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Courtesy of Laura Shuman

Rabbi Yosef Blau Addresses Stern Women in New Torah Scholarship Series
See article page 7

Curriculum Review to Effect Changes in SCW General Requirements, Electives

BY ARIELLA WEINBERGER

A new framework of general education requirements has been established as part of the ongoing curriculum review at Stern College for Women (SCW), according to SCW Dean Karen Bacon.

The College Curriculum Review Committee, first formed in the fall of 2005, is comprised of staff members and faculty charged with the task of revamping the current curriculum, which has not been altered for 15 years.

In reaching its decisions, the committee reviewed students' feedback to a survey which was previously distributed and also considered faculty responses and current literature on liberal arts curricula.

At the most recent committee meeting, a new system of general requirements, courses all SCW students

must take regardless of their major, was agreed upon. The modifications are intended to enhance undergradu-



Courtesy of yu.edu

SCW Dean Karen Bacon

ates' writing and analytical skills, as well as to "infuse the curriculum

with more interdisciplinary study and global perspectives on current world problems," according to Dr. Elizabeth Lazaroff, head of the education department and member of the Curriculum Review Committee.

Some fundamental changes to the curriculum will be introduced, including the expansion of the writing requirement to two semesters, one resembling the current English composition course, and the second geared specifically to each major. For example, a biology major would take one class in the general mechanics of writing, and a second course focusing on the style of writing used by scientists.

Another planned alteration is the replacement of the A through E paragraph requirements with a different organizational system. The

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A Woman in the White House? Stern Students on Hillary

BY GAVRIELLA PIKE

The 2008 race for the White House is in full force, and there is no denying that the nation is in for a very interesting, if not completely unprecedented election. There is a serious possibility that the next president of the United States could be an African-American or a woman, either of which would be a historic first for the country.

The possibility of a female president hits especially close to home at Stern College for Women (SCW). As Hillary Rodham Clinton traditionally performs best among her own gender, it would seem to follow that her popularity at an all-women's college would be relatively high.

However, the issue is far from simple. When asked about their voting preferences in the 2008 primary season, students offered a wide range of opinions and sentiments, indicative of both their specific views on Clinton and more general ones regarding the role of women in politics.

"I don't like her," said Dana Adler (SCW '09). "I personally would love to see a woman president, but not Hillary. She is anti-Israel and just a stereotypical, dishonest politician. I think qualification is more important than gender when choosing a president," she concluded.

Malka Sasson (SCW '08) concurred: "She's not trustworthy. She would be very scary in a position of power. But it has nothing to do with her being a woman. A woman president would be wonderful. If the Democrats had a different woman running, I would have been happy to vote for her."

Some students hold a more

neutral view, such as Michal Shapiro (SCW '09). "I haven't been following the race so far, so I don't know enough about Clinton to say one way or the other," she said. "[However], I intend to vote in the fall, and I care more about who would be a better president. Other countries have already had female leaders; it's kind of surprising the U.S. hasn't done it yet. I think society is definitely ready for it at this time, but the priority is that the most qualified person gets elected. If I think Clinton is qualified, I will vote for her; if I think she is not, I will not. It has nothing to do with gender."

The professed views of Adler, a self-identified Republican, and Sas-

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GPATS, First SCW Grad Program, to Gain Master's Accreditation

BY HILLY KRIEGER

The Graduate Program in Advanced Talmudic Studies (GPATS) has initiated the process for master's accreditation, to be awarded under the jurisdiction of Stern College for Women.

Once certified, graduates of GPATS will receive a Master's Certificate in Biblical and Talmudic Interpretation, approved by

the New York State Department of Education and Yeshiva University.

"The GPATS program will be the first graduate program offered by Stern College," said Dr. Morton Lowengrub, YU provost and senior vice president for Academic Affairs. "This is very exciting."

According to Dr. Lowengrub, the proposal for accreditation took two years to be completed and approved. The Department of Higher Education

has given its assent, on the condition that GPATS meets all New York State requirements for master's programs.

GPATS Administrative Director Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel emphasized that while the "approval by the Board of Ed is very significant in itself," the program will not be able to grant master's degrees until the fall of 2009.

The current structure of GPATS includes lengthy *chevruta* (study partner) study sessions in the Eisenberg Beit Midrash, with rabbis and older women offering help and guidance to students. Currently, the GPATS program has very little classroom learning, as the Talmud has been

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Contending with Fordham, Cardozo Scholarship Attempts to Draw Top Achievers

BY AVIVA MILLER

The Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law recently announced its decision to grant full tuition scholarships, plus an annual \$10,000 stipend for living expenses, to as many as six highly motivated Yeshiva University (YU) undergraduates accepted to the school's entering class of 2008, as part of an effort to draw more qualified applicants.

"The genesis of the program is for the best and brightest of our graduates to consider Cardozo," Dean Karen Bacon articulated. "[The scholarship] provides

economic advantages as well as being a statement of how valuable the school believes these students are."

Dean Michael Hecht, pre-law advisor at Stern College for Women (SCW), explained that the purpose of the scholarship is "to attract students who might otherwise go to an Ivy League school."

The new scholarship program, which has already been awarded to one SCW graduate, is highly selective and prestigious. There is no separate application process necessary in order to qualify for the funding; each YU applicant is automatically eligible for consideration. Students

are then evaluated based on the relative strengths of their application for general admission to Cardozo.

Cardozo Dean of Admissions David G. Martinidez listed qualities that the scholarship committee is seeking in potential candidates. "In selecting recipients, our committee will look for students who have thrived academically, been engaged in their communities, and have demonstrated leadership abilities and potential for making meaningful contributions to American life

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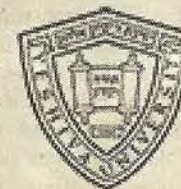
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Access Denied

The inaccessibility of various administrators based on the Wilf campus has been a difficulty with which Beren students have long had to contend. To the staff of The Observer, the communication barrier seems especially insurmountable, as contributors are often more successful at reaching contacts outside the university than interviewing those within. While authority figures may in fact be wary of reporters, it is highly doubtful that mere distrust of the press accounts for the overt disinterest displayed by many such individuals in giving even a fraction of their time to address student queries.

Undergraduates attending Yeshiva University do not pay

\$40,000 in tuition to be ignored. Presumably, administrators are encumbered with numerous emails and phone calls, and have busy schedules precluding their immediate ability to respond. There is a difference, however, in replying to a request within a few days and disregarding it altogether. Such indifference is not only unprofessional but is untoward as well, as the main constituency of a university is its students.

The women of the Beren campus do not always have the luxury of traveling uptown to meet with administrators in person. As such, it would be reasonable to expect administrators at Wilf to maximize their use of the remaining

modes of communication. Unfortunately, this has not been the case.

Yeshiva has hired a consulting psychologist to assess ways of improving the undergraduate experience on campus, particularly with regard to student dealings with various academic and administrative departments. This bid for change does not show much promise when an Observer reporter continuously corresponds for weeks seeking information, and still fails to be placed in direct contact with the individual.

The irony of this situation is too patent to be overlooked. If the university is truly interested in augmenting levels of students' satisfaction, it must make a

real and concerted effort to actually listen to them. Unanswered phone calls and emails only exacerbate undergraduates' frustration and disillusionment with a remote and bureaucratic administration.

By acting as a liaison between administrators and students, The Observer serves as a conduit for such exchanges. We only hope that our efforts at doing so will be reciprocated in turn.

Environmental Awareness

In an exciting new development on the Beren campus, Stern students are growing closer, united by their passion for two new initiatives. First, student leaders have succeeded in marketing a new program, dubbed "Recyclemania," bringing women together in their efforts to raise environmental awareness. The undergraduate women are also in the midst of planning their very own YUnite Shabbaton, enabling students to experience the warmth and spirit of Shabbat while simultaneously meeting more of their peers.

While "Recyclemania" is the brainchild of the Environmental and Energy Club, other organizations on campus have joined the endeavor, including Residence Life and the Student Life Committee. Friendly representatives cheerfully knocked on doors, handing out magnets and blue bags, and offering a concise explanation of the benefits of recycling. Floor-to-floor contests, in addition to the inter-campus competition for the most collected recycled items, has united women of all years and residences behind

the campaign's mantra, "Beren Can Collect More Filth than Wilf!"

Similarly, TAC, SCWSC, and SSSBSC have pushed for the creation of the first Beren YUnite Shabbaton, aiming to unify the campus's diverse student body. The shabbaton's location in Midtown will only further the sense of camaraderie, defying misconceptions regarding the absence of a vibrant community on Shabbat.

It is encouraging to see this coalescence occur, especially at the initiative of the students themselves, which not only strengthens campus

solidarity, but school pride as well. We hope to see more of such efforts in the future and salute those involved in bringing the current ones to fruition.

Waiting for Wireless

At a Town Hall meeting earlier in the year, SCW students rather forcefully requested that the university install wireless internet throughout the Wilf and Beren campuses. President Joel felt the measure to be unnecessary, citing examples of other colleges where wireless internet is seen as a distraction. Wireless internet, they claim, makes teaching impossible, as professors are forced to vie with Gmail or Instant Messenger for the

limited attention of their students.

This concern having been noted, wireless internet still ought at the very least, to be made available in all dormitory lounges. Current service in residence halls is shaky and unreliable, and interrupts those working many hours after the school computer labs have closed for the night. This is aside from the problem of the increasingly slow internet speed in crowded residence halls such as Brookdale, where frustrated

students wait interminably for documents to load and emails to be sent.

As for the issue of providing internet service within the classrooms, the paternalistic argument which has been advanced is not all that convincing. In the same way that students make the choice to attend class, they also decide whether to take advantage of the opportunity by actually paying attention to the lecture and instructor. If some undergraduates wish to squander away

their class time on the internet, that is their loss. But in the meantime, why must other students, who conscientiously utilize the web for academic purposes, be forced to suffer the inconvenience of a non-modernized and non-wireless campus?

All letters to the editors should be sent to scwobserver@gmail.com

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor,

I was moved and at the very same time distressed by Olivia Wiznitzer's recent article, "The Examined Life: Academic Bible at Stern," printed in the January edition of *The Observer*. I was moved that a student comfortably and boldly expressed herself for a cause for which she feels deeply. Yet, I was overwhelmingly distressed that the writer's view accords with a collegiate feeling of entitlement rather than a synthesis of religious conviction and intellectual honesty that our Yeshiva expects of all its talmidim.

At the outset, the writer's theory for why biblical criticism is not offered at YU is incorrect. It should be made clear that the architects of the Yeshiva undergraduate curriculums were not "worried that people would actually find Islam and Christianity more compelling than Judaism" just like the Mishneh's apprehension toward *sifrei hitzonim* was not to protect laypeople from the so-called truths of other faiths. Yeshiva's first president, Dr. Bernard Revel hired Dr. Moshe Seidel, as the history books record, to teach Yeshiva's students Chumash at a high level befitting a ben torah. For these courses, whatever knowledge students required of higher criticism was addressed "minimally" ("The Men And Women of Yeshiva," page 48). Were the case otherwise, such defense mechanisms would be emblematic of a frail religion; not one that has a longer and more scholarly tradition than any other.

In fact, religious Judaism's longstanding resistance toward interfaith studies and non-Torah readings of Torah centers on a fear of living a moment of our existence devoid of *Kedushat Yisrael*. "To remove the Bible, for a moment, from its pivotal role within Judaism and Jewish society," as Wiznitzer advocates, is not just definably *bittul Torah*, it's *bittul z'man*, something considered utmost taboo at centers of Jewish learning over the ages. Owing to this, when my peers and I, who feel profoundly about our faith, consider those subjects we are entitled to study in our short undergraduate education, we think of those topics which draw us closer to God, not ones that ask us to "analyze the Bible as though it were the work of a human being." We certainly do not ask to pretend God does not exist in a classroom for three hours a week just because we feel entitled to do so.

Moreover, to use Rabbi Mordechai Breuer's *Shitat Habehinot* approach to advocate this method is dishonest and unfair to the recently deceased scholar. First, his essays were meant to combat the "compelling arguments of biblical research" not to be another strand of comparative study of the Bible. And second, Rabbi Breuer's technique does not appear, at least to my mind, as a new-wave approach to the study of Bible. His textual study of Tanakh rings of highlights from Rabbi Akiva Eger's *Gilyaon HaShas*. Further, his conception of the "perspectives of God" serves as a valuable segment in a long conversation that includes Sadya Gaon, Rambam and Rabbi Breuer's ancestor, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch.

In addition, though I cannot

speak for the situation at Stern College, I do feel equipped to discuss students' attitudes for their Bible courses taught at Yeshiva College. Although it is an issue that a few YC faculty members assign essays that deal with biblical criticism, the hype is, on the whole, overrated. Using archeological evidence, as Rabbi Hershel Schachter has recently said in *The Commentator's Kol Hamevaser* magazine, or ugaritic poetry to throw light onto ambiguous *pasukim* are certainly much different than utilizing Abaranel or Malbim's commentaries, but these techniques are not a departure from *Avodat Hashem*. Indeed, academicians' claim that Sumerian literature helps aid our understanding of King David's writings and that knowledge of the layout of Palestine is essential to full cognition of the Canaanite Wars at the end of *Sefer Yehoshua* are well taken.

By contrast, Wiznitzer's claim that "there is value in understanding the work of a contemporary scholar who is not Orthodox" is not a simple matter. It is entirely logical from a secular perspective to state that "someone's religiosity," such as Berkeley's renowned biblical scholar Robert Alter "does not reflect his or her proficiency within a given field." Yet, while he is a brilliant scholar, there is a key philosophic, and indeed, halakhic, difference between him and Rashbam and Ibn Ezra's non-Talmudic Torah commentary.

Thus, I can only assume that the reason Deans Karen Bacon and David Srolovitz only consider Orthodox Jews to teach their students Bible is in light of Rambam's ruling (*Hilchot Yesodei ha-Torah* 6:8), where he states that while it is forbidden to burn or destroy Scripture or its commentaries, one is required to burn Torah scrolls and commentaries written by an apikores because "he considers it like all other matters" (See also *Igerot Moshe: Ohr ha-Hayyim* 2:51). We are told to proactively destroy such scholarship, not simply remain idle and ambivalent toward it.

More to the point, while Rashbam's Torah commentary sometimes contradicts aggadic adage in lieu of the Tosafist's pursuit of *peshat*, his religiosity, more than his scholarship itself, keeps his writings within the realm of acceptability. By contrast, the lack of religious conviction among scholars like Alter, excludes them from Orthodoxy's *Wissenschaft*. In a word, a yeshiva-college would be forced to offer his courses under the guise of the Literature department, making them largely unusable as *limud ha-Torah* and to a Jewish Studies student seeking credit toward her major.

Finally, I would like to close with a historical case that, to a large degree, resembles the unabashed request in Wiznitzer's article. In lamenting the supposed paucity of Jewish culture at the beginning of the twentieth century, Ahad Ha-am turned to the Torah for comfort. Thus he declared that our Torah should be like Shakespeare and Locke for the English and Voltaire and Rousseau for the French. "So long as the Bible is extant," he stated further, "the creative power of the Jewish mind will remain undeniable." The Torah would be for Ahad

Ha-am's Cultural Zionism the greatest and most ancient literature to show off to compare with the other nations and their respective intellectualisms.

Although the writings of Ahad Ha-am have inked him into history books, his positions more or less floundered thanks in no small part to his wayward student and eventual rival, Yosef Hayyim Brenner. The latter agreed with his master that Torah should be viewed as vaunted, but unsacred, literature. Eventually, however, hollowed of religious significance and thus bereft of any Jewishness, Brenner declared he had "long since broken away from the hypnosis of the twenty-four books of the Bible."

Albeit there are other philosophical issues interwoven into their ideologies, Ahad Ha-am, an irreligious Jew born to very religious parents, and Brenner, an opponent of all things Orthodox, are certainly not figures we ought to emulate when shaping a Yeshiva undergraduate curriculum.

Zev Eleff (YC '09)
Editor-in-Chief
YU Commentator

To the Editor,

In last month's *Observer*, an article entitled "Shidduch Angst: Are We Selling Our Sanity for a Wedding Band?" put forth the idea that the women of Stern College are putting too much pressure on themselves to find a good match and get married. I'd like to suggest a different perspective. I propose that this pressure is warranted, and further, that in many cases it is not enough.

It is the feeling of most girls in our society that logically, marriage is the next step after college. We ought to be preparing for it much in the same way we are preparing for a career. We study and work hard to get good grades to find good jobs; why would we not put the same concentration into finding a good husband? Making dating a key focal point of our lives at this point is just as natural as doing homework and studying for exams. Therefore, being "obsessed" with dating is not any more worthy of concern than is being "obsessed" with grades.

It has been argued that college is a time to focus on introspection, not marriage. I disagree. Introspection is something that should be done constantly, at all points in our lives. It does not start or end with college. In fact, it should have started a long time ago and be in a continual state of progression. Granted, one might have limited time for introspection after marriage, but certainly no less than one has during college. With homework, papers, exams, friends, and events, there is little time for much else. Furthermore, when one puts off dating on the grounds that one has some soul-searching to do, one enters the dangerous territory of embarking on a task that has no time frame. It's easy to say, "I'll date just after I figure such-and-such out about myself." But is this really a feasible goal? Who knows when you'll figure yourself out, assuming, of course, that you ever will? And, more importantly, will you actually take the necessary steps

to discovering the answers to your complex personal questions, if such steps exist? It is not realistic to put off dating in hopes of someday waking up and suddenly resolving all of one's personal issues. In fact, I'd say it's almost entirely implausible for a human being to discover, at some point down the line, that he or she has no more issues to resolve. In *Pirkei Avot* 1:14, Rabbi Hillel asks "If not now, when?"

Actually, dating is great for introspection. Very often, we don't know what we want or don't want until it's offered to us. Dating can help us figure out what we value in life and what our priorities are. It can also help us determine which personality traits we would and would not like to see in ourselves, and which are compatible, preferred, or undesirable in a potential mate. In this way, dating is a learning experience. I have never been on a date I've regretted. I've been on bad dates, but I have never encountered a dating experience from which I could not learn something about myself or others.

There is another problem with pushing off dating. Young women believe that they can put it off indefinitely and simply enter the dating world at any given point. While this may be true in other circles, it is sadly not the case in ours. For Jewish women, the pool is considerably smaller as we age. If this sounds harsh, consider this: a male Jew can date anyone below his age in addition to those his age or slightly above it. Thus, when he is 27, he can date a 20 year-old just as soon as another 27 year-old. A woman does not have such leeway. When she is 27, it is not generally acceptable for her to date a 20 year-old (it does happen, sometimes with successful results, but it is rare). Because older men can choose from across a greater range than can women, fewer of them are available to date older women. This is one reason why it is harder for older women to come across a suitable match. I am not suggesting that it is impossible—on the contrary, it is a frequent occurrence—but it is certainly much harder.

Many women who eschew dating now and regard any sentiments otherwise as undue "pressure" are not doing so because they are unready, but because they are afraid. When they say, "Stop pressuring me!" they are actually saying, "I'm too scared to start dating, so it makes me more afraid when you talk about it." This fear is not baseless. Dating is scary. It lets loose thousands of variables and even more insecurities. These are all legitimate concerns. But, like a job interview, it must be done, and the sooner one breaks past the first dating experience, the easier it will get.

Another issue is that numerous girls disdain set-ups, yet make no move toward finding someone on their own. Ideally (if one is not dating through set-ups exclusively), we should all be able to meet our soul-mates just like that, without interference from any third-party. But this is not something we can rely upon, especially if the girl in question has a hard time putting herself out there. If a girl who eschews set-ups stays at home, does not attend social events, or, if she does, remains

a shy wallflower, how can she expect to meet that certain someone?

It can be argued that marriage has been viewed as the ideal female role for serving God, and yet single women certainly lead fulfilling lives. Single women can and do have the ability to connect to God. However, there is no doubt that this is not the ideal way to live. In all likelihood, you will never encounter an older Jewish unmarried woman who maintains the opinion that marriage is not of so much importance to her because she can lead a perfectly fulfilling life through singlehood. While being able to serve God as a single woman is not only feasible, but standard, it is not an ideal situation, and moreover, it does not reduce the importance of marriage.

Marriage is often an idealized concept among women our age. It is viewed as a cure-all, a romanticized fantasy that can deliver the "happily ever after" for which we've all been looking. This is undoubtedly false. Marriage will not solve all problems and it is not an end to hardship. Nevertheless, while marital bliss is not a given, it is not unobtainable. If we view marriage for what it is, something to work on and develop, it can be a very rewarding experience.

In addition, the pressure to date and find a husband is often falsely viewed as a competition. Dating is not a race to the chuppah. On the contrary, it is a goal that can bring one closer to one's friends. Sharing dating experiences, advice, and insight allows us to create a common bond with one another. While it is possible that discussing relationships can provoke jealousy, if used with good judgment, it can be enormously beneficial, if not crucial, to those in the dating world. By viewing dating as a competition, we are only hurting ourselves.

It was suggested in last month's article that we abolish the door-decorating tradition so as to be sensitive toward the feelings of those frustrated with dating. While I understand the very noble reasoning behind this proposal, I disagree. We should not rely on the diminution of another's happiness in order to augment our own. We must train ourselves to be happy in light of the success of others, not despite it. And where would it end? Should we refrain from making engagement parties and showers to avoid promoting jealousy? These events were created not to showcase one's happiness in the face of those who have not achieved similar bliss, but so that we could share in the *simcha* of others and celebrate their joy.

I am not suggesting that we all need to obsess about marriage and dating. It's futile and counterproductive to be overly worried and constantly miserable. However, it's not in our best interest to belittle dating, to put it off, or to say that marriage isn't all that important. It is important, and we should all be working toward it to the best of our ability. To say it shouldn't be a significant part of our lives is to fool ourselves, and if a little bit of pressure is what it takes to get people to stop making excuses and start acting, then so be it.

Rena Katz
SCW '09

The Israel Experience: Removing the Rose-Colored Glasses

BY ADINA SCHWARTZ

The year of pre-college study in Israel is grossly overrated. While an extended period of time abroad may certainly enrich the life of the traveler, it is just one year out of what will hopefully be 120. And though it may be a year of intense religious study and personal self-actualization, one can only hope that it will not be the only year when that occurs.

People do not convey an understanding of the comparative insignificance of the year when they describe their own experiences in Israel. Consequently, future students have impractical expectations and a narrow perspective with which to view the year.

Not everyone finds his or her year in Israel to be as fulfilling as its reputation depicts it to be. For some, complete absorption in a yeshiva setting may be too intensive because he or she relates to Judaism in a more mundane and practical way. For example, there are men who would be better off in a yeshiva where they participate in more chesed projects and formally tour the land of Israel instead of learning Talmud to the exclusion of all else. Other young people feel shocked and disappoint-

ed when they are unable to reach any sort of religious clarity or sense of closeness with God in the course of just a year. I personally felt like a failure after my year in Israel because it was not the most enlightening and inspiring experience of my life, as others told me it would be. Only later did I realize that one should not reach his or her religious peak at eighteen; the year in Israel is meant to be a starting place for religious discovery—and not an ending.

The problem of viewing the year in Israel as the pinnacle of Torah observance stems not only from former students reporting back to friends and neighbors, but also from within the yeshivas and seminaries themselves. Some schools transmit to their students the false message that the year of complete immersion in Torah learning is the ultimate way of serving God. First of all, constant study in the beit midrash is obviously not for everyone. But secondly, that message seems awfully similar to the position of Ultra-Orthodox Jewish sects, as opposed to the “Torah U’Madda L’Chatchila” (Torah u’Madda as an ideal) approach championed by Modern Orthodoxy. Administrators of schools in Israel know that many of their students

come from and will return to Modern Orthodox communities in the United States. They also know that many will eventually attend Yeshiva University. Thus, the rabbis and teachers should be intellectually honest and realistic when discussing Jewish philosophy and the future of their students. In both method and message, yeshivot build their students up for a letdown upon their return to the U.S., which is neither necessary nor productive.

Another reason why people often see the year in Israel as the height of spirituality may stem from the problems of Jewish education in American religious day schools. Frequently, the year in Israel is the initial exposure to stimulating Judaic classes for young men and women. For the first time, Jewish education is treated seriously and given the same weight, if not even more, than secular subjects. With its challenging and rigorous curriculum, the yeshiva experience often pleasantly surprises people who have never dealt with religious material so intensely. This is an embarrassment to Jewish day schools. We are failing our young people if they only begin to feel Jewish during their year in Israel. Judaic courses need to be presented as vital and motivating to high school

and even grade school students.

The year in Israel is also shaped by the immaturity of the participants. Young men and women leave their families and comforts behind in a huge step towards independence that they are generally not ready to take. Because the flight from the nest is not gradual, many students end up calling their parents daily, asking for advice. This stunts the students’ development of self-sufficiency.

Additionally, the errors in evaluating the year in Israel come from 17 year-olds’ lacking the necessary sophistication to understand how complex forming a Jewish identity is. The young and impressionable are more likely to think of the purpose of the year in Israel in vague, meaningless terms like “religious growth.” Subsequently, these students also oversimplify religious issues in black and white terms. Young would-be mathematicians who are amateurs in the field of religious study invent equations like, “more-restrictions-equal-better-observance-of-Judaism.” Terms like “hashkafa” (religious outlook) are thrown around by those who think that a year in Israel alone is enough time to actually develop them. It would be time better spent if the semesters in the Holy Land

came after or during the college experience. This would maximize the impact of the experience, but minimize the brainwashing that is inevitable to some extent when dealing with naïve and immature students.

As it is, the year in Israel serves an undeniably important role in young, Orthodox Jews’ progression into adulthood. It is a time to focus on self-reflection, Judaic academics, and spiritual pursuits (like prayer and chesed). However, improvement to the system should be made. The year in Israel ought to be a program meant for older participants who can appreciate and understand the experience better than straight-out-of-high school students. The approach to the year in Israel must also change. It must be understood that the experience in Israel depends on the individual; each school and each student is different. Also, the year cannot be looked at as the best or only year of proper Jewish observance. Once Jewish day school education advances and attitudes become more sensible, the Modern Orthodox view of the year in Israel will be healthier and more levelheaded. Certainly, a revolution in the way of thinking about study in Israel will allow all students to feel positively about their experiences and their futures.

Doubt: The Closet Career Killer

BY PEREL SKIER

There’s a monster in my closet. Is there one in yours?

Beg pardon. I know you’re doing all the right things to give yourself the upper hand. You listened keenly to the murmurings of your

major-mates and the casual asides of your professors in the classroom. You researched obsessively all summer online. You took the tests, you applied to the schools, the labs, the firms. You’ve got your first internship all lined up, and it’s decent, exactly the kind of field experience which

you have learned students of your major are expected to garner; many of your classmates have nearly identical jobs. You’re taking all the right courses. You’ve got resumé padding by the fistful. You are prepared. You are polished. Future-ward ho!

Except...wait. There’s that creeping shadow. Something tastes like bad tuna. Maybe it was one of those classes you took.

You know. Some were general necessities, others specific to your major—well, actually, it was the courses under your major umbrella that frightened you the most. The handful that were desperately uninteresting; they felt drawn-out and tedious, and no matter how much you tried to convince yourself you wanted and needed to know what the textbook and professor simultaneously attempted to pound into you, you found yourself simply unengaged. Every paper/project/assignment for those courses was a curse, every final a nightmare. You walked out of the classroom with your backpack slumping off of one shoulder and a sense of defeat gnawing nervously at your stomach. Lurking questions pounced on you as you grappled with the coursework: Is this what you want to do for the rest of your life? Really? What made you think you had the narrowest wedge of aptitude for a profession involving these skills? When did you ever feel like rolling out of bed at a quarter to six in the morning to deal with this every day?

Or maybe you genuinely enjoyed most of your studies. They reaffirmed the original charm of your

field, its glamour or meaningfulness, and you came out of them feeling like a wonderful person, ready to do wonderful things. No, maybe it was that first internship, the research position, the entry-level job that stumped you.

Oh, who doesn’t love those uneven, unsteady first-time-in-the-field experiences. You show up at 9 a.m. on the dot that first day, awash in excitement and self-importance. This is it. After years and years of textbooks and training, you’re finally going to utilize all your fizzy potential to make an impact, a change. You’re working with (you say ‘with’, not ‘for’) people with awe-inspiring capabilities, and at times it’s thrilling to see the pros in action. But you...um...heh. You, actually, are sorting the office’s index cards from the late 40s; staring at the same lab specimen for four hours waiting to squeeze a single drop of solution on top of it; entering endless columns of numbers into spreadsheets all day, every day, hoping for the occasional excitement of a printer jam. Is this your dream? Is this what hundreds of thousands of dollars in education secures? Will you one day become the people you just started working for? Because suddenly, you aren’t sure if that’s what you want to be.

And you wonder. Are you really doing the right thing? Is this how the world really, truly works?

College student, meet the monster in your closet. His name is Career Anxiety. You can call him Doubt for short.

Your parents and well-meaning older friends will try to rid you of said monster by murmuring sooth-

ing sympathies, generally things you already know, such as the fact that everyone has to start from the bottom and work their way up, nobody expects you to be perfect the first day, even big machers (such as themselves, maybe) started small, etc. They will expect and anticipate your uncertainty like so much growing pain. To the extent that it’s a necessary aspect of the transition from youth to healthy, mature adulthood, it is a growing pain. But Doubt can be cancerous and crippling if its origins are never legitimately addressed, and so I invite you to clean out your closet with me.

If you’re feeling nauseous about your career choice, you need to figure out what your monster looks like, and why. Depending on your preference, Doubt can sock you a couple of ways.

For instance, let’s say you have a talent. You’ve always had a talent, and it was the pride and joy of your grade-school years. Your teachers fawned over you and wrote encouraging, if in retrospect vague, endorsements on your report card. You were a terrific artist, an immaculate mathematician, a brilliant leader, and when you grew up the world wasn’t going to know what hit it. So you didn’t fall prey to those shiftless “firefighter today, doctor tomorrow” fads that ruled the jungle gym—you were always the Artist, the Science Whiz, the Class Arbitrator. Everyone who ought to know anything pronounced you destined for greatness. Who were you to say otherwise?

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Torah Learning for Women - A Lifestyle or a Hoax?

BY JAIMIE FOGEL

Koveah itim laTorah.

This phrase, which literally means "establishing fixed times for Torah," is the way many Jews loosely refer to the concept of setting aside time in one's day for Torah study. Up until the last forty years or so, this phrase mainly found its home in the mouths of Orthodox men, men who set Torah learning as a life-long goal and as a strong presence in their daily lives.

Over the past few decades, however, the phrase has found another home in the mouths of a different segment of the population. It fills the hallways of learning institutions in Jerusalem and in the *batei midrash* of colleges like Columbia, Penn and Stern College for Women. This phrase, which for centuries had been reserved as a reference to men's Torah study, is now casually mentioned in conversation between women discussing their shared struggle to set aside time to learn during a busy day.

Many young women are being trained not to let a day pass without engaging in some form of Torah study. They are taught to feel guilty

and irresponsible if, invested with this capability, they fail to connect to God through formal study. One of the main messages I internalized from my year of study in Israel was this exact notion—that no matter what you do, make sure to learn something everyday to keep you connected. And many women, heeding this urgent call of rabbis, teachers, and role models, have come to integrate formal Torah study into their daily routine. It empowers them. It makes them feel connected. It is a central source of religious and spiritual growth and many women find it difficult to imagine life without it.

This message is great for 18 year-olds, college students, and single women. In fact, I think this concept of *koveah itim* plays a dominant role in the Jewish woman's religious future. The message urges that women demand excellence, not only in their science, literature, and history classes, but also in their Judaic courses. It is this message that permeates the lives of many women and is what helped expedite the construction of a new *beit midrash* on the seventh floor of the 245 Lexington building.

And it is in the wide-reaching

success of this message that many women have found themselves trapped. What happens when they are no longer in seminary, college or living as single women? What happens when a woman suddenly finds herself working full-time and the mother of four? While those are *brachot* (blessings), they are *brachot* that fill each moment of a woman's day, leaving her very little time for anything else, including her beloved Torah learning.

Women are being trained to connect to God in a way that they will not be able to do in their adult lives and it begs the question: are they setting themselves up for failure and disappointment? These women won't be failing in any Torah-mandated obligation, but will they be failing in their personal expectations, in what they have come to call their *avodat Hashem* (service of God)?

There was once a certain logic to the way women were educated. It was understood that a woman's main role was to be in the home and constantly busy with her familial duties. Now, however, contemporary teachers preach that women can be mothers, working women, and still find time to learn.

But is this true? Perhaps women will be able to spend five minutes a day learning some *parsha* (weekly portion), *halakha* or maybe set aside an hour a week to go to a *shiur*. But what becomes of the hours spent in the *beit midrash*? Obviously, a woman's priority is family, but that may implicitly mean that her relationship to God is doomed for a downward spiral. Women are not being trained to feel connected to God through diaper changes, driving carpool, and 3 a.m. baby feedings. I often worry that I will find my adult life more of a burden than a blessing, and then I begin to question—are we just fooling ourselves? Are women really meant to assert their place in the study hall if they won't be able to remain there?

While I believe that a passion for *limud Torah* (Torah learning) is a unique gift that women have been given in the past few decades, I wonder whether it will serve them well in the future. One day soon, many a woman will have to give up her *minyangoing* and learning hours so that her husband can have his. She will have to trade in her *avodat Hashem* for a new, upgraded model; one that finds God in bottle formula, soccer games, and parent-teacher conferences and not only in the pages of a *gemara* or *Tanakh*. The modern woman is being offered an invaluable tool that fuels her present spiritual life. But it is this skill and passion that may one day be transformed into a challenge to her ultimate service of God.

Technology: The Sabbath's the Limit

BY DANA HOROWITZ

A new cell phone approved by Israeli Rabbinical authorities has been taking the Ultra-Orthodox community in Israel by storm. It has been stripped of all extraneous features, including text messaging, internet connectivity, and the ability to take pictures and videos. Users only have to pay two cents a minute but are penalized with a gargantuan \$2.44 per minute penalty if used on the Sabbath. A database lists over 10,000 numbers deemed inappropriate, which are blocked, and the list is guaranteed to remain current. While all of this commitment to Judaism is admirable, it leads to our treading in dangerous waters.

The steps taken by this insular community to limit access to a modern device immediately reminded me of the Internet ban in Lakewood, New Jersey, a fervently Ultra-Orthodox community, where any use of the Internet is prohibited, with the exception of those adults who, with rabbinic permission, have access for the limited purpose of carrying out their business. Children will not be accepted into some of the yeshiva day schools if Internet availability is discovered in their homes.

While I respect this ardent devotion to what one believes is religiously and spiritually sound, I am uncomfortable with the way growing technology has caused the Ultra-Orthodox to isolate themselves even further from the general society, in addition to the message this broadcasts about their level of self-restraint. I would find the imposition of the above edicts somewhat self-deprecating and paternalistic. Would it not be more impressive to harness new technologies to improve one's lifestyle, and at the same time exert one's inner strength to resist misusing technology for a profane purpose?

Despite these reservations, I do believe the "kosher phone" is a step in the right direction; while it may not be the ultimate way to utilize technology, at least the technology is still being used, albeit regulated. The Internet ban, on the other hand, prevents technology from being used altogether. Instead, the Internet ought to be regulated like the "kosher phone," used solely for practical and useful pur-

poses while guarded by site-blockers.

To be sure, there are negative messages regarding and perpetuated by American technology that the Ultra-Orthodox would understandably wish to censor. America's society of consumerism and instant-gratification has gone too far. How often have I witnessed a party of dinner guests all on their cell phones, ignoring one another, or children fixated in front of the television for endless hours without a thought as to how their time could be spent more productively? But why must we ignore the overwhelming potential for technology to contribute to one's Torah study? The Lakewood Internet ban, for example, also deprives the community of endless Judaic websites, providing extensive Biblical resources. It prevents the community from accessing Torah-proper technological innovations like the "Shas Pod," which neither restricts nor limits the download of any songs, but comes with all of *shas* (Talmud) downloaded onto it.

Jewish law does not prescribe asceticism, but rather regulation and moderation. Alcohol in Jewish law is a quintessential example of this value of moderation. While wine can be abused to the point of inebriation and as a catalyst for profane activity, it may also be used to sanctify the Sabbath and other holidays through rituals that comprise an integral part of our religious culture.

In a society where guilty pleasures lurk at every corner, the ability to use technology along with self-control should be regarded as a higher level of religious observance than the use of limited technology. Not only do extreme limitations, such as the Internet ban, send a negative message about our ability to control our temptations, they also serve to further exacerbate the schisms within the Jewish community, and they put the Ultra-Orthodox community in a handicapped position in society. It must be said that "kosher phones" and other attempts to limit technology without completely removing it are a step closer to the right direction than are outright bans on technology. We should be able to welcome the advances of technology and succeed in avoiding all its potential spiritual pitfalls.

Career Anxieties

Continued from page 4

Or ask for a little more detail. Suddenly you find yourself on the threshold of college graduation and the subsequent, real-world Afterlife, and you experience a clutch of panic. How do you become a great artist anyway? That's what the plan was all along—but you're not a great artist, you're, cough, Paint-Shopping images for a kitchen appliance brochure. You were going to be this great scientist, but...well...you got this research job studying plants. It sort of feels like it's over. You don't really know what you're going to do with all your talent.

Where did you go wrong? Your sense of identity is shot. Blame the C.A.

Not to say someone whose profession wasn't forecast in their high school yearbook is immune to such fears, by the way. Doubt can ruthlessly undermine the stability of a loose thinker. Suppose you were one of those kids who drifted through school because it was the thing to do, middling around in various subjects, making friends, having a good time, etc. You did all right in most things, but there was always a frustrating, empty space where your career aspirations might have shone. You never knew what you wanted to

be. One day you read this newspaper clipping, which made this career sound kind of cool...and the next day you've made friends with this girl, who's really excited about her major, and maybe that's better than yours... It's not that you have no talent or expertise of your own; it's just that you can't put your finger on it, you don't know how to match the things you enjoy and enthuse over to an actual, wage-paying profession. You become the chronic Major Changer,

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NEWS

Meeting with Success, Tzelem Continues Conversation on Intimacy

BY YAEL WOLYNETZ

Following the success of its conferences for *kallah* (bride) teachers held in both 2005 and 2007, Tzelem, an initiative of the Center for the Jewish Future (CJF) committed to addressing issues of sexuality and intimacy in the Orthodox community, is launching its first *yom iyun* to train rabbis and teachers in the effective instruction of prospective husbands. The conference, entitled "The Role of the Chatan Teacher," is scheduled for March 4.

Founded by Dr. Koby Frances and Dr. Jennie Rosenfeld, Tzelem aims to facilitate healthier relationships through education. "There is a strong need in the Orthodox community for more education on issues of intimacy and sexuality in all ages and stages of life," explained Dr. Jennie Rosenfeld, director and organizer of Tzelem. "Various problems have emerged that could have been prevented by education: unconsummated marriages and sexual dysfunctions, as well as people who are not able to get married due to psychological barriers."

While Rosenfeld acknowledged that a lack of education is not



Courtesy of Jennie Rosenfeld

Women Attend Tzelem's Kallah Training Seminar

always the reason for such problems, she asserted that it plays an important role in a number of cases.

In order to tackle these issues, Tzelem has developed a three-fold approach. First is the design of a curriculum, to be implemented in yeshiva day schools, which will educate students in the areas of in-

terpersonal relationships, sexuality, and intimacy, and the Jewish values that inform those areas. Second, Tzelem administers *kallah* teacher training, which includes an annual conference with physicians, gynecologists, psychologists, and sexual health professionals, who focus on how to teach aspects of sexuality

and intimacy to future brides. Finally, Tzelem has more recently begun its conferences for *chatan* (groom) teachers dealing with similar issues.

"People stand on the brink of marriage not prepared," Rosenfeld emphasized. "Through training teachers, we are able to reach a larger number of individuals because most future brides and grooms, respectively, take classes as preparation."

Rosenfeld and conference co-chairs Abby Lerner and Peshi Neuberger were pleased with the positive feedback from the *kallah* teacher training sessions. The Tzelem director commented on the diversity of participants, comprised of women from the Modern Orthodox, Chasidic, and Sephardic communities. "The topics of intimacy and sexuality are human issues that transcend boundaries that would otherwise divide us," she pointed out.

Rosenfeld is optimistic about the turnout for the upcoming conference, noting that last year's Tzelem's conference on "The Rabbi's Role in Talking about Intimacy" drew more than a hundred attendees, even though it was held in the middle of a snowstorm.

"Shul rabbis are often the first stop for a couple when addressing problems of intimacy in their marriage, and it is important that they know how to properly deal with these issues," Rosenfeld added.

The upcoming conference, a joint venture between Tzelem, the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), RIETS Alumni, and the Orthodox Union (OU), is open to all rabbis and *chatan* teachers. Featured panelists include both rabbis and mental health professionals, who will discuss various aspects of marital intimacy from both a halakic and clinical perspective. Among the speakers are Rabbi Yosef Blau, *meshgiach ruchani* (spiritual advisor) of RIETS, Dr. Scott Chudnoff, director of clinical research for the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Montefiore Medical Center and instructor and assistant professor at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine (AECOM), Rebbetzin Abby Lerner, *kallah* teacher, Rabbi Yaacov Neuberger, Rosh Yeshiva at RIETS and *chatan* teacher, Isaac Schechter, Psy.D., director of the Center for Applied Psychology at Bikur Cholim, and Dr. Harvey Chaim Kranzler, professor of psychiatry and director of the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at AECOM.

"Men and women have different experiences and needs, and the *chatan* teachers need to be given the tools to better educate men," Rosenfeld said, explaining the purpose of the upcoming *yom iyun*. "Men too need to understand the struggles and anxieties they may face."

In addition to the various conferences, Tzelem also runs smaller events, including round-table discussions with mental health professionals who work specifically in the Orthodox community, as well as *shuirim* for young married couples dealing with issues of intimacy.

While Tzelem is a project of the CJF, it caters to the broader Orthodox community and transcends intra-communal boundaries. In this sense, Tzelem epitomizes the goals of the CJF, which strives to strengthen communities through leadership training.

"Through the incubation of a new curriculum on self-esteem and issues of sexuality, we provide a service to Jewish schools around the country," enthused Rabbi Kenneth Brander, dean of the CJF. "As the mission of CJF is to convene the vast intellectual resources of Yeshiva University to help enrich and inspire the contemporary Jewish community, Tzelem, a special project of CJF, celebrates our mission statement."

"Through programs such as teaching rabbis/rebbetzins—*kallah*/*chatan* teachers—it supports and empowers community leaders, giving them additional knowledge to interact effectively with their community," he continued.

Stern Recruits New Faculty for Academic Departments

BY YAEL WOLYNETZ

Several academic departments at Stern College for Women (SCW) are actively recruiting new faculty, as teaching positions have opened due to professor retirement and the expansion of course offerings and majors.

"Individual departments have been looking at their offerings to strengthen courses and provide enhanced opportunities for students," commented SCW Dean Karen Bacon. She cited the addition of a new major in biochemistry and a minor in education as changes implemented in response to student demand.

"In general, Stern College is on the move, expanding and enhancing," she said.

Economics is one of the departments looking to expand. With only one full-time professor, one assistant professor, and three adjunct professors, "the department is in desperate need of more faculty," explained Professor Dennis Hoover, chair of economics at SCW. "We are in the process of searching for an assistant professor in the tenure track."

Hoover acknowledged the challenge of providing enough classes during the desired timeslots with such a limited number of faculty members.

Rachel Cohen (SCW '08), an economics major, expressed her frustration with the department. "Since there are so few faculty members, the advanced electives are offered in three semester cycles, which means

that if you have a conflict and cannot take the class when it is offered, you might not have another opportunity to take it," Cohen explained. "If the school had more faculty, they would be able to offer a wider variety of classes focused within the different fields of economics. This semester, there are only four advanced economic courses offered."

Despite the small size of the department, Hoover, who has been teaching at SCW for the past 10 years, is pleased with the rising number of students majoring in economics. "When I first arrived as an adjunct in 1998, there were only three majors; now there are 25," he observed.

According to Hoover, the increase in economics majors at SCW is reflective of a national trend. "Because of the important economic issues that emerge on a daily basis, people want to have an understanding of economics," he explained. "Also, businesses like economics majors because they are trained to think in a specific way, so students think that they will be able to get a job if they major in economics."

The history department at SCW is also looking to hire two more full-time faculty members, in addition to the six full-time professors currently employed. According to Professor Hadassah Kosak, "both positions, as all others in the history department, will be shared between Stern and Yeshiva College."

"Considering that the com-

bined Stern and YC student population is over 2200, such hires will bring SCW closer to comparable academic institutions such as Oberlin College—with 2200 students and thirteen full-time faculty, or Williams College—with 2000 students and 20 full-time faculty," she said.

One of the new appointments will be a full-time professor in American history to replace Professor Ellen Schrecker, who plans to retire, but will continue teaching part-time for the next few years.

"The advantage of hiring a full-time person with a long-term commitment is obvious in light of the growing trend among students to undertake the writing of senior projects," Kosak added.

Specifically, the history department is looking to expand its course offerings in the non-Western field, in compliance with the recommendations of an external review committee that assessed the department several years ago. "It becomes clear as the university revises its undergraduate curricula that there will be a growing emphasis on East Asia, South Asia, Africa, or Latin America, as well as world history," Kosak noted.

Professor Joshua Zimmerman, chair of the history department, elaborated on Kosak's observations. "When you look at the courses we offer, we cover the origins of most of the demographics of the student body, including North America, Europe, and the Middle East," he said. "Clearly,

by virtue of demographics, there are some areas that are not represented."

Zimmerman is interested in student feedback regarding the decision. He plans to circulate a survey among history majors, soliciting their preferences with regard to geography. The survey reads: "If there were to be another full-time historian at YU, what continent would you prefer this person to have a specialty in: Africa, Latin America, or Asia?"

Kosak noted the consistently small amount of history majors. "We typically have had twelve to fifteen majors per year," she said. "[However], my colleagues and I have been impressed in recent years by our students—by their commitment, intellectual engagement, and the quality of their work."

History major Hadassa Rubinstein (SCW '08) is disappointed with one aspect of SCW's history department. "I'm personally very interested in cultural history and I have had very few opportunities to take classes in this genre," she remarked. "If even one is available a semester I consider myself lucky. The department could definitely benefit from more professors and should take its place as a dynamic and vibrant discipline at SCW."

Of all the academic departments, SCW's English department is busiest in its search for new faculty members. The four open positions are

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University Hires First Female HR Director

BY MICHAL GOLAN

Yeshiva University has hired its first female Human Resources (HR) director, naming Yvonne Ramirez as Chief of Human Resources Officer. Her appointment follows the retirement and 20 year tenure of Phil Ressler.

The new position of Chief of Human Resources Officer will encompass a greater deal of responsibility than the former post of HR director. As such, Ramirez will have broader jurisdiction than her predecessors, having more involvement with strategic planning of HR as well as leadership guidance. Additionally, she will be involved in selecting and implementing Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) technology and business solutions for YU.

As the first female director of HR, Ramirez is excited to begin her career at Yeshiva. Her initial goals include "providing the HR department with the support they require to become a model for an excellent service organization." She also hopes to "forge strong partnerships with YU constituents, faculty, and staff members "to ask them how HR can help to meet their workplace needs."

Both Hillel Davis, vice president of University Life, and Jed Shivers, associate dean for Finance and Administration at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine (AECOM), were instrumental in hiring Ramirez. Other members of the search committee included leaders of the YU community, both academic and administrative.

Ramirez was chosen from a pool of a few hundred qualified candidates, all with experience in the realms of non-profit work and education. Having previously worked at a multi-campus university similar to YU, she was particularly qualified, equipped with both the "technical know-how" and the management skills necessary to be efficient in her capacity, according to Shivers. Shivers also noted that Ramirez stood out from other candidates because of her focus on developing strategic plans for the university's human resources department as well as her approach of combined sincerity and pragmatism.

Ramirez officially began her YU career on January 22, following 28 years at Pace University, 10 spent as the vice president of HR. Under

Ramirez's leadership, Pace saw an expansion in their HR department and programming. She advocated for faculty and other employees, creating and instituting programs to promote strategic planning, improved management, organizational and leadership development, rewards systems, an efficient benefits and compensation system, and programs to aid with staffing and diversifying the university. Her accomplishments earned her the President's Award for Excellence and the Diversity Leadership Award.

During her time at Pace, Ramirez also acted as co-executive sponsor with the university's CIO, changing and enhancing the management of the entire university system. Other positions included membership on the Planning and Budget Committee, the Finance and Administration Committee of the Board of Trustees, and the President's Commission of Diversity, and chairwoman of the Benefits and Compensation Planning Committee.

Ramirez's role at Yeshiva will be similar in nature to the positions she held at Pace, with a focus on developing programs and strategies to help the university accomplish its long-term goals. Such goals include the recruitment of new staff members, better strategies for compensation, and improving employee benefits such as health and retirement. She also plans to implement an improved financial and administrative system for the university.

The new Chief of Human Resources Officer will also attempt to improve the quality of student life on campus. This will be expressed in the creation of an atmosphere of interaction, cooperation, and increased opportunity on both the Beren and Wilf campuses. Furthermore, by hiring people and filling positions with competent individuals who are best suited for and committed to their respective jobs, HR hopes to enhance the student experience.

Ramirez will mostly be stationed on the AECOM Resnick campus, which houses the central administrative offices of HR, but will also maintain an office on the Wilf campus. She intends to spend time interacting with students and faculty of both undergraduate campuses, so as to become better acquainted with their needs.

Torah Scholarship Series Kicks Off on Beren Campus

BY ALISA UNGAR-SARGON

On February 4, the Torah Activities Council (TAC) at Stern College for Women launched its new program, the Torah Scholarship Series, with a lecture by Rabbi Yosef Blau, mashgiach ruchani (spiritual advisor) of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary.

Rabbi Blau's talk, entitled "The Effects of the Changing Role of Women in Society on Orthodoxy," followed a source-based discussion of women's obligations in the context of mitzvot aseh shehazman grama (positive commandments with a time constraint) and was delivered to a crowded audience in Levy Lobby.

"The very fact that I had handed out such an extensive list of mareh mekomot (source sheets) reflects the change in the role of women in the Orthodox Jewish community," remarked Rabbi Blau. "[A] hundred years ago there would have been no point to anyone handing out such a list of

there was already standing-room only. "It exceeded my wildest dreams," Herzberg noted.

Rabbi Blau, when opening his address, commented similarly. "I am astonished at the number of people here," he exclaimed.

The series' organizers hope to duplicate the kickoff event's success at subsequent lectures. Rabbi Kenneth Brander, dean of the Center for the Jewish Future, addressed the question, "The Modern State of Israel - Is redemption possible through a natural process?" on February 11.

Future speakers will be drawn from both undergraduate campuses and will include Rabbi David Pahmer, Dr. Michelle Levine, Dr. Naomi Grunhaus, Rabbi Lawrence Hajioff, Rabbi Norman Lamm, and Rabbi J.J. Schachter. Their lectures will cover a range of topics dealing with the contemporary challenges facing SCW students as Modern Orthodox women.

SCW Committee Changes Current Curriculum

Continued from front page

committee hopes that students will no longer feel a sense of relief when they "get their requirements over and done with," noted Dean Bacon. She added that when she heard students' unhappy sentiments regarding the requirements, she realized that the courses held no meaning for them.

The new requirements will enable students to have more freedom in selecting their electives. Additionally, students will be able to select electives within their own discipline, something that is currently not accepted.

In the updated design, the courses are arranged around a particular motivating theme. For instance, one category may be entitled, "Paradigms of Expression." Theoretically, one could find the English composition class there, as well as the second writing course that will now be offered. Another category may be "Con-

temporary U.S. and Global Perspectives," where courses in economics and political science would be offered.

Dean Bacon emphasized that the new curriculum would reflect five basic principles: "An emphasis on subjects or skills and outcomes rather than disciplines; a focus on fundamental ideas, diverse worldviews and contemporary problems; the provision of avenues to integrate disciplines; the development of critical reasoning, effective writing, and quantitative reasoning; and the opportunity for students to take more electives."

The next stage of the process will consist of contact between committee members and faculty. The committee is currently speaking "one on one with our colleagues, to share our ideas and solicit their opinions and input before we proceed," said Dr. Lazaroff. The faculty will not only be responsible for voicing their opinions, but also for

determining which category their courses will fall into, as well as the development of any new courses.

Because of the breadth of the changes, as well as the numerous meetings the faculty must attend before things can be finalized, SCW will not implement the changes until, at the earliest, the 2009 fall semester. However, one change will already be put into practice next semester: the biology department has decided that for non-biology majors, only one semester of the traditional science classes will require a laboratory course, instead of the current requirement of two semesters of lab.

GPATS to Receive Master's

Continued from front page

traditionally studied in chevruta style.

However, the New York State Department of Higher Education mandates that all master's programs include actual courses, taught by professors in a classroom-type setting. As a result, GPATS administrators are attempting to devise a way to incorporate such academic requirements without compromising the chevruta learning essential for the successful study of Talmud.

Another issue to be addressed is the granting of stipends. Master's programs usually do not include

monetary compensation, but participants in GPATS receive a stipend financed by the Avichai Foundation, an especially important draw for married students. Administrators are exploring ways to maintain the funding.

"[I] anticipate increased enrollment and interest in GPATS once we implement the master's awarding into the program," said Rabbi Shmuel Hain, Rosh Beit Midrash and academic director of GPATS. "This program will be the only one of its kind in the world. We certainly believe that the new program will attract additional students and will obviously give additional credit and academic luster

to those students who participate."

Dr. Lowengrub also articulated his hope that the accreditation will result in increased enrollment. "The program offers another credential for women, especially for those planning to teach in day school curriculums," he noted.



Devorah Stechler/The Observer

GPATS students learn Talmud in Eisenberg Beit Medrash

FEATURES

Women Assume Active Role at Seforim Sale

BY ALIZA VISHNIAVSKY

For three weeks in February, women from the Beren campus trekked uptown each night to contribute their efforts to the annual SOY Seforim Sale, the largest Jewish book sale in North America. One of the university's most highly anticipated events, the sale is organized by the Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY), but is staffed jointly by undergraduate men and women.

The Seforim Sale, housed in Weisberg Commons, requires months of advance preparation and logistical planning. Despite the sale's distant location, the women of Stern College and the Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB) prove to be dedicated employees, serving on the board of directors and working as section managers and cashiers.

According to Ariella Ross (SSSB '08), a member of the board of directors of this year's Seforim Sale and head cashier last year, there are more male employees.

"[This] is very much a result of geography," Ross explained. "It is easier for the men to drop over for an hour or two and help out, while women have to have the time to come up for a whole evening."

Most of the sale's female employees are cashiers, although some sections are managed entirely by women. Additionally, the administrative board of the sale includes several women from the Beren campus.

"It is important for the women of SCW and SSSB to get involved because it educates students about running and operating a corporation," continued Ross. "It gives them real world experience that you cannot find in a classroom."

Ross admitted that running the Seforim Sale can be very demanding. "The most difficult part of the job is setting up the sale. It is very stressful," she said. "Shipments arrive daily and each item must be counted, scanned, labeled, scanned again, and physically placed in the correct section. Once we have that done, we logically organize the section to make it easy for the customer to find what he or she is looking for."

"The displays need to be eye-catching and placed properly," she added. "We basically set up and dismantle a Barnes and Noble store every winter."

Nonetheless, Ross said she enjoyed her time spent at the Seforim Sale. "The main thing I love about the Seforim Sale is the friends I have made and continue to make there," she observed. "When you spend an entire month intensively working with the same people, you really get to know them."

Other women who have worked at the Seforim Sale agree that the social benefits are significant.

"It's a great place for people



Shayna Hoenig/The Observer

Undergraduate women work as cashiers at SOY Seforim Sale

to meet each other," remarked Debbie Weinerman. "I got to know a lot of people both from working with them or just from seeing them come in and out of the sale. I personally think that any joint event or project between the two campuses is not only enjoyable for its social nature, but also just a healthy way to meet each other."

Perks such as earning credit toward purchases at the sale, as well as free SOY apparel, are additional incentives for prospective employees. Rena Eisenberg (SCW '09), who put in 30 hours at the sale, excitedly anticipated a free sweatshirt and many discounted books.

The involvement of SCW and SSSB students in the Seforim Sale is important to female consumers, who sometimes feel more comfortable approaching women when seeking books on more sensitive topics, explained Rifka Weider (SCW '08). "When I worked at the sale last year, mostly women came up to me for help," she affirmed.

With so many women included in the Seforim Sale in both administrative and employee capacities, some have suggested that the Torah Activities Council (TAC), the counterpart of SOY on the Beren campus, be represented in the sale's moniker.

"The Seforim Sale is a place where both men and women should be involved," articulated Etana (Lebor) Berkowitz, a recent graduate of SCW who worked at last year's sale as a cashier. "It's not just for the men. Maybe some of the proceeds should go to the women's campus since there really is so much involvement."

TAC President Laura Shuman (SCW '09) hopes to push next year for the event to either include the TAC acronym in its name or simply to advertise as "the Seforim Sale," devoid of any association with SOY. "It has nothing to do with the funding or who gets profit," she asserted. "It

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Confronting Challenges, Pre-Meds Contemplate Career Choice

BY ESTHER BARUH & BATSHEVA LIPSCHITZ

Unlike other universities, Yeshiva features no shortage of women interested in the sciences. With biology now ranked as the most popular major at Stern, in addition to the prospect of a full tuition scholarship to the Albert Einstein College of Medicine (AECOM), it should come as no surprise that the number of women planning careers in medicine has been increasingly on the rise.

However, over the course of their undergraduate years, more than a handful of women decide to leave the pre-med track, refocusing their ambitions on other health-related fields. The reasons for this choice are manifold, ranging from current academic stresses to future concerns about family and lifestyle.

"As years progress, there are

more Stern students applying [to medical school]," said Dr. Brenda Loewy, associate professor of biology and pre-health advisor at SCW. "A lot of our students are more confident that they can lead a medical career and raise a Jewish family. Some are still apprehensive, but many see they can do it without compromising on either ideal. It's not easy."

The challenge of reconciling a grueling medical career with raising a family is relevant to all prospective medical students and dependent on the capabilities and desires of the individual. "When I have students in front of me, I tell them they have to decide what's best for them," related Loewy. "Every individual is different. What I tell students is important is that they have to decide by experiencing it, to see if they can handle [being pre-med]"

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Stern Student Makes IMPACT through Adolescent Education

BY SHAYNA HOENIG

Many students at Stern College for Women (SCW) assume leadership roles in the Jewish community, in addition to their involvement and contributions to on-campus activities. Yehudeet Berger (SCW '08), is one such undergraduate,

(character traits), and other topics. The sessions, which are mediated by college-aged women, include games, discussions, role-playing, stories, in-session projects, and culinary activities, and are designed to appeal to all girls, regardless of academic ability.

Currently, the program is housed at the Rabbi Pesach Raymon

To Berger, Project IMPACT is about enabling students to feel eager about being Torah Jews and utilizing their capabilities. "The best way to catch the next generation before it falls prey to assimilation is to give them a sense of excitement about Torah and mitzvot, and about using their individual abilities to make our people stronger," Berger asserted.

Sessions for Project IMPACT meet in RPRY every other Friday for 35-40 minutes. Each grade is divided into three groups, with a madricha (mentor) assigned to each one. The small size of the groups facilitates a more intimate dynamic with personalized attention devoted to each participant. Students feel comfortable opening up and discussing their thoughts and feelings with their peers and madrichot, whom they begin to view as realistic role models.

Each grade participating in Project IMPACT has its own specialized curriculum, covering topics such as self-awareness and self-confidence, interpersonal relationships and spiritual awareness, and chesed. The program has become highly successful in RPRY and has grown from one session to four. In addition to the Friday sessions, Project IMPACT conducts other programming throughout the year, including grade-specific shabbatonim for the participants and a *Layl Shavuot* night of learning.

Though all of the madrichot involved in Project IMPACT either currently attend or recently graduated from SCW, Project IMPACT is not directly affiliated with SCW. Berger and her coworkers,

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Courtesy of Yehudeet Berger

RPRY girls participate in a session run by Project IMPACT

devoting countless hours to an off-campus initiative that she herself created and called Project IMPACT.

An acronym for "Inspiring More Practical Application Concerning Torah," Project IMPACT strives "to inspire, challenge, and influence early-adolescent aged girls outside of the formal classroom setting," according to the program's mission statement. Girls in grades five through eight meet in small groups to discuss different topics pertaining to the weekly Torah portion, *Pirkei Avot*, *middot*

Yeshiva (RPRY), located in Edison, New Jersey, and it is executed through the directorship of Berger and two friends, all of whom are pursuing careers in education or psychology, and who serve as mentors.

Berger explained the impetus for founding Project IMPACT. "After two years in Eretz Yisrael, I came back to America and noticed a lack in the Modern Orthodox community...the true focus in life is becoming lost to them, as is their sense of Jewish identity."

The Tuition Debate: National Expansions to Financial Aid Prompt Closer Look At YU Policies

BY JACKIE FAST

Recent news headlines have revealed that top-tier colleges throughout the country are planning to dramatically restructure the financial aid packages offered to middle- and upper-middle-class students. This nationwide wave of reevaluation has raised the question of whether Yeshiva University (YU) is also due for an upgrade to its student aid system.

Although Yeshiva's administration has not announced any similar proposals to modify its aid policies, the reason that it isn't following suit is not because the school lacks the means or the interest to assist in student aid. Rather, YU hasn't made any new changes because its existing financial aid program may already be one of the best programs available to middle-class students.

In December 2007, Harvard University announced that it would drastically increase its financial aid offerings to students whose families earn less than \$185,000 dollars a year. This policy change prompted great excitement nationwide, since many of the families who send their children to competitive universities fall into the middle-class income bracket. For those families whose incomes exclude them from qualifying for need-based scholarships, yet cannot afford to stretch the budget for tuition bills exceeding \$40,000 a year per child, Harvard's announcement was a veritable breakthrough. Since then, Yale University, University of Pennsylvania, Pomona College, and other universities with extensive

endowments have announced similar plans to revamp their payment systems. Middle-class families can celebrate the fact that generous financial aid is the latest collegiate trend.

The news of the latest tides surely has great significance for YU families, many of whom land in the income bracket that the new programs target. By now, many are probably wondering: in the face of this pressure to upgrade, what is YU's financial aid program?

According to Dr. John Fisher, director of Enrollment Management at YU, the new programs that have been unveiled in the last few months are similar to YU's already established financial aid program.

"YU has had the policy for ten years that when we evaluate a student's means, we don't take home equity into the picture. Harvard is just now starting to do that as well," Fisher explained. "Many of our students' families need larger and more valuable homes because Jewish families are in particular areas—therefore, we don't consider home equity when evaluating student need. We also ask if other kids in the family go to day schools, if they're paying more private school tuition, and take that into account in the family's favor."

Although YU's policies are not as simple as Harvard's, they give similar options to families seeking financial aid. On Harvard's new plan, families with incomes of \$180,000 or less will never pay more than 10 percent of their income per year; the remaining balance between the 10

percent that the family can afford and the anticipated tuition bill is designed to be covered with grants and loans.

Fisher compared this policy to what YU currently offers. "We think that that's similar to what YU is already doing," he noted. However, "because we want to tailor our package to each individual family, YU would never make a policy so across-the-board as that; our grants and loans are of a similar quantity, even though we evaluate need case-by-case."

A variety of programs are available for students at YU who seek financial aid. For those who qualify, generous merit-based academic scholarships are available. For need-based scholarships, all evaluations begin with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. Applying for financial aid through the FAFSA form enables students to receive federal grants and loans. The same application also determines eligibility for YU-specific need-based aid, which is granted and loaned to those traditionally considered "needy" as well as to middle-income families. Fisher clarified that "a more needy family at YU will more likely receive grants, and a less needy family will probably get loans," but any family that cannot afford to pay tuition will get a package that's proper for them. Additionally, YU offers a work-study program, although "our participation is relatively low compared to other schools because our students are really so busy," he observed.

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Social Justice Society: Expanding Our Communal Borders

BY SHLOMIT COHEN

In his book "Dignity of Difference," Chief Rabbi of England Sir Jonathan Sacks discusses the phenomenon of globalization and how it has impacted our relationship with the world. He explains that countries and societies have become thoroughly interconnected by technological advancements as well as by an economic system that depends heavily upon the global market. The notion of an isolated community has been lost, and we now relate to people from across the globe, instead of just to those living in close proximity. As such, Rabbi Sacks concludes that we can no longer dissociate ourselves from the poverty, disease, and war that affect humanity at large, regardless of the extent to which our immediate surroundings have been affected.

The notion that we are part of such an expansive community is both liberating and terrifying. If we are part of such a rich and diverse world, the ever-present question of where to allocate our limited time and energy takes on a new level of intensity and immediacy. This question, which defines the search for personal fulfillment through social contribution, is a continuous one. It is crucial that through this struggle we recognize the Torah imperative to expand our scope of concern beyond the immediate boundaries of our lives, and to see ourselves as part of a much larger and more intricate picture.

In a recent discussion with the Social Justice Society (SJS), Rabbi Saul Berman, professor of Judaic studies at Stern College for Women (SCW), spoke about the

Torah's model of true leadership, Moshe Rabbeinu. The Torah illustrates this paradigm of Jewish leadership through a series of three stories.

The first demonstration of Moshe's leadership qualities is recounted in Exodus 2:11, when Moshe witnesses an Egyptian beating a Jewish slave. Unable to stand idly by while his family suffers, Moshe intervenes to save the defenseless Jew. Then, in Exodus 2:13, Moshe witnesses a violent encounter between two Jews, and once again steps in to preserve justice.

Finally, in Exodus 2:17, the Torah describes Moshe's encounter with the Midianites. When Moshe observes a group of gentiles harassing other gentiles, despite the fact that no Jews are involved, Moshe responds to the injustice and fights for the poor and weak. It is directly after this incident that Moshe is chosen as the one who will bring the Jews out of Egypt. It is after he has demonstrated his universal sense of responsibility, his need to ensure justice even for those with whom he lacks familial or religious ties, that Hashem selects him as leader of am Yisrael. The definition of leadership that emerges from the example of Moshe Rabbeinu is the recognition that our responsibility to create a just social order is not limited to any one area of life, but must serve as a guiding ideal throughout all of our interactions.

The idea of an inclusive responsibility to ensure justice also has halakhic implications with regards to the concept of "lifnei iver lo titen michshol," the prohibition of putting a stumbling block before the blind. The Gemara in Pesachim 22b brings two cases to illustrate this prohibition. The first is offering wine to a *nazir* who has taken a vow to abstain from grape-derived products. The second example is giving *eiver min ha'chai* (meat taken from a live animal) to a gentile, meat which is forbidden to him according to the Noahide laws. Although it is not within the scope of this article to discuss the practical halakhic applications of *lifnei iver*, what we see from here is that once again, the principle of communal responsibility is not limited to those who are within our immediate religious circles.

The Social Justice Society celebrates the recognition of this concept. Our status as an *ohr lagoyim*, a light to the nations, is essentially a call to action. However, our responsibility to the people of the world is not to the exclusion of our own Jewish community and our local neighborhoods; rather, it is in addition to these responsibilities. As such, the SJS has recently implemented Tzedek Friday, an opportunity to volunteer right here in Manhattan. Every Friday the SJS will be joining Project ORE, a homeless outreach program that provides daily kosher meals and food packages for Shabbat. Project ORE is based at Congregation Emunah Israel, located at 236 West 23rd Street, and is part of the Education Alliance funded by the UJA-NY.

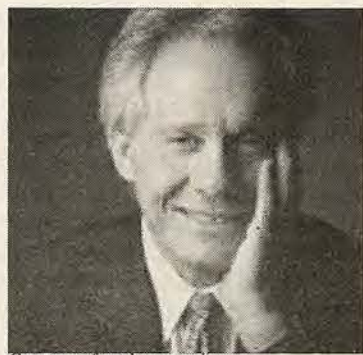
Full Cardozo Scholarship Targets YU Undergrads

Continued from front page

and the legal profession," he offered.

Fordham Law School, located on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, is often thought to be one of Cardozo's biggest rivals. Unlike other law schools in the city, such as New York University (ranked 4th) and Columbia University (ranked 5th), both Fordham and Cardozo do not place in the top tier in U.S. News and World Report's graduate school rankings of 2008. Therefore, students who wish to remain in New York but are not accepted to these two schools will most likely look to Fordham and Cardozo as their next choices. However, there is a significant difference with respect to their academic standings: Fordham ranks 25th on the U.S. News and World Report list, whereas Cardozo holds the 52nd slot.

While SCW and Yeshiva College (YC) are considered substantial feeder schools to Cardozo, students from other universities, such as the University of Michigan, Columbia University, and Barnard College, continue to outnumber YU graduates at Cardozo. Fall 2007 enrollment at



Courtesy of cardozo.yu.edu

Cardozo School of Law Dean David Rudenstine

Cardozo shows 30 students from NYU and only 10 from YU; however, this may merely be a reflection of differences in the sizes of the universities' undergraduate populations.

While these numbers may also suggest that YU undergraduates have the credentials to be accepted to higher-ranked institutions, perhaps they additionally imply that SCW and YC students do not consider Cardozo a top choice when applying to law school.

Historically, many pre-law students from SCW and YC have

viewed Cardozo as a "safety" school, a perception which may have motivated more qualified Yeshiva candidates to enroll elsewhere, while leading somewhat weaker students to matriculate. In recent years however, the school's admissions process has become more competitive, increasing the appeal of a full scholarship to top YU undergraduates.

"There is an energy and enthusiasm at Cardozo that is tangible as you walk through our halls," replied Martinidez, when asked about Cardozo's distinguishing characteristics. "We offer a rigorous world-class legal education in the heart of New York City, the legal capital of the world. Our faculty is engaged, dynamic, among the most widely published and cited of any law school faculty, and at the same time is committed to teaching and to their students."

He noted that various clinical education programs at Cardozo, such as the ones in intellectual property and alternative dispute resolutions, are held in very high regard nationwide. Martinidez praised Cardozo's diverse student body, which is comprised of an extremely accomplished

and varied group of academics from the U.S. and abroad, and which lays claim to a spectrum of ideas, interests, beliefs, and aspirations.

"We are a law school that is constantly looking to expand our faculty with young and smart professors; we are flexible; and each year we are enlightened by the exchanges occurring both in and out of our classrooms," Martinidez continued.

The Cardozo Dean of Admissions also seemed to draw a distinction with Fordham, which similarly offers the benefit of a New York City location and attracts a wide range of students. "Generally speaking, I think that older law schools tend to be more set in their ways and less able to adjust to change," he said.

Additionally, this past November, Cardozo surpassed both Fordham and Cornell Law School with a 92 percent bar passage rate, putting Cardozo third on the list, behind only New York University School of Law (96 percent) and Columbia Law School (95 percent).

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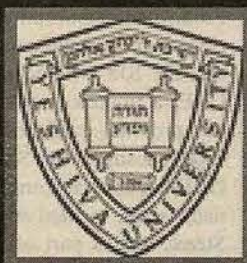
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For '08 Primaries, Gender Plays Minimal Role at SCW

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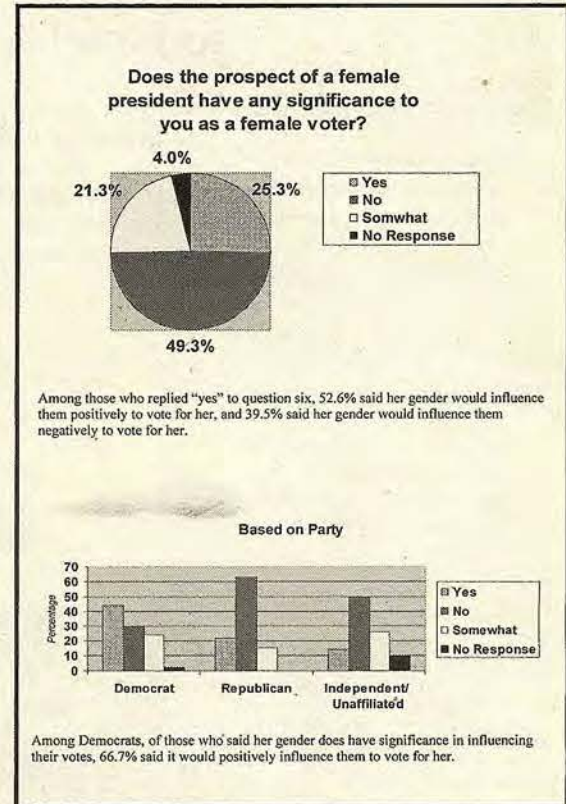
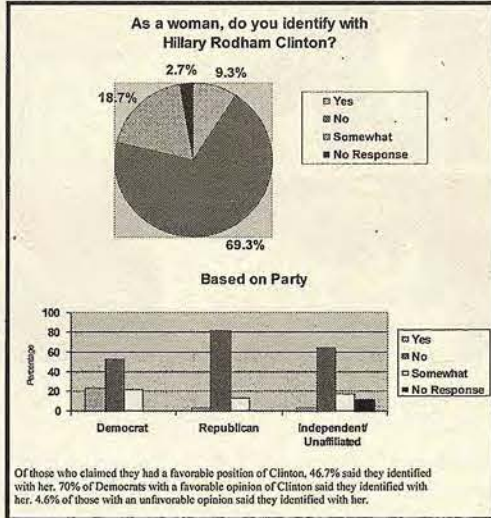
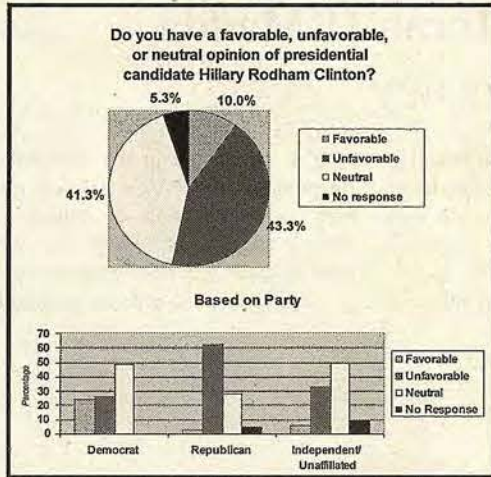
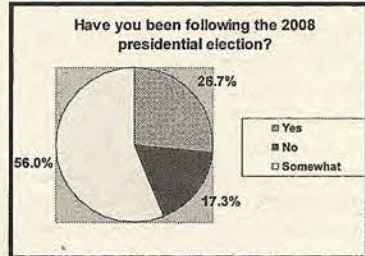
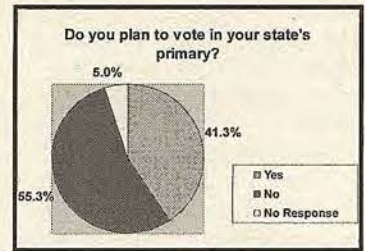
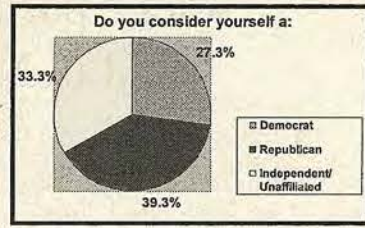
son, a self-identified Democrat, accurately reflect the results of a survey recently distributed on the Beren campus, in which 150 respondents, a random sample comprising approximately 10 percent of the student body, answered a series of 12 questions. The survey was compiled with the assistance of Dr. Dennis Hoover, chair of economics, and targeted both SCW and SSSB undergraduates.

According to the survey's findings, Clinton does not enjoy much support on campus. Not surprisingly, only 3.4% of those who identified themselves as Republicans held a "favorable" opinion of her. However, even amongst those who identified as Democrats, Clinton is not well-liked: 26.8% held an "unfavorable" opinion of the Senator, as opposed to only 24.4% who viewed her as "favorable."

An overwhelming majority of students, regardless of party affiliation, responded that gender plays no role in their choice for president. Supporters of Clinton constitute the one exception; of those who said they had a favorable opinion of the candidate, 66.7% wrote that gender was a key motivator. A small minority of students wrote that Clinton's gender actually influenced them against her.

The results were interesting to compare with those reached by a December 2007 study on the voting preferences of 18 to 24 year-olds, as conducted by Harvard University's Institute of Politics. While a greater percentage of the age group considered themselves Democrats rather than Republicans, with a 35 percent to 25 percent ratio, Republicans outnumber Democrats at Beren, making for a more politically conservative student body. Additionally, the Harvard study found that within the Democratic Party, Clinton lead rival Senator Barack Obama 37 percent to 36 percent among college-age women. In contrast, among the undergraduate women surveyed by The Observer, there were more Democrats with an unfavorable opinion of the candidate, than a favorable one.

Professor of Political Science Dr. Joseph Luders, who is currently teaching a course called "Women



and Politics" at SCW, offered his insights on the issue. "Nearly 90% of Americans say they would vote for a competent woman for president," he explained. "But in a survey that asked whether or not America is 'ready' for a woman president, 30-40% responded 'not ready.' This is suggestive of a significant reticence in voting for a non-traditional presidential candidate."

"Certainly some women support Clinton because she is a woman," Luders observed. "Some people despise Clinton for various reasons, and it is very hard at this time to know how much of this enmity to attribute to gender. That said, at least anecdotally, it certainly appears that some measure of this hostility derives from her being an ambitious woman."

Luders added that he believes that women are at an automatic disadvantage when it comes to running a campaign for higher office. "First, the higher the political office sought, the more a female candidate must move beyond the traditionally acceptable themes of health care, education, and children, to encompass military and economic affairs," he said. "For a presidential aspirant, it is necessary to demonstrate expertise in the domains in which men are culturally assumed to have greater competence." He also noted that women are expected to be more moral than men, so "they experience a greater backlash if they 'go negative' against an opponent." When asked if he thought a female president would run the coun-

try differently than a male, Professor Luders responded that while it would certainly be "symbolically" significant to have a woman in the White House, "ideology and partisanship are going to be far better predictors for political behavior than gender."

As a Canadian, Yaelle Frohlich (SCW '10), cannot participate in the elections. However, she offered her thoughts as well. "I'm not sure the U.S. President really affects events in Canada that much," she commented, "but then again, you don't have to really worry that the status of Canada is going to change. I worry more about Israel. Whoever gets elected in America has a direct bearing on what happens to Israel because the situation there is so precarious."

"If not for my News and Reporting class, I would not know so much about the elections, although I do feel at this point that I know a lot more than many of my American friends," Frohlich continued. "I don't have such a well-informed opinion on Hillary Clinton, but the fact that she remained with her adulterous husband definitely doesn't help my opinion of her." When asked if she believes the gender of the U.S. president would make a difference, she replied, "I don't think it would really matter. I'm neither for it nor against it. All I think is that when voting, gender should not be a factor."

At the end of the anonymous survey, there was room for additional comments, which served to further clarify the positions represented, as well as the influence of gender on the voting decisions of the students. For instance, a politically unaffiliated SCW senior asserted that "women are too emotional and sensitive and can't handle such an intense position," while an SCW Republican and senior posited that "while it would be good to have a female president, I do not like Clinton's politics and I will not vote for her." Yet another comment stated that "the fact that she is female will be an asset to many of the issues the country is facing and the world is facing."

One respondent, an unaffiliated junior at SSSB, reflected the most widely-held view on campus. "Gender and race don't matter," she wrote, "what matters is good policy. A woman may be president, and a good one at that, but not because she is a woman. Rather, it would be her actions, policies, and honesty that would define her as a good president."

The Pre-Med Question

Continued from page 8

with undergrad requirements. Some see they can handle it, some can't, and there's nothing wrong with it."

In order to get a sense of how many students are interested in medicine, Loewy circulates a preliminary email and then communicates with students who respond, whether or not they have officially declared themselves to be pre-med. This year, 17 women have already sent in applications to medical school, a number which is approximately the same as last year's. However, according to Loewy, "these things tend to fluctuate."

For students who determine that medical school is not a good fit, Loewy recommends alternatives such as nursing, work-

ing as a nurse practitioner, becoming a physician's assistant, and various other positions in public health.

Pre-health students at Stern have had varied experiences. Rena Gottesman (SCW '08) is a music major who is currently preparing to take the MCATs. "Being pre-med has made college very challenging," she admitted. "Although I decided to major in music after deciding to be pre-med, my priorities and obligations to both have at times been a challenge to meet. While that has not been so bad, I have appreciated less the pressure that was put on me by being pre-med. There is intense competition and intense pressure to excel, and it just never seems to end."

Gottesman affirmed that Dr. Loewy's involvement in the pre-med

process helped her clarify a course of action for her college years. She cited use of an information packet on applying to medical school made available on the Stern website. She noted that many students are not aware of this packet and "are therefore more out of touch with the process."

Rebecca Hazan (SCW '09) initially wanted to be pre-med, but after much introspection decided to pursue other career paths. "I just had the whole concept laid out in my mind, but no concrete plans," she related. "Maybe that's why I dropped pre-med. Intellectually, it was always my goal. But when I realized how long it really takes, how much time it would take away from me having a family, I began to reconsider. I didn't think it was good for

me to be so far away from my future family when they would need me."

"I understand very well that many, many dedicated women have become outstanding wives, mothers, and doctors. I respect those women very much," she emphasized. "But I didn't think I had that dedication for myself. I didn't think I'd be able to balance both lives at once and feel satisfied." Hazan turned to mentors whom she described as being very supportive to help her clarify her decision. She eventually decided to switch to a psychology major with a possible minor in biology, thus maintaining the option to apply her knowledge of psychol-

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ISRAEL

AIPAC President Ties Torah U'Madda to Israel Advocacy

BY MEIRA WEISS-FARATCI

Members of the Yeshiva University community are often faced with dilemmas of identity and ideals, balancing the Torah way of life on the one hand, while valuing *Madda* and involvement in the general world on the other. Although Diaspora Jews proudly wear the badge of Zionism and support Israel, many continue to establish thriving communities throughout the United States.

Howard Friedman, the president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the largest lobby group on Capitol Hill working to strengthen the U.S.-Israel alliance, is an example of a Modern-Orthodox Jew who is successful in the world of American politics. When invited to speak on January 23, 2008 in Levy Lobby on the Beren campus, Friedman requested that the event be limited to the students of Yeshiva University, whom he addressed on the balance of Torah u'Madda, religious and secular values.

Friedman's intention in singling out YU was to impart a message of responsibility and to urge the undergraduates to take action in defense and support of Israel as a Jewish community. To illustrate his point, Friedman quoted a verse from Psalms 121:4 "The guardian of Israel neither rests nor slumbers."

"The guardians of Israel are you," he urged.

When asked to respond to individuals such as John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, who have accused

AIPAC of dual loyalty and criticize its methods of lobbying, Friedman replied, "I respond to critics by being here, strengthening our support." He explained that "working harder and building stronger" was the first

both in Israel and in the Diaspora. He pointed to AIPAC's political efforts as a reflection of American Jewry's attempts at "doing what we need to do as a Jewish community."

Friedman's address preceded



Courtesy of YU Productions

AIPAC President Howard Friedman addresses students in Levy Lobby

step toward building enduring Jewish communities in Israel and the U.S. He stated that these must be followed by political, social, or communal action.

"I don't do [AIPAC] to help the people of Israel... I do it for me, my children, and my grandchildren," Friedman continued. "The only way to have a strong Jewish community in America is if there is a strong Israel."

According to the AIPAC president, the strength of the world community's acceptance and support for Israel affects the lives of all Jews,

February's Yeshiva University Public Action Committee (YUPAC) lobby mission to Washington, D.C., in which twenty student delegates from SCW and YC met with members of Congress to discuss salient issues relating to the U.S.-Israel relationship. The undergraduates encouraged continued support for Israel, especially with regard to decisions on Iran's nuclear energy plan which will soon be voted on. They also advocated in favor of Israel's position during its ongoing negotiations with the Palestinians.

ZOA Recruits YU Undergrads for New Leadership Council

BY LIATTE TSARFATI

The Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) is sponsoring a new enrichment series for pro-Israel students over the course of the spring semester. The program, titled the Zionist Leadership Council, is slated to convene every Monday night for seven weeks at the ZOA's headquarters in Midtown. Each session will address a different topic and will feature an original speaker, followed by group discussion. Topics for the sessions include Israel activism training, dealing with anti-Israel attitudes and anti-Semitism on college campuses, the history and defining moments of Israel, human rights, and immigration to Israel.

Although there is no application process, students are accepted into the program on condition that a designated member of their school recommends them. Ten New York colleges participate in the program; two students are admitted from each college. Dovi Meles (YC '09) was chosen by

the ZOA to recruit students from YU. He received a substantial response, especially from the Beren campus, with 10 women expressing interest.

"I was not looking for what students did in the past, but determined, committed students who want to learn, grow, and meet new people, with a passion for being educated and educating about the State of Israel," Meles commented.

Meles first got involved with the organization through an internship with the Jewish Federation, which placed him at the ZOA office in his hometown of Philadelphia. Upon his return to New York, he began working with the ZOA's Manhattan branch.

Meles also offered advice for other Jewish communal and non-profit organizations in search of volunteers, suggesting that they approach Yeshiva students on both undergraduate and graduate levels. "[YU is the] place to come to for students... when they need young Jewish leaders," he added.

ZOA College Campus Coordinator Dalia Lockspeiser, who has

been working closely with Meles, said there were three main goals to ensure the success of the Zionist Leadership Council. The first is informational: to educate students with facts about the history of the Zionist state, current events, and their ramifications on college campuses in the United States. Additionally, Lockspeiser aims to create a network of students in the New York area who will in turn form an inter-campus coalition. The third objective of the program is for students to learn how to advocate for the State of Israel by working with the ZOA.

Participants receive a stipend and a certificate upon their completion of the program. Lockspeiser articulated her hopes that students will take the skills they learn and integrate them into their leadership roles on their respective campuses. The participants are encouraged to continue their relationship and involvement with the ZOA, even

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Israel Apartheid Week Held in New York

BY TAMAR HANAU

February 4 marked the beginning of the fourth annual "Israel Apartheid Week," held this year in six countries: the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Mexico, South Africa, and "Palestine." The stated goal of the week of anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic events was to end "forty years of Israeli military occupation and fifty-nine years of dispossession and continuing ethnic cleansing."

The group planning the week's events is doing everything within its power to perpetuate the message that Israel is an apartheid-state and to call for a boycott against Israel. Participants and organizers of Israel Apartheid Week include NYU Students for Justice in Palestine, Falasteen and the Arab Students Association at Columbia University, Adalah-NY: The Coalition for Justice in the Middle East, Al-Awda, the Palestine Right to Return Coalition-NY, Arab Students United at NYU, New Jersey Solidarity-Activists for the Liberation of Palestine, the Palestine/Israel Education Project, and WESPAC Foundation.

ELI Aroesty-Cohen is the Wilf campus coordinator for the David Project, a non-profit organization whose mission is to develop and train leaders to defeat the ideological assault on Israel. "The Israel Apartheid Week is a defamation of Israel and abuse of the definition of apartheid because it denigrates the definition of what apartheid really is and the people who have actually suffered from its effects," Aroesty-Cohen explained. "We condemn it for this reason, but more than that. If you look at the word 'apartheid,' it actually is much more applicable to Israel's neighboring Arab countries. What we are trying to do is combat the lies and encourage the community to come out to the events and support Israel."

One of the week's events held in New York City took place on Wednesday, February 6 at the Church Center for the United Nations. Included in the evening's program was the screening of a speech by former MK Azmi Bishara on his view of the Israel Apartheid. Bishara, a Palestinian Christian and member of the Balaad Party, is a former member of the Israeli Parliament, who resigned in April 2007 after a series of criminal charges were laid against him. His advocates and admirers from the Israel Apartheid Week have accused the Israeli government of excommunicating him because of racial bias. In actuality, the Israeli government charged Bishara with treason and espionage for Hezbollah during the last Lebanon War, and he left the country of his own accord.

In total, there were little more than a dozen people who attended the event, mostly extremists and a core group of five Israel advocates, who had briefed with a David Project representative prior to the event. There were technical difficulties

with the film clip screened at the event, and after a long delay it was only able to provide audio sound. In addition to the inefficiency with the film, following Azmi Bishara's voice-over, organizers did not allow questions or comments. Sarah Davis, Christian campus coordinator for the David Project, reflected, "[the fact] that they did not allow questions and answers means [that the David Project is] getting to them."

Meira Weiss Faratci (SCW '10), sophomore at Stern College for Women and activist for American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), attended an Israel Apartheid Week event held on Thursday, February 7 at NYU. The event was run in conjunction with Arab Students Unite (ASU) and NYU Students for Justice in Palestine. The event featured a screening of the 2004 film, "Peace, Propaganda & the Promised Land: U.S. Media & the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict."

The Thursday event's turnout marked a significant contrast from that of the previous night. "When I got to the event, I wasn't sure if I would be able to get in; there were so many people. The hall was overflowing," Weiss-Faratci related. Weiss-Faratci explained that she was quite overwhelmed and disturbed by the biased and untruthful claims being made against the State of Israel.

"Here, it was a live audience who believed what was being said. It was that, above all, that really scared me," she reported. "I was surrounded by real people who actually believed what they saw."

She was surprised by the film's accusations regarding slanted reporting in the American media, especially since such complaints are usually voiced by the pro-Israel camp. While Zionists claim that the media has a pro-Palestinian bent, the pro-Palestinian party claimed quite the opposite, that the media favors the Israeli cause.

When asked to reflect upon being a Yeshiva University student attending an NYU event, Weiss-Faratci replied, "While I found the event really disturbing, as a Stern student, I was able to get on the subway and come home [to Stern]. The NYU students were not able to do that. Some of my friends live next door to the leaders of the ASU."

Jordanna Birnbaum, an NYU student and active member in the Orthodox Jewish community on campus, explained that the bias on her own campus was something uncommon. "We don't usually see this much anti-Israel activism on campus. It's really not so common," she commented. "While I am aware of the different opinions, if I had it my way, the film wouldn't have been shown in an NYU building; but it is their prerogative to rent it out to whomever they wish."

"Anyone who would see that video and actually understands the is-

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The Debate on Shmittah: SCW Student Reflects on CJF Mission

BY JAIMIE FOGEL

The majority of students on the Yeshiva University undergraduate campuses spend a year or more studying in various yeshivot or seminaries in Israel. But far fewer of these students gain a real understanding of the country and its complicated societal nuances during their time spent studying there. Students eat at Burger's Bar and hang out with friends on Jerusalem's Ben Yehuda Street, but rarely do they spend hours learning the ins and outs of the society that surrounds them.

Over this past winter break in January, the CJF sent 19 women on a trip to learn about Israeli society. The trip used the mitzvah of shmittah, the Torah's command to let the land of Israel lie fallow every seventh year, as a prism through which to gain an understanding of the larger political and societal reality in the modern state of Israel.

Before leaving on the mission, the group of women met for two intense sessions, briefing them on the basics of Zionist philosophy, the different views of *haredim* (Ultra Orthodox Jews), secular Israelis, and Religious Zionists, as well as the basic laws of shmittah. In order to hear from the world-renowned speakers listed on the itinerary and understand further discussion on the topic, the group first needed to be in-

formed of certain fundamental facts. After six information-filled hours, the participants were sent off to Israel, hoping for an engaging and inspiring program that would teach them about shmittah and show them a new side of Israel, one they had missed en route to the central bus station.

The group spent the morning hours in the women's beit midrash of Yeshiva University's Gruss building, learning about shmittah from the traditional halakhic sources. The shiurim approached the mitzvah from the perspective of the Tanakh, giving the group some insight into the original intention of the law. Then the group sat with *chevrotot* (study partners) and delved into some of the complicated regulations relating to the mitzvah.

Scholarly speakers addressed the group, including Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon, the spiritual leader of the new neighborhood in the Alon Shevut community and Rabbi Binyamin Lau, the spiritual leader of the Ramban synagogue in the Greek Colony of Jerusalem. The group also heard from a representative of the *haredim* sect of society and from members of the Religious Zionist camp, each of whom had insightful and diverse thoughts to share. The rest of the days were filled with service work, centered in greenhouses, fields and nurseries where the group saw firsthand how different agriculturalists approach the fulfillment of this com-

mandment. After all, it is really the farmers who are most dramatically affected by shmittah and it is they who are most knowledgeable about the practical application of the law.

Why is shmittah such a dif-

ficult mitzvah to keep? Why does it tear the country apart every seven years? The complex controversy that surrounds observing the mitzvah in modern times is a consequence of the diverse population that exists today in the tiny State of Israel. There are mul-

multiple halakhic solutions detailing how the mitzvah should be kept today, and how the issues it raises can be avoided altogether, and each segment of the population maintains a different view.

In the group's last halakha

ism. *Haredim*, who do not believe in actively supporting the government of Israel, will choose to buy Arab produce during the seventh year. To them, the halakhic problems with the other solutions are too great of a risk to one's spiritual well-being. On the other hand, religious Zionists, who believe that the existence of a Jewish autonomous state in the land of Israel is a step towards redemption, promote a view that supports the advancement of the state's developing economy, and opt against buying Arab produce.

The heter mechira (sale permit), which involves temporarily selling the land to non-Jews for the shmittah year so as to enable work to be performed on it, admittedly faces complicated halakhic issues, but many valid authorities allow this solution to be used with the understanding that the economy of the State of Israel cannot survive if it removes itself from the world market for a year. Religious Zionists, who care deeply about halakha and are also concerned about the success of the State, often choose to maintain the heter mechira because they find that it complies with halakha and their Zionist position. Moreover, many Religious Zionists find it morally uncomfortable to buy Arab produce as a way to sidestep



Courtesy of Michal Kalinsky

Stern College women work in Israeli greenhouse

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Israel Club Network Assists with Aliyah

BY NAVA BILLET

In the fall semester of 2005, Aharon Arazi (YC '08) and Rachel Goldstein (SCW '07) endeavored to establish a *garin aliyah*, a core group of students interested in moving to the Land of Israel. The initiative was launched in response to a growing request from fellow students. The attempt, however, was short-lived, though not forgotten. In the spring of 2007, Arazi, by that time president of the YU Israel Club, came up with a new plan, "The Aliyah Mentoring Network."

The role of the program is to match up current YU undergraduate and graduate students interested in aliyah with alumni currently residing in Israel. However, the pairing is not done randomly. Students are asked to fill out a survey with personal details, specifically about their future professional prospects. Each person is then put in contact with an alumnus in Israel who works in a similar field. Arazi, a transfer student from Brandeis University, explained that he modeled The Aliyah Mentoring Network after a similar service he observed there, in which "there is a vast infrastructure of alumni [who act] as resources for jobs...to help out students."

Seeing tremendous potential in such a network, President Richard Joel put Arazi in touch with Paula Simmonds, director of Alumni Affairs. Simmonds visualizes the service as "a three-way partnership between career development, students and alumni."

"Alumni are not only willing, but extremely eager to help students in any way," she added.

Subsequently, in the networking mode, Simmonds directed Arazi to Jay Kalish (YC '79, Cardozo '82), president of YU Israel alumni. Kalish confirmed that the community of YU alumni in Israel "cover[s] a very wide spectrum of the professional world—medicine, dentistry, busi-

ness, health services, legal, academia/education, [and] community service."

Israel, has been impressive. Already 110 students have submitted surveys, with a ratio of approximately three women to every two men. On the Israel front, Kalish has received replies from 82 alumni. The numbers continue to climb on a weekly basis.

Although it currently functions as a job database, the network will hopefully expand to serve as a social and community support system

grassroots effort, Hillel Davis, vice president for University Life, met with Nefesh B'Nefesh Associate Director of the Overseas Program, Ari Schuchman on Monday, January 28. Davis encouraged Schuchman to submit a proposal "to see whether or not we could get more direct contact between their advisement and our students."

At this point, the vice president is still awaiting a reply from Schuchman.

However, in a separate capacity, Senior Career Developer at Nefesh B'Nefesh, Rachel Berger, responded to a recent email sent by the network. "I am happy to help you as are the rest of the Nefesh B'Nefesh team," she offered. "If you need additional mentors, let me know and I can give you names of people in different fields in Israel who can help to mentor the students."

When asked if the percentage of YU alumni is rising, Davis replied that he did not have definitive statistics to reference. However, he did note that the number of students requesting assistance from the Rosenbaum Aliyah Incentive Fund, an endowment set up for YU alumni who make aliyah and need assistance in repaying student loans, has increased significantly. Davis suggested two possible explanations for the rising demand: the fluctuating economy or the rise in the number of students making aliyah.

Nefesh B'Nefesh confirmed this suggestion, citing a growth in the number of YU participants in their aliyah campaigns, from 59 in 2006 to 67 in 2007. Nefesh B'Nefesh also

informed The Observer that the North American aliyah has been steadily increasing since the year 2000. In fact, in 2000, North Americans made up only about 3 percent of the population of olim, whereas in 2007, North Americans comprise approximately 16.5% of Jewish immigration to Israel.

Renana Levine, a PR and communications manager for Nefesh B'Nefesh, shared some of the program ideas that will be included in Ari Schuchman's proposal to YU. "[We have] started [a] discussion with Yeshiva University to begin working with the administration and student clubs in order to assist students who are interested in making Aliyah as well as general Aliyah promotion," she said. The organization will work with the university's Center for Career Development to assist students with networking for jobs and with finding appropriate graduate schools, to be accomplished through personal meetings on campus as well as group seminars. It will also collaborate with the Israel club on promoting aliyah and the YU Israel Program on various projects.

Though the Aliyah Mentoring Network has made tremendous progress since the spring of 2007, it is still very much in its early stages. Arazi noted that he will be graduating at the end of this semester and Aviv has other obligations. The network is looking for dedicated students on the Beren and Wilf campuses to keep this valuable and practical support system running strong.

North American Olim out of Total Olim	Total Olim from the whole world	Total Olim from North America (USA & Canada)	Year
3.00%	61,813	1,848	2000
3.90%	44,911	1,764	2001
Nefesh B'Nefesh founded			
5.70%	35,514	2,024	2002
9.60%	25,069	2,410	2003
12.00%	23,016	2,757	2004
12.80%	23,341	3,004	2005
14.90%	21,305	3,174	2006
16.50%	19,330*	3,190	2007

*Estimated figure

Courtesy of Renana Levine

Nefesh B'Nefesh statistics for international aliyah, 2000-2007

"I can probably find people in every single profession in Israel, and usually high quality professionals at that," he said.

After meeting this past summer, Arazi and Kalish have been working independently on their respective continents to recruit mentees and mentors. The response to the program, both in the U.S. and

as well. Rachel Aviv (SCW '09), vice president of Israel Club and also the female liaison for the Aliyah Mentoring Network on the Beren campus, summed up her vision of the program. "It's an attempt to bridge the world of YU alumni and students... for professional and even social opportunities in Israel," she explained, noting that "people need to be prepared [for aliyah]."

In an attempt to expand the

ARTS & CULTURE

The Writers' Cafe: A Meager Selection

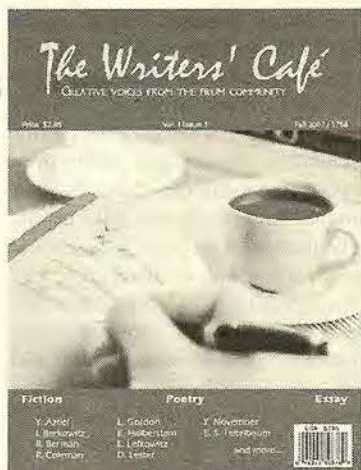
BY OLIVIA WIZNITZER

The Orthodox Jewish world has embarked upon a new and exciting venture, expressed in the form of a new literary magazine entitled "The Writers' Cafe: Creative Voices from the Frum Community." Available at such express venues as the Key Food on Broadway and 187th Street, Manhattan Judaica, and various news kiosks, the magazine cover catches the eye. A cup of coffee sits on a blue-and-white tablecloth, sugar cubes piled on a saucer nearby, while a hand holds a fountain-pen aloft over a leather volume with yellow pages, writing something profoundly beautiful.

Allen Auster, editor and publisher of the magazine, explains its purpose as follows: "The production of English works for the frum world has skyrocketed recently, and there are many good choices available for readers looking for Divrei Torah, the latest in Jewish news, general-purpose articles, advice columns and the like. But the production of high-quality works of purely creative imagination has not kept pace. We intend to address that disparity here. We want The Writers' Cafe to become your choice when seeking that special thrill that comes from encountering original, creative writing talent in full bloom." After further cautioning the reader that should art and Judaism collide, "the demands of art will have to yield," one is invited to begin perusing its contents.

For a first issue, the contents of this magazine are middling to fair. As seems logical, some authors write more beautifully than others, and some stories or poems are rendered with more skill. I particularly enjoyed "Rebbe and Talmid" by Allen

Auster, finding it to be well-written and nicely presented. The descriptions were particularly vivid; I felt as though I had met one Abie Koslowitz, "husky, with light freckles, red-blond hair, and a nose that had been knocked this way and that. His quiet grey eyes viewed the world with a faintly amused, skeptical smile, a



Courtesy of thewriterscafemag.com

smile often distant, sometimes guardedly open, always knowing" (21). Also beautiful was Yakov Azriel's "Tefillin: Two Black Snakes." I found it particularly interesting that Azriel would choose to compare Tefillin to snakes in his poem, realizing the particular symbolism that snakes have within Judaism. It is at first very disconcerting to correlate the serpent as described in Genesis with the winding straps of our Tefillin, and

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Metropolitan Students Discover NYC

BY OLIVIA WIZNITZER

The Beginning Life Undergraduate Experience (B.L.U.E.) Program, managed by the Office of Student Affairs on the Beren campus has introduced a new initiative, known as "Museum Month." Spanning the course of the entire month of February, the program affords first time on campus students, commonly referred to as FTOCs, the opportunity to tour some of New York City's most interesting and prestigious museums.

Organized by Rachel Shtern, student events coordinator at SCW, "Museum Month" has enlisted the assistance of student leaders Jordana Mainzer and Nava Billet. Shtern compiled a varied list of museums,

deciding to take the FTOCs to places ranging from the Tenement Museum in the Lower East Side to the famous Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Billet, who chaperoned the visit to the Lower East Side, explained that the tour enabled participants to experience New York culture in addition to touring the museums.

"[The Office of Student Affairs] bought us Metro cards and Jordana and I swiped everyone," said Billet. "Part of the experience was taking the Metro and getting through New York in New York fashion."

Before taking the tour of the Tenement Museum, the group stopped off at a nearby shop to eat bialies and then began their tour, visiting the home of German Jewish

immigrants, though "they weren't sure they were Jewish; we saw mezuzot on their doors and it seemed to indicate to us that they had been Jewish." They also stopped by an apartment of Italian immigrants. The walking tour was interesting, but the guide didn't know his audience; he was "talking more about the rates of apartments when we wanted to know more about Jewish heritage." Rachel Shtern plans on having another tour of the Lower East Side, this time with a professor from the college in order to rectify that problem.

Mainzer became involved in "Museum Month" because of her

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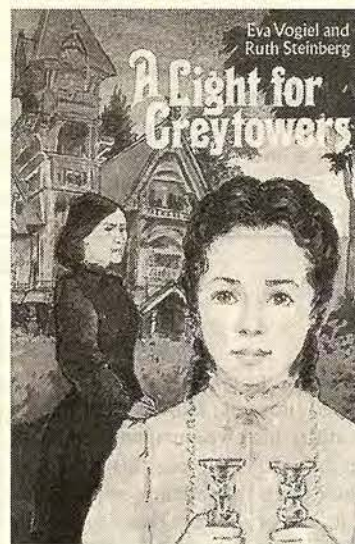
"A Light for Greytowers" Features SCW Student in Starring Role

BY ALISA UNGAR-SARGON

On Sunday, February 3, Stern College for Women screened "A Light for Greytowers," a production about a Jewish girl struggling to keep her faith, to two audiences at the Schottenstein Cultural Center. SCW senior Rivka Siegel starred in the all-women's feature-length film.

The matter of women's modesty in the Orthodox Jewish world, for better or for worse, has always been a major factor in decision-making, event arranging, or career building. While many Orthodox women have an affinity for the performing arts, this factor has been the end word on any sort of professional or continued interest. The issue has never been a lack of interest—simply, a lack of opportunity. A per-

former needs an audience. With half



Courtesy of feldheim.com

the population ruled out due to their being male, the need for a performing arts community amongst Jewish women has been long-overlooked.

The doors, however, have slowly been opening to the possibility of an established expertise in the performing arts, with centers springing up in locations from Israel to Los Angeles.

"A Light for Greytowers," a Kol Neshama musical directed by Robin Garbose, is based on the novel of the same name and tells the story of a young Jewish girl whose faith is challenged in a dark, suffocating orphanage. Siegel plays the Russian mother searching for the daughter that was taken away from her.

"I like emotional roles that you can sink your teeth into," said Siegel in an interview with The Observer. A 21-year-old art major native to Los Angeles, she had been part of the inspiration behind the summer program first created by Garbose. Upon being presented with the film just after graduating high school, Siegel initially declined; Garbose, however, convinced her to do it. "Robin pushed me and I found out things about myself that I didn't know that I could do," she explained.

The filming itself took only 20 days, after rehearsing the songs and choreography for a month. The scenes were done out of order, sometimes requiring umpteen takes. "In the reunion scene they chose for the movie I'm all red after 10 takes," Siegel laughed.

Everything was done professionally, from the crew to the makeup. The sets were all in Los Angeles, with an old Chabad house as the orphanage. Though Siegel's character does have a husband in the film, they never actually appear in the same scene together. "I definitely would much rather be in movies than in plays," Rivka confirmed with certainty. "A movie is there, it's permanent. A play is more fleeting. I'm so happy that I don't have to perform and still can affect people."

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The Irony of Peony

BY OLIVIA WIZNITZER

Lisa See uses words as others would a paintbrush; she slowly creates images and allows them to come to life, delicately and effervescently melding them together to create the perfect work. Her newest work, "Peony in Love" is an exquisitely detailed portrait of a young woman named Peony growing up in seventeenth-century China. The book discusses what it means to love another, the credos by which we live our lives, guilt and responsibility, and effortlessly merges the real and magical so that the two exist side by side, as indeed they always should.

Young Peony is obsessed with her favorite opera, entitled "The Peony Pavilion," a love story in which a man dreams a woman into life, creating her out of his own longing and yearning and finding a way for true love to prevail despite all obstacles.

Peony, an adolescent herself, envisions herself as just such a woman, and hopes for true love to come and find her as well. Betrothed and unable to choose her suitor, Peony chooses to venture beyond the boundaries that are created for her own protection, meeting an unmarried man outside her house and even beyond. He engages in seduction in a highly charged scene that leaves her virginity intact but nevertheless causes her to melt completely and become his entirely. Who is this mysterious young man, with whom Peony has fallen hopelessly in love? She does not know; she knows only that their love is doomed; for they both are betrothed, and she will never wed him.

Despite her beauty and the fact that she will make an excellent wife, once Peony is touched by love, she finds it impossible to resist. Her every thought and waking moment is filled with images of her poet, who spoke

passionate words to her that thrilled her and promised her a life where she could indulge her desire to learn and to make more of her mind. He loved her for her heart, mind and soul, and not merely her beautiful appearance, and all these ideas appeal to her. She wastes away, but nobody knows the cause, for she tells no one. It is interesting to note the way in which anorexia is correlated with lovesickness in this book; here the "lovesick maidens," as they are known, all die from death by starvation. They cannot be prevailed upon to eat, for their minds, souls and bodies are bound up in love with one who will not be theirs.

In a sad twist, Peony discovers that the man to whom she was betrothed all along was the very poet who seduced her, twining loving words around her and promising her the world. She resolves to be happy but is far too ill to recover; instead she dies, but because an ancient Chi-

nese rite is not properly completed, she is unable to move forward into the world of the dead and past the world of the living. She is resigned, instead, to a viewing terrace from which she can watch the living and finds, to her horror, that she is a "hungry ghost," one who has not finished her task or mission yet. It is in this way that Peony is able to continue her mission and her purpose, meddling in people's lives and learning the difference between good intentions and what joy ought to be hers.

Peony desires to please her poet, and when a different wife is found for him, she possesses that woman, writing thoughts that please him and being in all ways an amiable and sweet wife for him. He is happy with her, or rather, with the way in which she fashions his new wife for

Writers' Cafe Reviewed

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the very idea is therefore intriguing.

Rachel Berman's "Sister of the Groom" spoke to me only inasmuch as it seems a particularly apt description of such a person's feelings. There was one section where I felt that Berman could have gone off in an entirely different direction, and indeed it was what I thought of when I first saw the title. Berman writes, "'Im yirtzeh Hashem by you,' you hear a thousand people say, and you're happy enough to reply without a grimace" (24-25). While Berman decided to make this sister "happy enough to reply without a grimace," I believe it would have been more interesting and compelling if she had discussed the sister who does grimace, and who wishes people would refrain from making such remarks. Upon seeing the title, I had thought that Berman planned to explore the feelings of a sister who remained unmarried while others in her family were married off, always to be wished, "Im yirtzeh Hashem by you" and hating it, feeling hurt and angry and perhaps even jealous at the same time that she was happy for her brother, or sister, or whomever's wedding it was that she was attending at the moment.

"Feathers in the Ether" by Ron Coleman was an interesting polemic against the dangers of the Internet age, with special emphasis on the problems caused by complete ano-

nymity. He makes several good points, and begins one striking paragraph by stating, "Remember accountability? It is gone. Today anyone can destroy lives, families and institutions by instantaneous and virtually universal broadcasting of fact, fiction or a little of both mixed together—and there is no accountability" (17).

Unfortunately, the rest of the stories, pieces and poems were not of much interest to me, while some were blatantly disturbing in their short-sighted and close-minded outlook. "Sisters" by Estie Halberstam particularly infuriated me; a typical story about a teenager who went off-the-derech and subsequently, from a Judaic viewpoint, ruined her life, I found it to be stupid, unappealing and entirely unrealistic. When Tamar, who is still frum, tracks down Chani, her wayward sister, the conversation they have is entirely forced and improbable, but what is worse, is composed of myriads of assumptions about contemporary culture. Chani has a child with a Hispanic man, and Tamar's reaction upon seeing the child is to think that she isn't cute or pretty, possibly because "she looked so foreign to me" (10). In other words, Tamar is somewhat racist. But it gets better. Chani gives a long speech where she explains, "I've split up with... Susanna's father. And when she's with him it's terrible for me. And for her. And I realize now he's not a good person. He was...unfaithful, selfish. Not

like the kind of men you know. Not like the kind of man you will marry, Tamar" (12). Aha. I see. So within the Orthodox Jewish world, surely no man is ever unfaithful. And it would be impossible for any such man to be selfish! This fairytale vision of Orthodox Judaism disgusts me; it is so shallow and untrue. The story is pure propaganda, of the kind that assumes no intelligence on the part of its readers. The characters are not treated with compassion; Chani is allowed only the most formulaic, foolish lines, and Tamar comes across as a self-righteous idiot (and that is a kind description.) "I couldn't imagine any way we could ever have a real relationship," Tamar thinks to herself before leaving Chani forever (10). Of all the cruel, vicious, self-righteous things to say!

"Shopping with Mom" by Lonna Gordon is yet another story that suffers from the simple flaw of its being pointless—it is a description of a daughter shopping with her mother, but it is hardly original, and gives us no insight into its characters. "Miriam's Song" by Larry Lefkowitz is better in that his prose is wonderful, but the story is somewhat fanciful. There is no reason given for the fact that Miriam begins to sing this song which alienates her from all others, including her twin brother. She is finally reunited with a man who sings this song as well upon venturing to Israel, for he is to be her husband, and that's all very interesting but...what's the

point? The Man in the Gold-Sequined Jumpsuit" by Elise Susan Teitelbaum was intriguing by its nature, but very difficult to understand. While it was clear that the author decided to weave symbols into the story, attempting the style of magical realism, she loses clarity in doing so, and leaves the reader bemused. "The Sermon," by Cary Friedman, was amusing in that the Rabbi gives a speech which actually reflects on himself; he finds that he is guilty of all the sins with which he accuses his congregation, and that he is entirely made up of lies—it was somewhat enjoyable, and certainly better than some of the other pieces. "Yechiel the Baseball Player" by Ira Berkowitz was also one of the better selections, featuring a paragraph that read, "They lived 'on Yechiel's meager salary (barely enough for a childless couple) and on the mélange of lunchroom food Yechiel brought home each day, jello invariably mixing with tuna fish, chocolate pudding with creamed corn" (6).

Yehoshua November's "In the Unseeable World" was interesting in its attempt to correlate dreams and reality to the individual who reaches heavenward in prayer. I liked David Lester's "Days of Awe" due to his incorporating the words "His unbearable light" while describing God, as those seem quite apt (23). November and Lester's other poems, while sometimes incorporating interesting ideas, were not particularly compelling in

that they did not describe their ordinary subjects in a new or exciting way.

Currently, "The Writers' Café" does not impress, nor does it fulfill its mission to be "original" and "creative." In part, this comes from my expectation of what a story, poem, or work ought to convey to the reader. In *The Invention of Solitude*, Paul Auster describes a story by stating "For this is the function of the story: to make a man see the thing before his eyes by holding up another thing to view." I believe this is correct. A story must be written if it is new, original, or explores an aspect of the human condition that we find relevant and compelling. A story is another way of showing ourselves to ourselves, giving over either a message or a deeper understanding of ourselves and our humanity, thereby allowing us a greater sort of ability to comprehend one another. "The Writers' Café" is filled with stories about Jews but they do not latch onto the soul; I am not enthralled, do not feel myself to be uplifted or shocked by their truth. While the idea behind this literary magazine is excellent, and I applaud the endeavor, the publication still needs work. It is my hope that they continue to grow and improve in every way.

Peony

Continued from page 15

him, but Peony's meddling is improper, something which she herself must learn. She must realize that it is unkind and cruel to possess another, that each must live his own life and fulfill his task. Using others as tools is unfair.

In this way a classic tale unfolds before us, exquisitely told and beautifully depicted. See makes excellent use of nature, ascribing particular beauty to plants and flowers—there is much that she sees that the average observer would not. Her careful use of history to add context and further develop the character of others in Peony's family, in addition to causing Peony to be in all ways human, and therefore to want, lust, desire and long for things which cannot be hers, all make her writing uniquely beautiful. Her wording is subtle and skims the surface of deeper feelings; her

method is to conceal more than she actually reveals, allowing the reader to utilize his own imagination to create the rest. One reads this work and understands the delicacy and fragility of it; it is in all ways beautiful and in all ways real and true. Humanity, even when beautiful, is tinged by pain and suffering; these are lessons that Peony must learn as she discovers herself and what it truly means to love.

See incorporates themes that contemporary readers would enjoy, utilizing such common talk-show topics as anorexia or feminism—especially in terms of all things literary—but recaptures seventeenth-century China with the care and delicacy with which she captures her characters and setting. This book is a treasure that must be savored and valued; there is much that is wondrous within it, if only we can bear to look and see ourselves reflected within the characters.

FTOC Museum Month

Continued from page 15

desire to arrange a walking tour for students at Stern. Having broached the subject with Shtern, but realizing that the weather probably did not permit for it, the two explored the idea further and came up with the idea of "indoor educational events," evolving into the current program.

"[The B.L.U.E. program] is really wonderful; it's a great opportunity for students to be involved, meet people and have a somewhat normal college experience that they wouldn't have otherwise," explained Mainzer. "We can't study all the time and the FTOC program is a great outlet to express our creative sides," she said.

Mainzer also spoke highly of the "great mix of classic and Jewish museums," and

the all-expense paid admission.

Even people who are not on the program or first-time students take advantage of the tours, Billet explained. While they were at the Met, a student from Columbia University and of Asian descent accompanied them on their "Highlights" tour, which showed them main things like the Egyptian exhibit and the Greco-Roman Section.

While on the Lower East Side tour, "one of the funny anecdotes was when this man, a Chinese immigrant who grew up on the Lower East Side, took us to The Forward building and started explaining how it's the best—and it was this Jewish socialist paper that was written in Yiddish, so we were laughing inside," Billet recounted.

However, these lighthearted moments gave way to more meaning-

ful ones. Mainzer reflected upon the fact that the most recent visitation had been to the Jewish Heritage Museum. Their tour guide, Ruth Keller, was a Holocaust survivor, and therefore "it was truly a special experience."

Next week boasts an opportunity to visit the Museum of Modern Art. While spots are held for FTOCs first, other students are invited to join if there is extra room, although space is limited.

Metropolitan Experience: My Carnegie Hall Debut

BY NAVA BILLET

Recently, on a Thursday night, I attended a Bobby McFerrin concert at Carnegie Hall with the Stern College for Women Metropolitan Experience. As usual, we had great seats, located in the prime parquet of the Stern Auditorium. (Yes, Carnegie

Hall's main auditorium is also called Stern!) McFerrin is a wonderfully talented vocalist who can reach wide ranges of tones and notes. He has a captivating sense of humor and keeps up a sweet banter with his audience throughout his performance. Mid-concert, between songs, McFerrin asked the attendees if there was any-

one in the hall carrying a harmonica. One of the Stern students happened to have one in her bag (don't ask why), but she was too shy to say so. I told her that if she wanted, I did not mind offering him her instrument and bringing it to the stage. During this lapse of time McFerrin was just about to give up on receiving a har-

monica from the audience. Suddenly, I stood up and exclaimed, "I have a harmonica." All eyes turned to me and the hall was silent. McFerrin replied, "Come on up; you'll play with us." Shocked, I wailed, "But, I do not know how to play the harmonica!" He said, "So what's that good for, I don't know how to play either."

The entire hall burst out in laughter.

Though I do regret that I was unprepared for my first Carnegie Hall debut, I was glad to have provided an exciting piece of entertainment from my seat in the audience.

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DON'T GET CARRIED AWAY THIS PURIM!

Purim is a very joyous holiday.

It is a time when we thank Hashem and celebrate the wonderful miracles
He performed by averting a terrible tragedy – the loss of life.

Unfortunately, every Purim we hear of people ending up in the hospital –
drunk, hurt, sick or G-d forbid, even worse.

By being safety conscious we can have a safe and happy Purim.

Here are some tips for keeping safe:

Alcohol dulls the senses, slows reflexes, and reduces coordination, often with you realizing it.

If you plan to drink, give your car keys to someone else before you even begin.

Don't get into a car with anyone who is drunk, even if they deny it. Don't let anyone drive drunk!

Alcohol poisoning can result in serious permanent injury or even death, G-d forbid.

If you think someone may be suffering from alcohol poisoning,

do not put him or her into bed to "sleep it off."

Immediately call your local EMS squad.

Please note: Alcohol can be deadly when combined with certain prescription medications.

A Safety Message from Hatzolah EMS of North Jersey
& your SCWSC, TAC, and SSSBSC Presidents.

SCIENCE & HEALTH

Torah U'Madda Week Debuts at Stern

BY MIRIAM MERZEL &
OLIVIA MATTHIAS

The Department of Biology at Stern College for Women, in conjunction with the Yeshiva University Center for Israel Studies, launched the school's first "Torah U'Madda Week," a series of three lectures addressing different aspects of the interface between Torah and science.

Rabbi Natan Slifkin, an author known as the "Zoo Rabbi," spoke on the topic of "Sacred Monsters—The Fabulous Jewish Creatures of Harry Potter" on Monday, February 4. The following day, Dr. Nathan Aviezer, professor emeritus in the Department of Physics at Bar Ilan University, delivered a talk entitled, "On Contradictions between Torah and Science: The Creation of the Universe." The final lecture of the series took place on Wednesday, February 6 and was offered by Rabbi Dr. Edward Reichman, associate professor of Emergency Medicine and associate professor of Philosophy and History of Medicine at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine (AECOM). His lecture was titled "The Halachik Approach to New Frontiers in Ovarian Preservation and Transplantation."

Before each presentation, students were given the opportunity to meet with the designated speaker of the evening.

Torah U'Madda Week came about through a stroke of luck. Both Rabbi Slifkin and Dr. Aviezer have presented at SCW in the past, and it turned out that this year, the two were going to be visiting in the United States during the same week. With two speakers ready to present on the topic of Torah and science, the idea of Torah U'Madda Week was born. Rabbi Dr. Reichman, who spoke at an undergraduate Biology/Chemistry shabbaton at AECOM during the fall semester, was invited at the request of students.

Dr. Harvey Babich, professor of Biology at SCW and founding organizer of Torah U'Madda Week, said that although this year's event came about "accidentally," he hopes it will become an annual event.

"People in kiruv often comment that on most college campuses, science is taught as a challenge to religion," Babich explained. "On such campuses, those Jewish students with little Torah education often totally accept the science and negate the religion. Such students are uninformed of the YU approach, the Torah U'Madda approach, in which science is not a challenge to Judaism, but rather is used to better understand and comprehend various Torah concepts and thoughts."

Sacred Monsters—The Fabulous Jewish Creatures of Harry Potter: Rabbi Natan Slifkin

Monday's event included an overview of particular mythical



Courtesy of YU Productions

Rabbi Slifkin delivers lecture in Koch Auditorium

creatures such as centaurs, dragons, phoenixes, griffins, mermaids, and unicorns, and their mention in the Torah, halakha, and rabbinic literature. The lecture also reviewed how these creatures' existence is disputed among great Torah scholars like Rashi and Rambam, as well as by modern scientists. Students engaged Rabbi Slifkin with their own questions before the evening ended.

Rabbi Slifkin maintained that biblically referenced creatures are often inaccurately confused with commonly known mythical creatures. "When there is conflict between science and Torah you have to make sure that it has been translated correctly," Rabbi Slifkin asserted. He posited that translations of Torah and rabbinic literature must be reevaluated to give substance to what the mefarshim (commentaries) discuss.

The "Zoo Rabbi" compared Torah sources with various citations of Harry Potter and reconciled the seemingly preposterous assertions of biblical creatures, using his expertise in zoology and natural history. For example, when the Tanakh mentions a fiery flying serpent (Isaiah 14:29), it does not refer to a dragon like that mentioned in Harry Potter, but a saw-scaled viper. "The saw-scaled viper has fiery burning venom and it lunges with such tremendous velocity that it can fly off the ground, even catching birds in flight," explained Rabbi Slifkin.

He brought in several similar examples from rabbinic literature and offered scientific explanations for the animals or creatures the mefarshim could have referred to when men-

tioning apparently fictional creatures.

Rabbi Slifkin is a strong advocate of reconciling Torah and science for those Jews who live in the modern world and are aware of modern science and critical thought. "When the gemara speaks about an existence of a creature that we know does not exist, it does not mean that it must exist," explains Rabbi Slifkin. "And it's not heretical to say that the sages of the gemara were mistaken for believing that it existed."

Rabbi Slifkin is also a zoologist and published writer. He has written a number of works discussing Torah and zoology including "The Challenge of Creation", "Man and Beast", and his most recent work, touched upon in the lecture at SCW, "Sacred Monsters: Mysterious and Mythical Creatures of Scripture, Talmud, and Midrash."

On Contradictions Between Torah and Science—The Creation of the Universe: Professor Nathan Aviezer

On Tuesday February 5, Torah U'Madda week continued with a lecture from Dr. Nathan Aviezer, Professor Emeritus of Physics at Bar Ilan University. Professor Aviezer spoke about the Big Bang Theory, a theory that is controversial and seemingly anti-religious. In his speech, Aviezer compared the Big Bang Theory to the biblical account in Genesis. "Today," said Aviezer, "there is harmony and consistency between the words of the first chapter of Genesis and the latest findings of science."

The Big Bang Theory has

been gaining momentum ever since the emergence of scientific data supporting its validity. It was first formulated in 1916, when Albert Einstein developed the General Theory of Relativity, stating that gravity is a distortion of time and space. This theory, along with the Cosmological Principle that maintaining that all the matter of the universe is homogeneously spread out, is the basis of what English astronomer Frederick Hoyle termed the Big Bang Theory.

"The Big Bang Theory is today accepted by all cosmologists, buttressed by a vast array of scientific evidence," explained Aviezer. "I wished the students to understand that the era of contradictions between Torah and science is over. The Jew of the 21st century is no longer required to choose between accepting the latest scientific findings or remaining faithful to our Torah tradition that is thousands of years old."

Aviezer's lecture emphasized the possibility that Torah and cosmologists, those who study the science dealing with the origin and development of the universe, are actually speaking about the same thing. Cosmologists refer to the "creation of the universe" and the Torah refers to the "Creator of the universe." Aviezer used this and other ideas to resolve seeming contradictions between the two.

The Halachik Approach to New Frontiers in Ovarian Preservation and Transplantation: Rabbi Dr. Edward Reichman

Rabbi Dr. Reichman wrapped up the week on February 6 with a very contemporary topic: infertility and ways to combat it. He began by giving a history of how science and halakha view the development of a child. This led into a discussion of

what constitutes paternity and maternity in terms of halakha. Considerations include who is the father in instances of artificial insemination, what makes a woman the mother in the eyes of halakha, and what issues are involved in ovarian transplant, a new medical advancement. The presentation ended with examples of issues such as a postmenopausal woman carrying babies, freezing ovaries or eggs, and the development of sperm or eggs from stem cells.

"I found Dr. Reichman's presentation very worthwhile," said Aliza Berkowitz, SCW '09. "He was enjoyable to listen to and had a lot of extensive sources both in halakha and biology. It was an interesting topic, relevant on personal and societal levels and really combined the idea of Torah U'Madda." Berkowitz added that she would like to see such a week again in the future, perhaps including topics from other secular areas as well.

The general consensus at the end of the series was extremely positive. Women walking out of all the speeches had complimentary remarks about the speakers, topics, and the series in general.

Furthermore, Torah U'Madda week took on another important function by extending its audience beyond current SCW students. Yeshiva high schools in the tri-state area were invited to bring their AP biology and chemistry classes to attend the speakers, as were seniors who had just applied to the Honors program.

In addition, tours of the biology and chemistry labs at SCW were given by a few of SCW's science majors. "We want to show the high school students that Stern takes science seriously," said Murray Sragow,

Continued on page 22

The Chemistry of Antioxidants

BY TEHILLA RAVIV

As part of an ongoing effort to educate Stern College for Women students about the health benefits and risks associated with various chemicals, the Chemistry Society has decided to introduce a new column entitled "Nutrition and You." These articles will tie into the Chemistry Society's nutritional theme of the month. This month we have chosen to discuss the chemistry behind antioxidants.

An antioxidant is loosely defined as a chemical that protects the body from highly reactive oxygen species, such as free oxygen radicals. These reactive molecules have at least one oxygen atom with an unpaired, free electron. This causes the molecules to be highly unstable and therefore highly reactive. To gain stability, the oxygen atom attacks another compound and 'steals' an electron to pair with its own. By

doing so, the molecule that loses its electron becomes unstable and must also change in order to gain stability. Since the molecule is changed, however, it can no longer take part in necessary cellular reactions, disrupting the normal functions of the cell. If not stopped, free radicals can cause damage to proteins, carbohydrates, lipids, and nucleic acids. In fact, current research has tied free radicals to many health problems including cancer, heart disease, and cataracts. Recently, scientists have also theorized that free radicals may be responsible for a great deal of the aging process.

Free radicals and other reactive oxygen species are created as a result of normal metabolic events in the body such as enzymatic reaction, and from exposure to environmental hazards such as x-rays, ozone, cigarette smoking, air pollutants, and in-

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Active Minds Raises Mental Health Awareness

BY GRACE CHARLES

Over the past few years, experts have become increasingly alarmed by the status of mental health on college campuses. In 2006, the American College Health Association announced that over 40% of college students reported having felt so depressed at times that they were unable to function. According to the Suicide Prevention Resource, suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students. Perhaps most notably, in the past few years, the U.S. has suffered several tragedies on school grounds. Three school shootings occurred in 2007 alone, including the most deadly school shooting in the nation's history in which 32 people were killed at Virginia Tech. Such events exemplify the effect of ignoring poor mental health, instead of acknowledging and treating it.

To improve the crisis state that campus mental health has reached, some students are working hard to change the way people perceive mental disorders. Rather than allowing students with poor mental health to be shunned and isolated from society, a new student organization, called Active Minds at YU, is aiming to ensure that undergraduates are comfortable speaking about their problems and seeking help.

"Today, everyone knows everyone's business," says Asher Morris, founder and president of Active Minds at YU. "If you're suffering from

a mental illness, you should be able to be open with everyone about it."

As of October 2007, the YU undergraduate schools officially became part of the 111 chapters involved in Active Minds, a national organization that develops and supports student-run mental health awareness, education, and advocacy groups on college campuses. Active Minds's novel approach is the brainchild of Alison Malmon, who was a freshman at the University of Pennsylvania when her older brother committed suicide in 2000.

Brian Malmon, a Columbia College student, had visited the counseling center at Columbia University in November 1998 after revealing that he had experienced depression and psychosis throughout the previous three years. Taking the counseling center's advice, he returned to his family's home in Potomac, Maryland and started seeing a therapist and taking medication for his mental illness, which was later diagnosed as schizoaffective disorder. (This particular diagnosis refers to individuals who may have symptoms of both a depressive disorder and schizophrenia or symptoms of schizophrenia without mood symptoms). Tragically, a year and a half later, Malmon ended his life. His death came as a shock to the many people who knew him. "You don't really expect it to happen to a brilliant, outgoing, funny young adult who is in an Ivy League university," Alison Malmon

said in an interview with CNN.

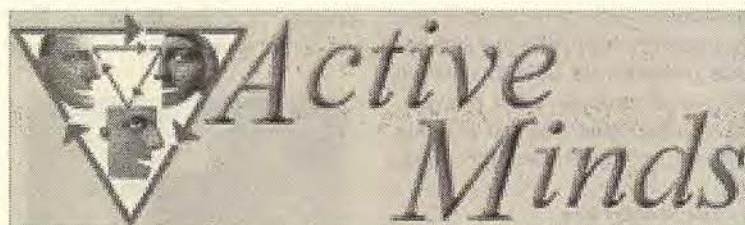
Alison Malmon believes her brother's fear of his mental illness hindered him from getting help. Realizing that her fellow Penn students did not speak about mental health problems even though the issues were clearly prevalent on campus, she formed "Open Minds" about a year and a half after her brother's death. Her intent was to educate students about the issues, signs, and symptoms of mental illness and about where and how to get help. "And," Malmon says, "I wanted that to come from the students themselves, be-

Malmon. Asher Morris, a senior at Yeshiva College, had tried earlier last year to start a peer-counseling program similar to a program he had observed at the University of Maryland. However, he had been turned down due to the small size of YU's undergraduate campus. When Dr. Nissel approached Morris with the idea of starting a YU Active Minds chapter, Morris eagerly went to work.

Today Morris is the president of a board made up of seven other members from both Yeshiva College and Stern College for Women. The board meets once a week to discuss

ate an environment in which students feel comfortable to openly discuss mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and stress. The chapter already has had a successful kickoff event on Monday, December 24. Approximately 200 students from both campuses met at Schottenstein Residence Hall's Ivy Lounge and enjoyed Starbucks coffee, popcorn, and music at the Active Minds Coffee House. At the event, information was available regarding various mental illnesses, how students can help friends in need, as well as information about the Counseling Center. Active Minds's second event, "Perspectives on Suicide: Mental Illness on College Campuses," was held on Tuesday, February 5 and focused on mental illness and suicide awareness. The event included a documentary film "The Truth about Suicide" and a panel discussion with Alison Malmon, YU Dean of Students Dr. Victor Schwartz, and Dr. Nissel.

In addition to these first events, Morris and his board are working to create other informative and interesting events for YU undergraduate students. Possible future events include: showing a documentary about eating disorders on college campuses and inviting a woman who overcame an eating disorder to talk about her past battles, having a downtown to uptown walk to raise awareness about mental health, and hosting a speaker on halakha and psychology.



cause I felt education coming from the clinicians, from professionals, is often more stigmatized and more intimidating, than it is coming from students who have their own stories." After Open Minds gained more public recognition, Malmon decided to change the name to Active Minds.

The idea for opening an Active Minds chapter at YU began after Dr. Chaim Nissel, director of the Counseling Center at YU, attended a presentation by Alison

upcoming events and general information about what is happening on campus. They also have an Advisory Board consisting of members from the Psychology Clubs and Peer-to-Peer. Dr. Yael Muskat, assistant director of the YU Counseling Center says, "We at the Counseling Center are thrilled that this organization has taken off and support it in any way possible."

The group plans to hold events to help remove the stigma surrounding mental illnesses and to cre-

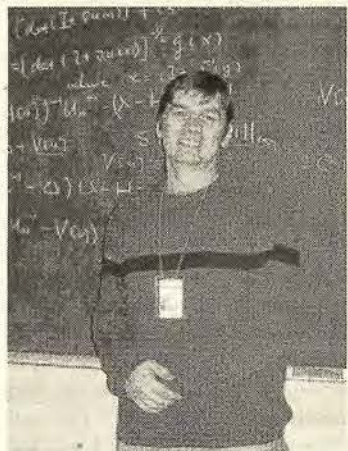
Spotlight on SCW Faculty-Student Research: Physics

BY LORIEL SOLODOKIN

Physics research is a growing pursuit among both the faculty members and students of Stern College for Women (SCW). While this focus of investigation is complex by nature, it does not deter the faculty members at Stern from continuing their respective projects. At SCW, three members of the Physics department are currently incorporating undergraduate assistance in their research.

Dr. Anatoly Frenkel is interested in understanding how the atomic structures of materials influence their properties. To study nanoscale materials (nanoparticles, nanoalloys, their nucleation and growth), Dr. Frenkel relies on X-Ray-Absorption Fine-Structure (XAFS), one of the structural techniques used to observe local atomic environments. At Brookhaven National Laboratory, Dr. Frenkel runs XAFS experiments at the National Synchrotron Light Source (NSLS). A Synchrotron light is electromagnetic radiation produced by bending magnets and insertion devices in particle accelerators and free electron lasers. As a co-director of the Synchrotron Catalysis Consortium, funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, Dr. Frenkel helps run the facility for synchrotron research in nanocatalysis and nanoscience. In his X-ray absorption spectroscopy experiments, he obtains data that can be directly related to the details of the local structure around the absorbing element in the system of interest.

During the summer, Dr. Frenkel works with SCW undergraduates both at the Beren campus and at Brookhaven National Laboratory. Many of the students who have worked with Dr. Frenkel have had the opportunity to be co-authors of journal articles.



Eveline Mordehai/The Observer

Dr. Emil Podan

Dr. Frenkel commented that the investigation has given students the "excitement and fulfillment of a research project," adding that it often helps them reach decisions regarding future careers. "Ruling out the desire to do research is just as important as deciding to conduct research," he said.

"It was interesting to see what was being done in a physics research laboratory as opposed to reading the material in a physics text

book," remarked Malka Bromberg (SCW '10), who researched with Dr. Frenkel in the summer of 2007. As a result of the experience, Bromberg said she is more knowledgeable about the subject than before.

Dr. Emil Prodan, who recently joined the Physics Department, conducts research focusing on theoretical condensed matter, "mainly using chalk, and lots of it, and a blackboard" to evaluate the complex behavior of many-particle systems. He is also simulating realistic systems and generating quantitative predictions on a computer that can be verified experimentally or used for applications.

Currently, Dr. Prodan is concentrating his attention on understanding how charge and spin are transported across molecular structures. He is working on a new theory of tunneling transport which could, for example, have ramifications for tunneling magneto-resistance, a key concept used in information storage. Dr. Prodan is also exploring certain topological aspects present in strongly correlated matter and how to use these special properties to generate robust quantum computing algorithms. Another project, which is actually a collaborative effort involving several physics faculty members at SCW and Yeshiva College, focuses on quantitative predictions of nano-particles' atomic and electronic structure and their optical properties.

Dr. Prodan has informed SCW students about his research through short presentations. He is

now seeking undergraduates interested in theoretical and computational research to assist with projects he is designing. Dr. Prodan noted that doing research exposes the students to the "challenges that scientists solve and the approaches to their methods."



Eveline Mordehai/The Observer

Dr. Anatoly Frenkel

"Getting your hands wet in a lot of different subjects prepares you for graduate school," said Amy Levee (SCW '10), currently working with Dr. Prodan. "Everything you do [that is related to your field of study] will help you advance your career."

Lastly, Dr. Lea Ferriera dos Santos, who also joined SCW this past fall, has been conducting research in the field of quantum mechanics. The discovery of the particle/wave duality of matter led to the branch of physics

that now called quantum mechanics. This fundamental physical theory describes the world at the microscopic level and is at the basis of practically every modern technological development, from magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to computers and cellular phones. One of the most surprising properties of a quantum object is its ability to possess two or more states at the same time—what is known as coherent superposition. Quantum coherence, however, is not a permanent property. It is eventually lost through the unavoidable interaction of the system with the surrounding environment. Internal couplings (caused by the inevitable system-environment communication) may also be detrimental if not controllable, since they may evolve the system into undesired or unknown states. Therefore, the ability to control the quantum system by minimizing the effects of all unwanted couplings is crucial. Dr. Santos's area of research focuses on the development of methods to control and reduce the effects of undesired interactions.

David Cohen (SCW '09), who plans to research with Dr. Santos, is presently learning the background information for quantum physics, so as to be better prepared for the project. Cohen commented that her experience has allowed her to "appreciate physics even more," concluding that it is "nice to be involved in something to help science."

FASHION & STYLE

Report: Fashion Week

Fall '08 Beauty Trends

BY VIVIAN DONATH

This month has seen one fabulous week of fashion in New York City. Here's an insider's view of the beauty trends spotted on the runways.

The show's look, often dictated by the designer, was based on the theme of each collection. Some makeup artists were really creative in inspiring new trends. The top makeup artists for the various shows, such as Ayako of Nars, Christopher Del Castillo of MAC, Gucci Westman of Lancome, Pat McGrath of Max Factor and Dick Page of Shiseido, once again demonstrated their talent for the art of application.

1. An Elegant Face

The focus was on long luscious lashes, and a strong mouth with beautifully stained lips—not matte, yet not too glossy. Hair was long and flowing, or up in a tight ponytail, wrapped around the head and secured with a headband to give it a hint of the 1920s flapper feel.

2. Simple and Chic

It's been a while since we saw Marc Jacobs as subdued as he was at this year's presentation of his Marc by Marc Jacobs line at New York's Fall Fashion Week. (What, no reverse-heeled shoes?) While I loved that he chose to use pretty and flattering shades of pink on his model's lips, the otherwise bare faces and slicked-back ponytails did little to spice up the overall look. On other runways, the beautiful gold lids and a strong eyebrow were great, even for spring.

3. The Stormy Eye

Layer upon layer of plum, lilac, and black shimmering shadows were copiously applied to create this radical look. To balance it out, cheeks were enhanced with a sheer glow to create a soft, luminous face. Lips were matte.

4. Youthful Skin

The key here was "selectively matte" skin. Instead of dusting powder over the entire face, the trend was lightly sweeping translucent powder just over the forehead and chin and letting the rest glow.

The effect of the makeup was natural and luminous. Applying a rosy cream blush on cheeks caught the light and added a youthful element.

5. Half-up Hair

"This is Jerry Hall meets Park Avenue." The overall half-up look was a bit sporty, with some added



Courtesy of Style.com
Bobbi Brown at Fashion Week

height and beautiful sexy waves.

6. Bold, Bright Eye Shadow

Nothing makes a great dress pop like a splash of color, and the shows this time around proved no exception. Fresh, exotic colors on the eyes brightened the otherwise

subtle, muted collections. When done right, a sheer blue really flatters any eye. To achieve this look yourself, apply blue shadow from the inner corner to the center of the

lid, only. Then sweep a soft gray shade to the outer edge of the eye.

Vivian Donath is the president of the Cosmetic Marketing Club

Industry Insider: A Chance Encounter Leads to a Couture Adventure

BY EFRAT OKRENT

My Aunt Edna owns an antique shop in Sherman Oaks, California that sells an array of items from armoires to original costume jewelry. Edna is definitely not your run-of-the-mill, polite shop owner. She is extremely sociable and never fails to make an impression.

This past summer, a woman who often shops at the store took a liking to Edna and they began talking. "So what do you do?" Edna asked her. "I'm the buyer for a clothing company," the woman responded.

From there the two became good friends. A few weeks later, when Edna's family was at my house for Shabbat, she asked me what career I was going to pursue upon my graduation from Stern. I told her that I was teetering between buyer and stylist positions and that I had not yet made up my mind. "Oh, you're kidding," she said "I have a friend who is the buyer for a clothing company. I think it was called G-B-C-G, something like that." "Do you mean BCBG?" I asked in a hopeful tone. "Yeah, that's the one!" Edna confirmed. We set up a meeting and I began interning for BCBG's Production and Design departments.

On my first day, as I peered through the long mazelike hallways, I could not help but feel overwhelmed by it all, and a bit afraid that I was venturing into the world of "The Devil Wears Prada." However my fears were quickly allayed as my boss showed me around and introduced me to the people I would be working with. They were all very friendly and welcoming. I felt right at home, and the fact that I was surrounded by row after row of couture was a fabulous fringe benefit.

Among other tasks, I was responsible for "the books" in the Production Department. These were huge binders containing fabric swatches and lab dips that either came back from the dyeing mills or were waiting to be sent out for color comparisons. Once the lab dips were returned from the mill, they would become bulk fabric. I received the textile packages and filed them under their corresponding style numbers. It was really interesting to see the dresses that were created from the materials I had put away.

However, the real treat was



Courtesy of Efrat Okrent

my work each Friday, when I was assigned to the design department. I helped out with prepping and organizing the collections for official meetings and with making fabric buttons. I also participated in photographing the inspiration pieces that were bought by Lubav Azria, the designer's wife, on her trips around the world. These pieces were then used to generate design ideas from the latest up-and-coming trends.

I most enjoyed working in the "Vintage Library," a massive warehouse filled to the brim with the actual runway pieces and Herve Léger originals worn by celebrities. Celebrities and their stylists would come in to choose a dress or gown for an event from the "Vintage Library" and my boss and I would pull the pieces from the warehouse. After the event was over and the dresses were returned, we carefully placed them back in their cover-slips. Some of the unique designer pieces from the 80's became my favorite. Their colors were fantastic, and the signature "bandage dresses," fashioned out of lycra and spandex strips of fabric made to contour a woman's shape, were absolutely amazing.

My experience at BCBG was a positive and educational one and provided me with a great opportunity to network with industry members. It is extremely important to possess a positive and affable attitude in this business. Putting yourself out there and taking chances allow you to expand your horizons. Remember, you never know who you might meet!

Inside the Tents and Beyond

BY DANELLE TOKAYER

"Fashion Week" is a term that seems to be thrown around with the assumption that everyone knows what the two juxtaposed words entail. Yes, New Yorkers are aware that it sweeps the city biannually, conquering Bryant Park with a large white tent and forcing the ice rink to close mid-season. But what really is Fashion Week?

Fashion Week occurs twice a year in the four fashion capitals of

and expositions, at which designers showcase their new collections.

Fashion Week, held first in September and again in February, is essentially a forecast for the industry.



Courtesy of NYMag.com

The fall shows exhibit styles for the following spring and summer, while the winter shows present what's on tap for the next fall and winter. The week therefore functions as an important sneak peek for buyers and insiders.

Designers spend several months and countless hours in preparation for the runway shows. Each collection is compiled with a specific theme in mind and the lighting, music, scenery, and choice of models are set accordingly. There is cohesion and

fluidity as the show progresses from one piece to the next, but the designer typically begins and ends the show with the collection's strongest pieces.

For example, Angel Sanchez's Fall 2008 collection was inspired by Japanese architecture. He accomplished a pervasive architectural theme by utilizing geometric shapes in both the garment structure and appliqué. Although the collection ranged in style and color, the show was pulled together by the models. Their calm makeup and hair styling, and their legs uniformly adorned with black tights, all reinforced the show's focus.

The first Fashion Week commenced in New York in 1943 as an effort by the American fashion industry to divert attention away from French designer clothing during World War II, a time in which Americans were limited in travel. The initial purpose for the event was to serve as a means for showcasing designer innovations, and over time, it has become one of the major and most exclusive events of the year, attracting socialites and celebrities.

Although many events of Fashion Week are by invitation only, the general public is at times allowed to enter the tent, which is an experience in itself. Bryant Park, temporarily transformed into an indoor social hall decked with flashing lights, fashionable socialites, and lots of excitement, is a sight to behold.

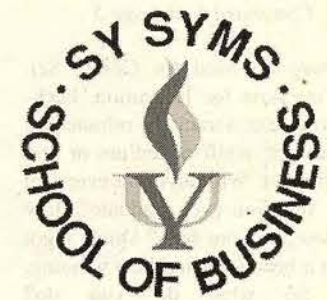
The next Fashion Week is due to invade the city in September, so make sure to be on the lookout!



Courtesy of NYMag.com

Two looks from Angel Sanchez

the world: New York, Paris, Milan, and London. The week-long event is comprised of a series of runway shows, charitable fundraisers, galas,



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Career Woes and Worries

Continued from page 5

swapping Pre-Med for Comp. Sci. and Fine Arts for Education, backing away from a track the minute you get that first whiff of tedium or disappointment. Will anything ever feel right? Will you ever graduate? How will you pay your bills? Doubt's got you in a headlock, and he's winning.

So what do you do?

I'm not sure I know. I've seen people tackle Career Anxiety in various ways, with varying degrees of success. A friend from high school, frustrated by the vague and tepid information about jobs in her dream field of English Lit., settled for a more practical certificate as a paralegal, securing her income but leaving her change-the-world yearning oddly unfulfilled. Another moved to Israel with half a Comp. Sci. degree and half a Bio, hoping to divine from the Land what her tafkaid (purpose) really is. And then there are students like me, putting one foot in front of the other, feeling our way along the job markets without any real sense of what the job that will fulfill us looks like, if it really exists, where to find it, and how to make ourselves appealing candidates for the position. In the meantime we

work where we can, trying to frame our desires and abilities in terms of what's asked of us, trying to glean clues about what constitutes success from the environment around us.

Maybe that's what it's about. Maybe everyone you see who seems to genuinely love what they do came to their career through a molasses-like concoction of carefully sifted information and luck. Maybe not. I can reach no satisfying conclusion. But even though I have not yet stumbled upon the antidote to Career Anxiety, I believe there's a certain Rumpelstiltskin-esque power in giving it a name. Once you know what you fear and why you fear it, the helpless, overwhelming terror of a blank future fades, and what you are left with is a problem to be solved, whether that means taking critical stock of what you are good at and what you can do or retooling your ideas of how your strengths and weaknesses can be applied in fields you haven't even Googled yet.

And should you, in the midst of this, have any breakthroughs on the Doubt front—I'll be feeding freelance pieces to the monster in my closet. He has a taste for unsolicited manuscripts.

Cardozo Scholarship

Continued from page 9

Alumni of YU reflected on their respective law school decisions, in light of the new Cardozo scholarship and rising stature.

"Never having Shabbat or Yom-Tov conflicts is really great, and having a kosher cafeteria to rely on is a really good perk," enthused Julia Frankston-Morris, one of the two SCW 2007 graduates currently attending Cardozo.

Gadi Dotz (SSSB '07), a first year law student at Fordham, finds the school, which is a Jesuit institution, to be just as respectful of the needs of religious students in attendance. "The professors are very understanding, and the school records all the classes that are taught during yuntif [Jewish holidays] and puts them online for the Jewish students who can't be there in person," Dotz related.

"I'm not really sure how much the new scholarship would have affected my decision," added Dotz, who was accepted to both Cardozo and Fordham. He did note that "law school is very expensive though, so it would have been something to consider."

Project IMPACT

Continued from page 8

however, embody the values YU attempts to inculcate in its students—a greater understanding of responsibility to the Jewish community and the dedication in translating that responsibility into meaningful action.

"The students experience learning as a stimulating, fun workshop and realize that learning and living Torah is enjoyable and fulfilling," explained Berger. "Hopefully this strengthens their ties to *Yiddishkeit* (Judaism), and produces stronger feelings of Jewish identity."

Tuition Debate

Continued from page 9

When asked if YU feels pressure to vamp up its financial aid offerings, Fisher insisted that no upgrade was needed in order to compete. "Overall, what these Ivy League schools have announced to do is similar to what we already have," he declared. "We welcome the other universities who have joined us in our effort to make college affordable. It's great that they're making that commitment."

Torah U'Madda Week

Continued from page 18

associate director of Undergraduate Admissions. "We felt we could accomplish that in two ways. One was to invite them to lectures and the other was to show them around the labs, to demonstrate that there is a tremendous amount of real work going on and there are committed faculty members and students. The outcomes are apparent. Our students get into advanced programs based on the work they do here at Stern."

Approximately seven schools took SCW up on their invitation, bringing their students as groups, while individuals from other schools came on their own.

"The Orthodox Jewish viewpoint is not to hide its head in the sand when new biotechnological advances arise, but rather to analyze the technology and its applicability within the guidelines of halacha," concluded Dr. Babich. "Thus, Torah U'Madda week represents a healthy approach to science, as viewed through the parameters of Torah."

Women at Seforim Sale

Continued from page 8

has to do with recognizing that women are working along with the men."

Shuman did not anticipate any detrimental effects to the sale following a name modification, arguing that the same customers would continue to shop there.

"We have the idea of hakarat hatov," she continued. "Here that means that if men and women are working on a project together they should both be recognized. This would just be evolving the name into something more representative of reality. Women at the sale is not a b'dieved' (less than ideal) situation—they actually take a very active role."

YU and ZOA

Continued from page 12

after the program's conclusion.

"This is only one of the many things that the ZOA does," said Lockspeiser, referring to the organization's mission of providing creativity, logistics, and ideas to students with leadership roles on campus. "This is only a new initiative that we're just starting."

Meles, in turn, confirmed that YU students were "able and willing" to step up and take an active role in the ZOA.

Shmittah Debate

Continued from page 14

these halakhic issues, on top of the fact that by importing produce, one avoids partaking in this special mitzvah altogether. Due to the political implications of the Haredi-preferred method, many Religious Zionists consider it to be ethically-suspect, no matter how much it is halakhically-sound.

The above summary in no way serves as a comprehensive study of the complicated halakhic and societal factors surrounding shmittah, but it does offer some perspective on the issues. It is easy to lose oneself in the details of the controversy, but it is important to remember that this heated debate, which does much damage to the unity of the Jews of Israel every seven years, is not a new one and is most likely not one that will be solved for many years to come.

Sefi Lerner (SCW '08), a participant in the winter mission, shared a realistic and sincere thought on the debate after hearing a lecture from Rabbi Binyamin Lau, who spoke about leadership in *am yisrael*. "There needs to be people who are holding of the heter mechira for the state to survive, and there will always be people with the strong desire to be machmir (stringent) on halakha," Lerner noted. "This conflict is almost inevitable. On one hand it's depressing, but on the other hand, this is what it means to be a diverse people living together in one country."

Over the course of the trip, the women heard from scholars supporting a broad range of positions. The characteristic that shined through all of their opinions and offered some comfort to the confounded members of the audience was that each speaker believed that his position was accomplishing the most for the Jewish people. The good intentions are there, but ultimately good intentions are not the only factor in determining peace and for now, shmittah will remain a challenging mitzvah for the nation to keep on a national level.

The winter mission, aside from being intellectually engaging and often emotionally evocative, was a major milestone for women's learning. Never before has there been a winter mission trip for Stern students focused on learning from traditional sources. The idea of a learning mission was envisioned by students on last year's war-relief mission to Israel and with the support of the CJF, it was successfully actualized one year later. This seven-day intensive, explorative experience awarded the nineteen women who participated in it with opportunities for spiritual growth and intellectual development in the Land of Israel, and to learn about a mitzvah whose discussion can only reach the realm of the theoretical here in the Diaspora.

WhoWhatWhereWhenYU

News you should know: From Enrollment Services

STERN COLLEGE FOR WOMEN/SY SYMS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
THE REBECCA IVRY DEPARTMENT OF JEWISH STUDIES/
S: DANIEL ABRAHAM ISRAEL PROGRAM

This is the first in a regular series that will appear in each issue of the Observer — news, updates, etc. from the Beren Campus enrollment offices. Use the email addresses below or stop by every now and then to stay in touch!

- It's that time of year again — if you are applying for 08-09 financial aid, the FAFSA filing season has begun. You can go online right now to www.fafsa.ed.gov and get it filed. The Student Aid Office encourages you to complete the FAFSA right now, based on estimated 1040 data, so that you get in the game as early as possible.
- Once again this summer, YU and NCSY will host SUMMER@YU. This unique summer college experience for high school students offers the independence of college life and the excitement of NYC, all within a Torah environment. If there are any high school students in your family who might be interested, let them know — the remaining slots are filling quickly. Full details at: www.yu.edu/summeraty

John Fisher
Director of Enrollment Management



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Pre-Med Career Challenges

Continued from page 11

ogy to other aspects of healthcare.

"I don't think I regret my decision," she declared. "Some people look at me and feel bad for me, and I have a few friends who still think I'm pre-med at heart. But maybe pre-med just isn't for me after all, and that's okay with me."

For Tami Schechter (SCW '08), dropping the pre-med track made college less stressful, and although leaving behind her dream of becoming a physician was difficult, she felt that her future family would be more important than her career. She hopes to become a physician's assistant, "because it still gives me an opportunity to be involved with medicine, but it is still a little higher than a nurse."

Schechter expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of guidance she received, noting that she missed earlier deadlines for applications because of a lack of information.

"I decided probably junior year that I wanted to go into nursing," related Devorah Thaler (SCW '08). "I thought it was a great way to help people, be involved in medicine. I wanted something more hands-on medically than just a therapy, and nursing looked like a great alternative with possibility for advancement and a graduate degree in nursing. Honestly, medical school is a lot of

work and time, and I wasn't motivated to go the whole nine yards."

She added that often, students are quite idealistic about the theoretical prospect of attending medical school, but that upon encountering the workload, end up changing their minds or pursuing other life plans. Thaler noted that while there is an academic advisor who specializes in students interested in nursing, her role is not well-publicized, and her hours on campus are very limited.

Chana Posnick (SCW '08) knew that she wanted to be a nurse from the beginning of her career at SCW. She saw nursing as a way to interact with patients without having to go through the intense schooling required of a doctor. Posnick was unimpressed, however, with the lack of guidance given to pre-nursing students at SCW. "In terms of staff, the school hired a nursing advisor, but she is only available one Wednesday a month and only for about two hours. It's ridiculous when there are many students considering nursing who need the proper guidance."

All of the women interviewed for this article mentioned having acquaintances with similar feelings, whether it was regarding the stress of the pre-med workload, or the dilemma of choosing whether or not to continue on the road to becoming an M.D. For women who are con-

SCW to Expand Faculty

Continued from page 6

both a result of a departmental expansion and an attempt to replace professors considering retirement. According to English Chair Professor Laurel Hatvary, the department is seeking an early Americanist, a twentieth-century Americanist who specializes in Jewish American Literature, an Upper Level Victorian scholar to enter as an associate or full professor, and a Medievalist to replace Dr. Lana Schwebel, who was tragically killed in a car accident in the of summer 2007.

While the task of hiring new faculty is a challenging one, Hatvary mentioned that both she and her colleagues have met "some wonderful candidates." After reviewing the hundreds of resumes received, the English department collectively narrowed down their choices and interviewed more than twenty potential candidates at the national Modern Language Association (MLA) Con-

ference in Chicago this past January. After the conference interviews, the English faculty then invited two professors in each field to visit SCW in order to tour the school, meet with students, and in most cases, give a lecture. The bulk of the candidates will be interviewing at SCW during February and March.

"English majors were always consistently popular amongst the women at SCW," said Hatvary, reiterating her commitment to hiring the best candidates. Dr. Morton Lowengrub, provost and vice president of Academic Affairs at Yeshiva University, noted that the active recruitment in the various departments "is part of the university's strategic plan to add more faculty and maintain the average student to faculty ratio of 10 to 1."

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According to Lowengrub, the undergraduate schools have added 56 new positions since 2003, a significant number of them located at SCW.

concerned with meshing a demanding career with raising a family, the question is delicate and complex. Each student's ultimate decision is a personal one, reflecting her capabilities, interests and overarching life goals.

Dr. Loewy reiterated that students must take those factors into consideration when making future career plans. "Many walk out with

hope...but you can't give people a false sense of hope," she said seriously. "I have to tell them at a certain point to look at plan B. If they still want to apply, I'll back them up. I have to be realistic - I don't want to set people up for failure. If I didn't do that, I wouldn't be a good advisor."

Israel Apartheid Week

Continued from page 12

sue would be uncomfortable," continued Birnbaum. "The movie was taken totally out of context; the title itself was so biased. The people running it were clearly biased, we knew going in what we were in for, and the David Project prepared us for it before the event began. It was horrifying to see how much the facts could be twisted."

Weiss-Faratici walked away from the event feeling empowered and eager to combat biases. "I am armed with the truth and I can voice my opinion and tell the people that really count that truth," she asserted. "Instead of just being disturbed, we as responsible adults have to do something."

In fact, Weiss-Faratici and several YU students are already taking action. On the day she was interviewed by The Observer, Weiss-Faratici was heading to Capitol Hill on a Yeshiva University Public Action Committee (YUAPC) trip. "I'm going on a lobby mission to Washington today and I'm going to tell the people who count the real story," she said.

Antioxidants

Continued from page 18

dustrial chemicals. The human body, however, is not defenseless against these antagonists; it has its own molecular defenders that react with free radicals before they can wreak havoc. There are two lines of defense in a cell: the enzymes and the antioxidants. Enzymes, such as glutathione peroxidase, protect the cell by decreasing the concentration of reactive oxygen species in the cell. They can only work when there is a high enough concentration of specific essential minerals including selenium, copper, manganese, and zinc. When these minerals are lacking, the body is more at risk for disease. The second line of defense, antioxidants, protects the cell by donating a free electron to the radical oxygen in order to stabilize it before it reacts with other compounds. These antioxidants include glutathione, ubiquinol, and uric acid, all of which are naturally produced.

We can help our body fight free radicals by ingesting other antioxidants as part of a healthy diet. While over 4000 antioxidants have been identified, research has shown that vitamin E, vitamin C, and the carotenoids are the most effective. They each protect different types of molecules from oxidation. Vitamin E is actually a collective name for eight non-polar compounds, which are fat-soluble substances present in all cellular membranes, and is mainly stored in adipose tissue, the liver, and muscle. Vitamin E is one of the principal antioxidants in the body and is more effective than both vitamin C and carotenoids. It mainly protects fatty acids in cell membranes. Vitamin E is called a

"singlet oxygen quencher" because it neutralizes single, or singlet, oxygen molecules that have been found to be able to damage DNA. Currently, vitamin E is widely used in facial creams because of its newly discovered anti-aging influences on skin.

Vitamin C, also known as ascorbic acid, is a water-soluble vitamin and thus, protects from free radicals in the water portions of cells as well as in the fluids between cells. It is considered to be one of the most important antioxidants in extra-cellular fluids. Vitamin C is also important because it is involved in regenerating vitamin E after it has neutralized free radicals. Lastly, carotenoids are a group of red, orange, and yellow pigments found in plant foods, particularly fruits and vegetables. Of the carotenoids, B-carotene and lycopene have been studied the most, and researcher has found them to be powerful singlet oxygen quenchers. Carotenoids work by assisting vitamin E.

It is important to keep in mind that while antioxidants are a necessary component of a healthy diet, too great of an amount is damaging. Free radicals, while often harmful, do play an important role in protecting the cell from pathogen microbes. White blood cells release free radicals as a line of defense, so neutralizing all the free radicals in a cell prevents the immune system from using a powerful tool. Recent studies have shown that beyond a certain dosage of antioxidants, the body's immune system is weakened and the body is more susceptible to disease. Therefore, while taking supplements of antioxidants is beneficial, only the recommended amount should be consumed, as dictated by a doctor.

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