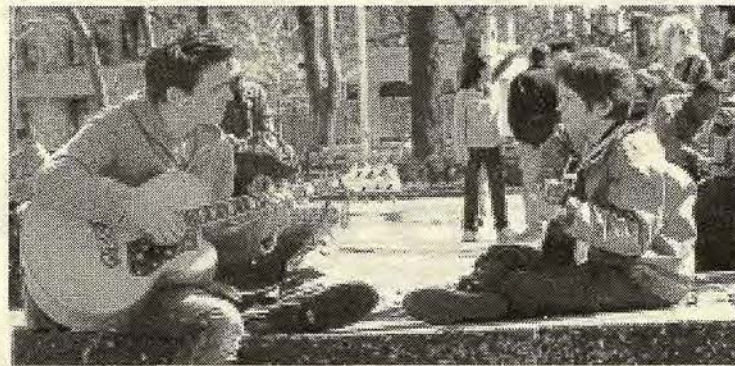
Meanwhile, Louis has turned to business, and has a successful career. One day, however, his life suddenly collides with his long-lost desires when he crosses paths with an old band mate and decides to return to the music he abandoned so long ago. Lyla, on the other hand, has left her performing days behind and spends her days teaching music, miserable and depressed. Her life comes to a halt when her father, on his deathbed, admits to his cruel actions. Lyla soon embarks on a journey to recover her lost child.

The film's culmination, like its entirety, requires a calculated suspension of disbelief. As with many happy endings, the rational possibility of the occurrences is quite unlikely.

What is portrayed in the film is a type of magic - that of notes, keys, sounds - stories told without words. It necessitates the viewer's taking an active part in the storyline in an effort to appreciate the magic as the characters do.

The film as a whole is not by any means a flawless work. The plot blends two reasonably good storylines together, but this combination results in what is often a rather frustrating jumble. The love story of Louis and Lyla, with their parallels and undeniable chemistry, works well, lending itself to a satisfying tale, and Au-

tended to center the tale on August's journey rather than that of his parents, the film excessively involves the viewers in Louis and Lyla's story, to an extent where August is no longer the protagonist. Both plots are treated as the movie's focus, giving the viewer too much knowledge and not enough suspense. Though the ending is obvious from the first moments of the opening scene, it still engenders the expectation of something beautiful to come. However, though the anticipated happy ending occurs, it lacks character and distinction.



Courtesy of filmpeek.net

gust's heart-wrenching journey is a fresh addition to the age-old fairytale. But the added component of August's role as a musical prodigy often takes over the plot, as the film focuses on his endeavors in the field rather than on the ongoing narrative of his parents. If, however, the filmmakers in-

This is not to say that the film has no merit whatsoever; it has several notable aspects. To aid in portraying some of the magic felt by the characters, the film employs a number of musical sequences blending Louis's rock and Lyla's classical, in which they are able to hear each other's music. The

arrangement succeeds quite well, especially with countless shots of Russell's spellbinding eyes arresting the audience with their ethereal gaze.

Another highlight of the film is an incredible scene in which Louis approaches August while he is playing in the park and strikes up a conversation with him. The scene utilizes the viewer's omniscience, as the audience knows the background of the situation, while the characters are oblivious. However, rather than portraying a mere brush with his son, Louis sits down beside August and trades guitars with him. The duet that ensues is spectacular, the chemistry between the two actors incomparable. There is a connection between father and son that is almost tangible, and gives the spectators a rare glimpse into the joy that music is able to summon.

Another noteworthy characteristic is the stark contrast between the Wizard and the Reverend. The Wizard extorts and dominates August for his own ends, while the Reverend sends him to Juilliard. Both, however, are acting in marveling appreciation of August's talent. Though this can be attributed to their different backgrounds, what is shown here is a mild commentary on the extremes of human nature, and what men are willing to do when faced with such an opportunity.

The film also boasts a strong supporting cast of characters

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## Ezrat Nashim

*Continued from page 16*

cipher the painted biographies on the rear side of each "woman." For each of her friends, the artist has prepared a short biographical blurb. Stern calls her nine friends by their first names (Cheryl, Wendy, Menorah, etc.) and explains the intentions behind their illustrated descriptions.

The soft sounds of Stern and the other women chanting *Hallel* (prayer of praise) also fill the gallery. On the exhibit's accompanying pamphlet, the artist writes that each woman is a prayer leader, expressing her struggle to connect with G-d and find her place as an individual within the community.

Contemporary Jewish artist Miriam Stern has put together a provocative addition to Yeshiva University Museum's current exhibition repertoire. This small yet profound show has both aesthetic value and a deeper message, raising questions about Jewish femininity in the modern world.

*The Ezrat Nashim exhibit will be on display at the Yeshiva University Museum until January 13, 2008. The YU Museum is located at 15 E. 16th St. in Manhattan. Museum hours are Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday: 11am - 5pm.*

*Continued from page 16*

the dentist sweeps Audrey off with him (but only after ensuring that she has her handcuffs in her purse).

The moving plant suddenly acquires the ability to speak (voiced by the beautiful tones of Sharona Motkin) and proceeds to utter an annoying but entertaining refrain, "FEED ME." This is underscored by an exquisitely choreographed dance performed by figures in green shirts and leggings worn under black t-shirts and shorts. The plant wheedles, threatens, and intimidates by turns, prompting the delicate Seymour to find fresh supplies of blood for him. Its first victim is Orin: he convinces Seymour that Audrey's abusive boyfriend deserves

## Little Shop

to be plant food. Seymour goes along with this, but the plant's wily arguments begin to persuade him to do evil things and commit even more murders. To prevent Mr. Mushnik from accusing him of murdering Orin, Seymour feeds Mushnik to the plant as well. When offered contracts and told that he has the ability to become a sensation in the field of botany, Seymour hesitates. The plant convinces him that Audrey's love for him is dependant upon his newfound fame, so Seymour reluctantly signs.

But then the great tragedy occurs when Audrey enters the flower shop at night and is tricked into watering the creature, only to be eaten. Seymour saves her before she dies, but not for very long; her last wish is to be fed to the plant to enhance his career. Echoing her former dream, she explains that at last she will be "somewhere that's green." Caplan sings these lines with heartfelt pathos, which only serves to undermine the ridiculous nature of her request. As she bids an exaggerated goodbye, one hand limply waving farewell, the audience cannot refrain from snickering, if not laughing outright.

Seymour, given strength by grief, acted to perfection by Baruh, whose eyelashes seem convincingly

wet with tears, determines that he will end the evil plant before others can take cuttings from it, unleashing a man-eating epidemic upon the world. However, he too is consumed as he struggles to conquer the evil specimen. The play ends when the Doo Wop Girls inform us that this is only one of many similar stories taking place around the country, and the fantastic finale (which sports ghosts in wonderful blue makeup in addition to original hairstyles by DeeDee Klein and Georgie) exhorts us, in song, not to feed the plants.

This musical is a great, glittering confection of absolutely ridiculous comedy, excellent acting, and beautiful set design. The energy about the show is infectious; it is played in a campy, fun, exciting manner, which suits perfectly. This choice was an excellent decision on the director's part; the show could just as well have been played in a terrifying, nightmarish manner, but this comedic slant is wonderful. There is nothing that could possibly have been better; the feel, the energy, the packed theater, the performers, whether singers, dancers or actresses, those involved offstage in hair and makeup, costumes or crew—everyone did her utmost to ensure a success. And a success it was!

## August Rush

*Continued from page 17*

who manage to stand out despite their smaller roles. Terrence Howard is convincingly compassionate as Evan's social worker, credibly conveying his intensity and consideration. Becki Newton of "Ugly Betty" plays herself as Louis's girlfriend in

his business days. William Sadler as Lyla's father plays the tense and worried part of a father-turned-manager.

Though not quite suitable for a family audience, the film highlights the prettier parts of the world and leaves the viewer feeling contented. Describing the euphoria felt by those capable of truly appreciat-

ing music is nearly impossible, but the movie makes a strong attempt at it. Though "August Rush" may not have achieved everything it set out to do, it is a pleasure to watch and certainly captures the attention long enough to leave a lasting impression.

*On behalf of The entire Yeshiva  
University Beren Campus  
Office of Student Affairs*

*Good Luck on*

*Finals!*

*Have a great intersession!*

## “Flipping Out”

Continued from page 16

who spent that follow-up time studying in Israel for a second year. This most probably colored their responses and injected more high-scoring results into the data. Secondly, questions about moral behavior are not always answered with complete honesty. Many students scored high on the moral section of the survey, answering that in the face of moral dilemmas like cheating and giving up their seat for an elderly person, they would make the correct choice. But some of these results seem unlikely. Perhaps the respondents answered affirmatively because they felt it to be the “correct” answer, but these answers did not accurately reflect the reality.

The other difficulty I have in accepting these results is that the research was conducted over a decade ago. Each year the group of students who attend post-high school study in Israel expands. More yeshivas and seminaries open up every year, often attracting students to come and study who a decade ago would never have dreamed of taking a year off to spend in Israel. The addition of these new types of students and the growth of the student body in Israel must have some ramifications on such a survey. It seems difficult to accept these surveys as factual when the reality now may be different than it was at the time they were conducted.

Another troubling aspect of the section is that Rabbi Berger attempts to deal with many issues in one small segment. I often found that instead of enlightening the reader on a particular important question, the obvious was stated. Most astute students who studied in Israel could have predicted much of the discussion. It is the deepening of these ideas that a knowledgeable reader is looking for and will not find.

Dr. Jacobson bases much of his research for the second section of the book on conversations with male students studying in Israeli yeshivas. His dissertation deals with the male population of students, though much of what he discusses would apply to both males and females. Due

to his psychological background, Dr. Jacobson offers the readers a vocabulary to describe what we observe in our society—a benefit for communicative, accurate dialogue on the subject. For example, many students appear to return home looking like one another. Their garb matches and they choose to spend time involved in similar religious activities—yet beneath the seeming similarity are two people who went through two profoundly different experiences. Dr. Jacobson discusses the difference between “conservational” and “transformational” religious change: “In the former, the goal is to change in order to maintain and solidify the individual’s present identity, while in the latter the goal is a replacement of the former self with a new sense of being” (Jacobson, 89). These two types of change are radically different. Even though two young men may look the same, what they have gone through and their methods of change can be radically different. By granting the reader this type of precise language, Jacobson allows for clearer thinking and discussion.

Jacobson, like Berger, attempts to cover a wide range of topics. He explains some of the psychology behind difficult transitions, why people change, different types of change, influential figures, etc. I think much of his research faces problems similar to those in Berger’s. It is impossible to adequately address that much information in such a small amount of space. Many times a question was stated with psychological background and explanation, but no answer was offered. The big questions the book’s title promises to address are merely left as well-explained and justified questions, but not ones with many concrete answers. Perhaps it is unrealistic to expect answers because this area of study is so new, yet how helpful for society is a book full of questions without any answers?

The third section, by Chaim Waxman, is an essay taken from a selection of his other published articles. What is most puzzling about this section is that it has no apparent connection to the “year in Israel.” Waxman

brings up just about every other issue in American Modern Orthodox society—such as aliyah, sky-rocketing day school tuitions, and the *daf yomi* (daily amount of Talmud learned) phenomenon—but at every point when he begins to discuss a topic directly related to the year, he veers off onto a different sociological tangent.

For example, in the chapter “Year in Israel and the Orthodox Community” he spends a few paragraphs discussing Israeli customs that have seeped into America, like the recitation of *yedid nefesh* before Friday night services. He explains that because such a deep link has been forged between America and Israel, there is some exchange of customs. He then discusses the adoption of stricter halakhic living by many Israel returnees and their desire to pray in shuls filled with passionate congregants like themselves, but then inexplicably spends the rest of the chapter discussing Haredi Jews and their relationship to Zionism. This third section, similar to the other two, stumbles over the temptation to bring up everything without clearly explaining much of it. This section felt unfocused and misplaced in a book dealing with the specific impacts of the “year in Israel.”

I commend these three men for breaking into an area of study crucial to the Jewish past, present, and future, but I often found that this effort came up short. As I turned the pages, I kept waiting to find out information I had not already intuited as a participant and observer of the “year in Israel” phenomenon. While I did empathize with many topics of discussion—connecting with mentors, returning home to culture shock, the challenge of continued growth—I did not find that the information shed light on most of them and I don’t think this effort has uncovered all there is to understand about the phenomenon. My guess is that time will present our community with many of the answers we are searching for. But I think that there is a tremendous value in attempting to help guide a somewhat confused community of parents and peers of those affected by the experience. This book is a first step.

## The Case for Academic Bible

Continued from page 3

pose of pursuing Judaic studies, we should be offered as many courses as are offered in other colleges, if not more. If other universities study biblical texts from a critical point of view, Yeshiva University should not study those texts only from a traditional or medieval viewpoint, but from a critical point of view in addition to the traditional and medieval viewpoints. Why should I be disadvantaged? Why should I, as a Judaic Studies major, not be able to learn the staples of what is taught at other universities? Why should my observance and religious practice get in the way of the ideas I absorb, all of which can be used for the purpose of understanding and furthering that religious observance?

There are definitely people at Stern who lead examined lives and who would benefit immensely from courses such as the ones I have suggested. We may be in the minority—it is my impression sometimes that we are—but that does not make our desires any less legitimate. It is my hope and wish that we soon see such courses offered, in addition to the fascinating but more traditional studies of biblical texts. I, for one, would like to be aware of more than the limited view or spectrum, more than the contained religious study. If I am to be a Judaic Studies major, then let me do this properly, learning about Judaic Studies from every possible

angle, religious or not. pose of pursuing Judaic studies, we should be offered as many courses as are offered in other colleges, if not more. If other universities study biblical texts from a critical point of view, Yeshiva University should not study those texts only from a traditional or medieval viewpoint, but from a critical point of view in addition to the traditional and medieval viewpoints. Why should I be disadvantaged? Why should I, as a Judaic Studies major, not be able to learn the staples of what is taught at other universities? Why should my observance and religious practice get in the way of the ideas I absorb, all of which can be used for the purpose of understanding and furthering that religious observance?

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## Teaching Outside the Classroom

Continued from page 3

mention was another Chanukah celebration in the home of a beloved Judaic studies faculty member here at Stern. Rabbi Mordechai Cohen, his wife, and his five adorable children opened up their home for a gathering of his current students on the seventh night of Chanukah. An evening overflowing with laughter, great food, and, of course, Torah brought together a diverse group of students all connected through their choice of professor. Rabbi Cohen and two students shared words of Torah which enlightened and uplifted students, weary after a long and draining semester.

The message of Rabbi Cohen’s *dvar Torah*, a theme implicit and sometimes discussed openly in

his classroom lectures, was the importance of consistency in a Torah lifestyle. An ideal Torah life is not necessarily achieved by the person who adopts the most stringencies or the one who must be chased out of the beit midrash late at night by security guards eager to close the building at the end of a long shift. The consistent, diligent servant of God who studies regularly and works on the basics of Judaism before jumping into the extraordinary is the one who achieves long-lasting results and benefits from his Torah life. The message was clear, and it was made even clearer by the students’ ability to see it exemplified in real life; to sit in a home which exudes constant Torah study and living—a message audible in a classroom but

only truly heard when seen lived.

I offer my deepest thanks to the faculty who gave of themselves and who shared some of their personal time and energy outside of the formal classroom with the students. It was an irreplaceable enhancement to this year’s Chanukah experience at Stern—a true gift—and I encourage these educators to continue their efforts, which have not gone unappreciated.

Although students may not verbally express the desire for a relationship with their professors, many are looking for that multidimensional learning experience in their education here at Stern. It has been a personal mission in the past three years I have spent on campus to try and facilitate more open discussion and dialogue

between teachers and students. I have met with many challenges along the way, but none were caused by a lack of student interest. Developing relationships with college professors is difficult. Often, the contact remains in the intellectual realm and both sides are either uncomfortable or unwilling to extend that relationship to the personal level. However, *mashgichim ruchani'im* (spiritual advisors) and others specifically hired to talk to and guide students are not the only figures who students should relate to. While these men and women are a crucial presence on campus, students want and need to see their professors, who are already a part of their lives and who they already respect and admire, in this light as well.

I often feel that it is the profes-

sors who are the ones slightly lagging behind on this issue. While it is up to the student to initiate and go forward with personal contact, it would certainly not hurt for a professor to reach out in some way. A friendly smile, an open office door, and even the occasional Shabbat invitation all help in more ways than one could ever imagine. In addition to showing appreciation to the bold faculty members who eagerly reached out to the student body this past Chanukah, I wish to encourage the rest of the faculty at YU to follow their lead. It is sincere efforts like those of the Secunda and Cohen families that transform our university into a community.

# SCIENCE & HEALTH

## AECOM Hosts YU Pre-Med Shabbaton

BY ABBY ATLAS

The idea for a shabbaton at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine (AECOM) for Yeshiva University pre-med students had been in the making for over two years. When Yonah Bardos (YC '08), president of the Yeshiva College Student Council and the Student Medical Ethics Society (MES), first met Rabbi Alexander Mondrow, rabbi of the AECOM Jewish community, Bardos proposed the organizing of a shabbaton. This idea finally became a reality over the weekend of November 30, when 15 Yeshiva College students, 30 Stern College women, a few YU alumni, and students from other undergraduate institutions joined the Einstein Jewish community for Shabbat.

According to Bardos, one goal of the shabbaton was for pre-med students to "feel for themselves the warmth of the Einstein community." The sense of community was evident from the fact that 130 people gathered together for davening on Friday night. The willingness of the medical students' to open their homes to their undergraduate counterparts was further testament to their hospitality.

In addition to exposing YU students to the AECOM community

as a whole, the shabbaton allowed students to form connections with individual AECOM students and their families. Chani Schonbrun (SCW '08), MES co-president, noted that another aim of the shabbaton was "to provide [YU students] with the opportunity of getting to know the students [of Einstein]... because it's nice to have a friend or a connection to someone who has already gone through it and can help you through it." To provide YU students with the opportunity to forge this connection, the undergraduates ate the Friday night meal with their host families instead of as a larger group.

The shabbaton also hosted Rabbi Dr. Edward Reichman as guest speaker. "[Rabbi Reichman] was an easy choice as a speaker," Schonbrun explained "He is a member of the MES's advisory board and always has excellent and enlightening things to say." Schonbrun added that, as an alumnus of AECOM, he was able to talk to the students about his experience there and "how he balances personal life and family with medicine and also still has time to lecture and learn and be an involved member of the Jewish community."

At the oneg Shabbat on Friday night, Rabbi Reichman spoke about the "History of Medicine and Halacha."

The lecture dealt with the halakhic approach to medical ethics questions of the past and present. It ended with a discussion about the future of the field of medicine and how halakha will continue to address difficult questions. At seudah shlishit, he also led a question and answer session on "Issues Facing the Medical Student."

These lectures were well received. "I thoroughly enjoyed his lectures and the discussions that were generated as a result," noted Reena Gottesman (SCW '08).

After Shabbat, Dr. Edward Burns, the executive dean of AECOM, spoke to the undergraduate students about admissions and medical school in general. His talk was followed by a *melave malka*, which gave students the opportunity to talk to Dr. Burns and ask him questions about AECOM.

According to Bardos, the response to the shabbaton was overwhelmingly positive. "Our survey showed that all of the students really enjoyed the shabbaton and over 95 percent accomplished what they had hoped for," he remarked.

"[My experience] just gave me another reason to want to go to Einstein," added Gottesman.

## Preventing MRSA at SCW

BY MIRIAM MERZEL

In an email addressed to the student body in November, YU Dean of Students Dr. Victor Schwartz addressed an issue that has been attracting much media attention lately: the methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) infection.

"We sent the email about it because we wanted people to be aware of this problem since there was a Center for Disease Control report about it that was being covered in the media," explained Dr. Schwartz.

MRSA is an infection caused by the common bacterium *Staphylococcus aureus*, commonly known as staph. This strain of bacteria is normally carried on the skin or nose of healthy people. About 25 to 30 percent of the population carries the bacteria without any infection. Nonetheless, staph sometimes does lead to infection, and is the most common cause of skin infections in the United States.

Though the cases are usually mild, in some instances, the bacteria can cause more severe infections such as surgical wound infections, bloodstream infections, and pneumonia. In addition, some strains of the staph bacteria are resistant to antibiotics, making the infection extremely difficult to treat. MRSA is resistant to a type of antibiotics

known as beta-lactams, which include methicillin, oxacillin, penicillin, and amoxicillin. About one percent of the population carries MRSA.

When the *Staphylococcus aureus* bacterium does cause infection, it is mostly in hospitals or other health-care facilities, where the patients have weakened immune systems. Such health-care-associated staph infections include surgical wound infections, urinary tract infections, bloodstream infections, and pneumonia. Although these infections occur mostly in healthcare facilities, they can also arise in the general community. About 12 percent of clinical MRSA infections are community-associated. These infections, usually presented as pimples or boils, can be red, swollen, painful, and have pus or other drainage. The infection can also develop from mild to serious.

MRSA is spread through close skin-on-skin contact, open cuts, touching contaminated items or surfaces, living in crowded conditions, and poor hygiene. As such, the ways to protect against MRSA are to keep hands clean by using either soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer, to keep cuts clean and covered until they heal, to avoid contact with other

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## Spotlight on Faculty Research

BY LORIEL SOLODOKIN

Faculty-run research in the science departments at Stern College for Women (SCW) both contributes to scientific knowledge and expands the inquisitive minds of undergraduates. Quite a few professors in the chemistry and biochemistry departments include SCW students in their on-campus research.

Dr. Evan Mintzer, professor of organic chemistry, has pursued his interest in the biophysics of lipids and membranes and is involved in multiple projects, which he began working on several years ago as a graduate student at Queens College. One project involves oxysterols on membranes. These molecules, derived in-vivo from the oxidation of cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein particles (LDL), have been found to be cytotoxic, but the mechanism of toxicity is unclear. In his research, Dr. Mintzer is attempting to discover why these naturally produced molecules are harmful to the cell.

Another topic that Dr. Mintzer is addressing deals with protein-lipid interactions. The goal is to elucidate the thermodynamic parameters and specificity of certain protein-lipid and protein-saccharide interactions. Results on several of these topics have been published. As of yet, no students have joined Dr. Mintzer's research team; however,

he strongly encourages anyone who might be interested to contact him.

Another professor, Dr. Chaya Rapp, conducts research that relates to different aspects of protein structure. She is attempting to discover what determines a protein's three-dimension-



Dr. Lea Blau

al structures, how a molecule's structure relates to its function, and how receptor/ligand complexes form. Dr. Rapp's research utilizes principles of physics and chemistry to model and predict how proteins behave. Along with her collaborators at Columbia University and the University of California at San Francisco (UCSF), Dr. Rapp has made progress in predicting the structure of protein loops.

Some of her recent work has dealt with modeling the interactions of phosphate groups (a key method of protein regulation), and understanding the differences between proteins that are crystallized and those that are in aqueous solution. Currently,



Courtesy of Dr. Rapp

Dr. Chaya Rapp

Dr. Rapp is predicting the model in which a ligand will bind to a receptor molecule. Students involved in her research have even had the opportunity to be sent to UCSF to enhance collaborations. Dr. Rapp noted that student involvement in her research has had a positive impact.

"Research is what science is all about, and is therefore an important component of

students' education," she said.

Also in the chemistry and biochemistry departments are Drs. Lea Blau, professor of organic chemistry, and Donald Estes, general and organic chemistry laboratory instructor. They have been working on a study



Courtesy of yu.edu

Dr. Evan Mintzer

to determine what interactions give rise to the stability of DNA. Originally, this project was developed for Physical Chemistry On-Line (PCOL) Consortium, which is a multi-university, multi-faculty effort carrying out physical chemistry projects on-line.

Over the past few summers, Drs. Blau and Estes have included students in their research. One of the students who participated in their en-

deavors was Sara Guigui (SCW '08). According to Guigui, this experience was her "real first initiation to 'wet lab' research." The experience of working with the chemistry faculty in SCW taught Guigui specific knowledge and techniques that she had not encountered before. Her experience was overwhelmingly positive because, as Guigui explained, "It is important that one is exposed to research in an environment in which she feels comfortable, so that she can work to the best of her potential."

Research at SCW both impacts the scientific forum of the world and enhances the experiences of Stern undergraduates. They learn scientific techniques both in and out of the laboratory and build relationships with faculty on Stern's campus. As Dr. Blau explained, "Students benefit greatly from these research projects, and the faculty has the satisfaction of introducing the eager, talented, and dedicated students to the world of scientific research—research that is the engine that moves science forward."

*This article is the second installment in a three-part series on faculty research.*

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## A Glimpse into the Science of Glass

BY EMILY LIEBLING

During the summer, my family took a trip to the Corning Museum of Glass in Corning, NY. What I thought would be a day of glazed eyes and periodic glances at my watch turned out to be a fascinating experience. The material we take for granted and use in the form of Snapple bottles, eye-wear, and windows, is a science unto itself. Some of the greatest minds have devoted themselves to the study of glass and its application to our daily lives.

Once thought to be a substance in a class of its own, glass has actually been given a new designation; it is now a state of matter. When a substance changes its physical phase from a liquid to a solid, its molecules gradually revert to their crystalline structure. At times, a substance is heated beyond its melting point, becoming a very hot liquid, and is then immediately exposed to temperatures below its freezing point. The molecules in this substance have little time to reorganize themselves from the disarray of the liquid to the organized crystal of the solid, so they inevitably freeze in place, remaining wherever they may be. The result is the glass phase. The museum in Corning has various materials on display that have undergone this process

of cooling. They are truly magnificent sights. One example of this phenomenon is obsidian, which is glass formed during volcanic eruptions.

Industrial glass has three major ingredients: formers, fluxes, and stabilizers. Formers make up the basic substance of the glass. Any compound can be melted and cooled to form glass, including the earth's entire crust. The former we are most familiar with is sand that contains silica. Others include anhydrous boric acid and anhydrous phosphoric acid. Fluxes allow formers to melt at lower, more easily attainable temperatures. Sand has a melting point of approximately 3360°F, which would be very expensive to achieve, so fluxes, such as lithium carbonate and potash, are added to lower this temperature to 2370°F. These fluxes, however, make the glass chemically unstable and soluble in water. Stabilizers are therefore added to help the glass maintain its structure. Such stabilizers include limestone, magnesia, and zinc oxide.

Our erroneous perception that glass is very fragile is due only to surface imperfections which occur when the glass is cooled too quickly. Some of the naturally occurring impurities present themselves in appealing manners. Obsidian, formed when the extreme heat of the volcano melts silica sand, looks shiny, black,

and opaque due to these impurities. In actuality, glass is extremely strong if tempered to remove the impurities. When cooled slowly enough, the surface of the glass is allowed to set in the same way as the interior, reducing the strain immensely. The glass is then said to be annealed.

Among the myriad uses of glass in our modern world is that of fiber optics. Internet access, telephone communication, and television are all the products of glass fiber optics. Op-

tical glass fiber can carry thousands of times more information than the once-used copper wire. Ninety minutes of television can be transmitted in one second; two optical fibers can transmit 24,000 telephone calls at once. As the glass fibers channel light, they must be completely free of bubbles or any other defects, so as to ensure accurate bending of the light. Optical fiber is so strong that it can tolerate tensile stress equivalent to 600,000 pounds per square inch.

Though we may take this seemingly ordinary substance for granted, the intricate properties and volatile functions of glass are mind-boggling. Glass allows the careful observer to see chemical and physical marvels galore. So the next time you see the sun's rays bursting through the window, put this wonderful material in the spotlight and realize just how amazing it is.

## MRSA

*Continued from page 20*

people's cuts and bandages, and to avoid sharing personal items. While living in a dormitory, it is especially important to practice good hygiene, as people are living in close contact.

Susceptibility to MRSA seems to be increased when there is skin damage. Since skin damage often occurs in an athletic context, YU is working with the departments of athletics and facilities to ensure that the athletic equipment and public areas are kept clean.

"We wanted to make sure people were also reassured that we

were taking prudent steps to address prevention," reported Dr. Schwartz. "We were particularly interested in doing this since there have been past outbreaks of MRSA in other universities and especially in athletic facilities where people often sustain minor skin injuries and then might use the same equipment." Antiseptic wipes are now available in the workout rooms to wipe down equipment after use and everyone is urged to practice good hygiene.

Although MRSA is resistant to some antibiotics, there are other medications that do treat it. Therefore, if someone develops MRSA, it

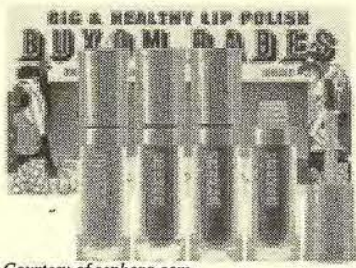
is important that they immediately see a healthcare provider and follow whatever instructions they are given. It is also possible for a person who has recovered from MRSA to contract it again. As such, increased awareness of the symptoms and causes of MRSA allows students to avoid an outbreak to the best of their abilities.

# FASHION & STYLE

## Winter Beauty Secrets Revealed: Five Ways to Help You Stay Hydrated

BY EFRAT OKRENT

They say winter is "the most wonderful time of the year"—but I bet if we asked our skin and hair, they would beg to differ. That's why I have compiled a list of products to help combat the chapped lips and parched hair that result from the plummeting temperatures.



Courtesy of sephora.com

\*\*\*The first, most essential product is becoming a staple in many women's beauty regimens. During the winter, our skin undergoes stress from the changing climates and as a result becomes dry and flaky. That's where Borghese's Sali Esfoliante Salt Scrub comes in. Not only does the gentle exfoliating scrub remove rough patches, leaving skin smoothed and evenly toned, but it also seals in that extra moisture absent in the air during cooler months of the year. After use, skin looks and feels silky smooth and revitalized. You can pick up a jar at Bloomingdale's.

\*\*\*The next staple for every

girl's handbag is the Naked Body Butter hand cream from the fabulous people at Bliss. It is ideal to use this creamy moisturizer after exfoliating, as skin is most absorbent after a good scrub. This body butter is great because it doesn't leave that greasy feeling



Courtesy of starbulletin.com

and your hands will stay moisturized for many hours, which means fewer applications. Cop a tube at Sephora.

\*\*\*Your hair will surely thank you for this third beauty must-have: Paul Mitchell's Super Skinny Serum, which is fantastic for over-worked lackluster hair. After showering, apply one squeeze to your fingertips and run it through your hair. The result is stunning. Along with leaving your hair looking and feeling sleek and shiny (not to mention providing major flyaway control), the

serum provides your hair with a deep conditioning treatment that helps prevent breakage and split ends. It's available in most hair salons.

\*\*\*To keep your parched pouts hydrated, Bare Minerals has come up with a perfect set of lip polish to do the trick. Buxom Babes Big and Healthy Lip Polish infuses lips with ultra glossy moisture that comes in four fabulous shades and delicious scents. Grab a set from Sephora stores.



Courtesy of strawberry.net.com

\*\*\*Finally, Chantecaille's Rice and Geranium Foaming Cleanser is the perfect morning pick-me-up (especially if combined with a nice cup of Starbucks) after a long night of studying for finals. The cleanser combines soft exfoliating rice bran with the beneficial effects of geranium, which stimulates skin cells. Also, its restorative properties will invigorate your dull, lifeless skin. After use, your complexion will appear radiant, glowing, and most importantly, refreshed! Available at Neiman Marcus, Bergdorf Goodman, and Barneys New York.

## Cheap and Chic

BY CHANA FILLER

In a city like New York where fashion reigns, the pressure to look great is always high—but your budget may not be. Here are some great tips to keep you looking fabulous without breaking the bank.

### The Sample Sale:

What possesses an otherwise sane and well-adjusted individual to wait in line for over an hour in the freezing cold, only to contend with screaming women all vying for the same pair of shoes? The Sample Sale, of course!

At a sample sale, designers offer their wares at reduced prices. They are not always cheap, but they are often a fraction of the retail value. I recently waited in line for nearly an hour to gain entry to the Diane Von Furstenberg sale. You would think these women had never seen clothes in their lives. Suffice it to say, that if you suffer from claustrophobia, then these sales may not be for you. However, if you are willing to brave the

crowds you will be sure to find some great deals. Many of these sales are not publicized, but you can find out about some of them online. NYmag.com and dailycandy.com offer comprehensive listings of upcoming sales.

### Vintage Stores:

Another haven for great deals and steals are the vintage and resale shops scattered throughout the city. You can find some great designer pieces, as well as unique accessories that everyone will covet but no one else will find. Granted, you may have to rummage through a lot of outdated clothes, but you are sure to discover some treasures. Check out Cheap Jack's on 31<sup>st</sup> Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue for a great selection in a variety of price ranges.

### Mixing and Matching:

Sometimes all it takes to look like a million bucks is a great accessory or one classic piece to pull your ensemble together. If your accessories are high end, people will assume your wardrobe is too—and you don't

need to inform them otherwise. Try mixing some of your tried and true favorites with trendier pieces from H&M or Zara, and you will be sure to pull off that chic look on the cheap.

### Hair Modeling:

Hair maintenance is a must, but sometimes all that cutting, coloring, and styling can rack up a big bill. What you may not know is that many major salons offer haircuts, styling, and even coloring for a fraction of the cost or even free of charge. When top salons are training stylists, members of the public are often welcome to come in and serve as hair models.

The renowned Bumble and Bumble salon has a great program, dubbed Bumble and Bumble University. You go in for a consultation with a stylist and decide together what kind of cut and style you are eligible for. You then go ahead and schedule an appointment. It is absolutely free; all it costs is the time it takes for the initial consultation. Find out more at [www.bbmodelproject.com](http://www.bbmodelproject.com).

## Industry Insider



BY RENA KUKIN

During the spring semester of my sophomore year at the Sy Syms School of Business, I paid a visit to academic advisement. I was confused about what classes I should be taking for my still undeclared major. I felt that somehow, if I continued to flip through the slim booklet of proffered major options, I would find my calling. That did not happen, but I grew increasingly interested in the Fashion Marketing joint program with Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT). Despite my uncertain career path and my wariness of a couture fashion lifestyle, I sought an internship to further explore the fashion industry and decide if it was the place for me.

Since June 2007 I have interned with the design team for a company that creates and markets intimate apparel and sleepwear. They design and produce products for a variety of companies ranging in style, markets, quality, and price.

When you go into any store and purchase a pair of say, Hanes brand undergarments, chances are they have not been made in a Hanes factory. Most big brand names hire other companies to design and create their product via a licensing agreement. It is a form of outsourcing where an outside company produces the garments and then affixes the

Hanes label. The company I work for has designers working on brands such as Hue, Fruit of the Loom and Badgley Mischka, to name a few.

While I have gained experience assisting the whole design team, I've worked most closely with the designer for Badgley Mischka Lingerie, an elegant and chic collection. Daily tasks and ongoing responsibilities are very hands-on, literally. My hands have grown sore from cutting sticky Velcro for color cards, swatching fabrics for trend boards, sewing bows and crystals onto samples, and creatively assembling presentation boards. I've visited textile factories, attended print meetings, completed requests for sample production, set up showrooms, and organized competitive sample closets stocked with some of the industry's finest lingerie.

This has been a tremendous learning experience and opportunity for me. My exposure has gone beyond the initial design to include witnessing how each garment is developed and the process involved in marketing it. The fashion industry does not merely create beautiful designs—it is a business. When crafting a collection many decisions are made based on pricing. A major component of running any successful venture is to ensure that all elements are efficient, which is why many consumer products are made in China where production is less costly, and why in the fashion industry one might opt to use a poly blend fabric instead of pure silk.

Through my internship I have gained a greater understanding of how the fashion industry operates. It is very fast-paced and often sink-or-swim. You must be willing to get your hands dirty and finish the project, which has been wonderful for me as I am a self-starter and appreciate the responsibility. Some might consider my job assignments routine, but with these ostensibly mundane tasks I have gained critical exposure to the process, which is crucial for a possible future in this industry.

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## Technology in Moderation

*Continued from page 4*

knowledge is that perhaps there are some things that are private, that aren't meant to be shared at all. Online, what stops someone from typing anything that occurs to him or her? It is as simple as a few flicks of the fingers and a push of the enter key—and then the words are in the other person's possession forever, recorded in print. Instant messaging becomes dangerous territory, where fear of confrontation disappears with the knowledge that all one has to face is a dimly-lit screen. Without the natural inhibitions that prevent a person from speaking, you are more likely to write something you will regret later.

Yet another thing that AIM lacks is tone of voice. Without tone of voice, a phrase meant sarcastically can be taken literally and vice versa. Without tone of voice, words lack sincerity and a certain ability to penetrate into the reader's being. Without tone of voice, writing can often lack clarity, or, worse, cause true misunderstanding.

AIM is not the only impersonal form of technology that causes people to suffer from disassociation. It is all too common to

pass people on the street and notice the thin, white wires coming out of their ears and disappearing into their pockets where, undoubtedly, they are attached to either an iPod or an MP3 player. Even a short, 20 minute car ride cannot be endured without an iPod or the radio blaring—even when there are others in the car. Supposedly, there was once a time when people actually made conversation while walking or during car rides.

And then there's television. A disturbingly large number of people would be lying if they insisted they were not slaves to their televisions. Evening plans are made around TV programming. Quick, drop everything and run! It's 8:00—do you know where your remote controls are?

Just as science fiction authors like Aldous Huxley and George Orwell predicted, we seem to be conditioned by technology to have certain behavioral patterns, like impatience and low attentiveness. With high speed internet, nearly everything is at our beck and call. Waiting five minutes for a webpage to load? Scandalous! Two minutes of commercials in between TV shows? Preposterous! Clearly we'll have to change the channel to watch something else

in the meantime. It is frightening how short our attention spans have gotten and how ridiculously easy it has become for us to lose patience.

Possibly even more frightening is how many hours a day a person is glued to some piece of technology, whether it is television, the computer, a music device, or all of the above. Technology is not bad. It is most certainly not evil, not the devil, and not something to be afraid of or to shun. However, it is something that, like all things, must be taken in moderation. So many people have disciplined themselves to go on food diets and eat fats and calories in moderation. Perhaps technology needs to be treated in a similar fashion, as we allow ourselves just a certain allotted time for TV watching, internet surfing, or iPod listening. If we take a break from the virtual world, we may find ourselves pleasantly surprised at the wonder and excitement of living in the real one.

## International Community

*Continued from page 3*

dents on the Beren Campus and I have never felt shunned by any of them. (And yes, I have spent much time with many of them; not only do I frequently stay for in Shabbat, but last year I actually roomed with three of them).

Perhaps it is the Americans who are the ones that cause division. More often than not, I see the international students striking up conversation with the American students; very rarely do I see it go the other way. If anything, the Americans have a larger responsibility to embrace the international students than the international students do to embrace the Americans. Take the example of a guest coming to stay at someone's house. It is the duty of the host to make sure that the guest feels comfortable. So too, it is the moral responsibility of the Americans to make sure that the international students feel at ease at Stern.

Just think for a minute what the international students go through on a daily basis. Not only do they have to deal with a difficult language barrier, but they also have to cope with missing everything that is near and dear to them. Imagine what it must be like to be an international student—most of them only get to see their parents and siblings once throughout the school year, and they also are in culture that is different from the one that they have spent their entire lives in.

On top of all that, add the fact that many of the American students that they go to school with are so ignorant of other cultures that they not only are clueless as to what country a city as famous as Buenos Aires is in, but they do not even know that to use the word "foreigner" in casual conversation is completely inappropriate and unacceptable. And yet, my friends from other countries do not complain. Never have I seen a single one of them fall into despair because of homesickness, and I have never any of them lose their patience with my American friends. Their courage and grace is of a rare caliber and truly admirable.

The international students are unquestionably a bold group of students whose dedication and loyalty to Yeshiva University are undisputable. Who has not seen the picture of a multitude of international students flanking President Joel at the Salute to Israel Parade? The international students deserve a much more prominent place at Yeshiva University than the one they are commonly afforded and they do not need to be portrayed as being weak or ungrateful. I suggest that each American student make an effort to befriend one international student and so that they may see just how much they have in common. Maybe if we adopt this plan of action, we all will feel a greater sense of community.

## Shidduch Angst

*Continued from Page 4*

opportunities to help improve the world he or she lives in, regardless of whether one is married or not, that person is clearly a servant of God.

While *avodat Hashem* (service of God) is perhaps the noblest reason to begin dating, it is not the only one. Other women at Stern College would admit that their draw to the *chupah* comes from a secret hope, stemming from a Cinderella Complex, that a handsome prince will come and take them away from their lives of drudgery. These women are simply looking for an escape. They have been taught by films like "Pretty Woman," "Ever After," and every other romantic comedy, that marriage to the right man will bring wealth, ease, and happiness. This is not a good reason to look for a marriage partner.

If a person has problems before the wedding, the problems will remain after the wedding; a husband is not a cure-all, even if he is a "handsome prince." While it is understandable that some equate marriage with "happily ever after," life, with all its hardships, continues even once the glass slipper is returned, and it would be naive to think otherwise. The addition of another person with thoughts, feelings, and difficulties of his own only increases the difficulties in a woman's life.

The intellectually honest might acknowledge another reason for the pressure to marry. These women would acknowledge that they are healthy individuals with normal libidos. As halakhically ob-

servant Jews, they wish to marry so that they can have physical intimacy as sanctioned by the Torah. While still single, not much can be done to improve these young people's situation. Still, if they are not ready for the responsibilities of marriage, then no matter how strong their desires may be, it would be wrong to hasten that trip down the aisle. The best thing to prescribe is a cold shower.

All of the aforementioned reasons for marriage—spiritual, psychological, and hormonal—weigh upon the minds of young Stern women and create an unhealthy pressure. This pressure has the unfortunate side effect of adding stress to relationships between female friends. A competition emerges: who can get set up the most, with the best people, and ultimately get engaged first. This rivalry may not be spoken of or even conscious, but it stealthily slips into conversation and subtly sneaks into minds. Checking the website "OnlySimchas" becomes tortuous for those competitive women who watch as, one by one, more of their colleagues get engaged and leave them in the dust.

The situation as it is leaves much to be desired, and a large-scale revolution of thought and action would need to occur for it to be ameliorated. Personally, I suggest that the women of Stern College start working to alleviate stress in the dating world through smaller steps.

We all want to be caring and sensitive people. Thus, my first bit of practical advice is to show consideration for our peers, thus helping to remove some of the pressure

to get married from our campus: the door decorating must stop. How painful it must be for a woman unlucky in love or with a broken engagement to pass by the door of someone who has recently gotten engaged. While we should all feel unadulterated happiness for those who reach such a milestone, it is not tactful on the part of the *ba'alat simcha* to be showy about her engagement.

Next, I would recommend that women keep their dating lives to themselves. Friends may be curious and genuinely interested, but often they cannot help but worry that they will not be as successful in their own relationships. This is highly difficult to do, particularly for women who like to gush about the men in their lives, but talking about personal dating experiences just fuels the feelings of competition.

I would also like to present a proposal for a YU student-run discussion group. It would be like a book club, only instead of discussing books, we would address issues that confront the YU community. In this article, I have focused on women, but pressure to get married exists for the men of YC as well. I believe we should have a convention of YC men and Stern women sitting together around a table, just to talk about these problems. That would be the first step to actually coming up with a solution. Ultimately, this discussion group should deal, not just with dating, but with all of the challenges that Modern Orthodox people face. At YU we have great minds at our disposal, both those of the students

and of the faculty. We ought to take advantage of them and try to help further Orthodox Jewish society.

The final suggestion I would like to make is a change in how we as a community see both singlehood and marriage. The only 'crisis' that exists is that we call it a 'crisis' to be single. When we no longer view being unmarried as a tragedy, the "shidduch crisis" will cease to exist. After all, being single can be empowering. A single person can travel, introspect, make new friends, and participate in countless other activities more easily than his or her married counterpart. However, the Orthodox Jewish community must exert more effort to create a place for single men and women within society and not to look at them with pitying and disdainful eyes.

I am not saying that I think people should never marry. Clearly, marriage has the potential to be beautiful and, in many ways, magical, servicing both members of the union. Furthermore (and I have personally seen it happen), some young people marry and mature together, helping each other grow mentally, emotionally, and religiously. And to those at Stern and YC who are engaged or married already, of course I wish you a heartfelt "Mazel Tov" without a trace of bitterness or jealousy. In no way do I condemn you for finding your soul mate. I just beg you to be sensitive to the feelings of your peers. We must all endeavor to ease the tension and calm the pressures that could potentially depress those unlucky in love and drive others into unwise unions.

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