



The Yeshiva University

OBSERVER

VOLUME LV, ISSUE 1 AUG 27, 2009

SCW and Legacy Heritage Fund Launch Jewish Educators Project

Estie Neff

In Fall 2009, Stern College for Women (SCW) will begin the Jewish Educators Project, a joint SCW-Legacy Heritage Fund program to provide specialized support for budding Jewish educators. Participants in the Jewish Educators Project will receive tuition support from the Legacy Heritage Fund, which was founded in May 2006 to further Jewish adult education in communities throughout the United States.

"We believe that the graduates of this program will contribute to the great need for professional,

knowledgeable and well-trained educators in the various day schools throughout the country," Associate Dean Ethel Orlian told *The Observer*.

Each year, nine students will be accepted to the Jewish Educators Project. While only these nine will receive the title of Legacy Heritage Fund Scholar, any student will be able to major in Judaic studies with a concentration in Jewish education.

The Legacy Heritage Fund Scholars will receive full tuition support in the form of half grant and half forgivable loan. The scholar-

ship requires that the participants teach for the three years succeeding graduation. "In general we expect that this commitment will be fulfilled directly after graduation," said Dean Karen Bacon. "If students need to deviate from this plan we will have to review this on a case by case basis."

Scholars will be eligible for certain incentives during their initial teaching years, including mentors and financial support. Further details about these programs could not be disclosed as the Jewish Educators Project is being undertaken for the first time this year and its organizers can, as of now, only offer a broad description of it.

SCW started publicizing the program to prospective applicants around November 2008 via Yeshiva University (YU) advertisements and representatives. The nine Scholars chosen from across the U.S.A. to join the Jewish Educators Project this year are: Shane Abani, Jill Joshowitz, Leah Moskovitch, Rachel Ratner, Abby Stelzer, Shayna Stollman, Ora Weinbach, Miriam Weiss, and Davida Wolfson. Scholars were chosen based on applications and two letters of recommendation that were due by February of this year. Finalists

were personally interviewed by Dean Bacon, Dr. Ephraim Kanarfogel, Mrs. Gerrie Mansdorf, and Dr. Aharon Fried.

"My teachers were always my advisors and mentors, and I hope to be able to continue this for future generations," said Leah Moskovitch (SCW '11) of her drive to become a Judaic Studies teacher. Moskovitch, originally from New Rochelle, NY, hopes to help Jewish youth gain a more in-depth knowledge of original Hebrew texts; she proposes that many schools rely too much on English-language sources for their Jewish studies curriculum, and this trend has a negative effect on their students' Jewish education.

Moskovitch thinks that the Jewish Educators Project, with its intensive Jewish studies curriculum, can help her achieve this goal. She hopes to teach Tanakh (Bible) or *machshava* (Jewish philosophical thought) to high school or seminary-age girls, and to eventually become an administrator in an all-girls' yeshiva institution.

Skokie native Abby Stelzer, (SCW '11) hopes

to have a career teaching high school-age Modern Orthodox girls. Stelzer believes that she will succeed as a teacher because of her ability to relate to her students. As a Heritage Legacy Fund Scholar, she wants to perfect the art of connecting to students in a classroom and communicating Torah to them in an effective way.

In addition, Stelzer views the Jewish Educators Project not just as a great opportunity for the nine Legacy Heritage Fund Scholars, but as a statement to the Jewish world at large. For those who do not view Jewish education as a field worth pursuing, the Jewish Educators Project, a serious, professional, and rigorous program, will silence their objections. "It's a statement from YU that Jewish education isn't to be taken lightly," stated Stelzer.

Dean Bacon considers the Jewish Educators Project an opportunity to hone the teaching skills- not just

continued on page 3



The Observer
Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad will attend the United Nations General Assembly's open debate in September.

Rally Scheduled to Protest Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's United Nations Speech

Yaelle Frohlich

A rally protesting Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presence at the United Nations will take place on September 24 at 12:00 PM at 47th Street and 2nd Avenue, across the street from the United Nations Headquarters in Manhattan. The rally will be co-sponsored by many Jewish and non-Jewish organizations that oppose the Iranian regime's nuclear aspirations and human rights violations.

Ahmadinejad, notorious for his de-legitimization of Israel (including an ominous 2005 call to "wipe Israel off the map") and Holocaust denial, is coming for the United Nations General Assembly's general debate to be held on September 23-26 and 28-30, following the 64th General Assembly Session on September 15.

"You can't stop him [speaking] at the U.N.," said Dr. Malcolm Hoenlein, President of the Conference of Presidents, the central coordinating body for 52 Jewish organizations in America that advocates for issues affecting American Jewry and the United States-Israel relationship. "But this is to send a message about human rights violations and other issues, like women and children being executed, stopping terrorism, and nuclear weapons programs."

Hoenlein says that the rally is expected to draw people from all parts of American society and will hopefully include addresses by high-profile speakers. He believes that the rally is especially important because of recent political events in Iran. "It [the rally] takes place in a different setting...the mood is different," explained Hoenlein, referencing violations of human rights of those who sought to protest the elections, Iran's support of terrorist organizations such as Hizbullah and Iran's ever-expanding nuclear program. Recent events, implied Hoenlein, have heightened awareness among numerous organizations of the Iranian threat to "order and civility."

The 64th Session comes months after the disputed June 12 Iranian election, in which Ahmadinejad was reported to have won 60% of the votes. The election prompted bitter opposition from some citizens, who claimed that the victory was stolen. Police and Iran's Revolutionary Guard quashed the demonstrations, and at least 17 people were killed. Hundreds of protestors were imprisoned, and there have since been claims that prisoners were raped and otherwise abused while incarcerated. These claims have been denounced by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khameni.

Beren Campus Welcomes New Campus Couple, Rahel and Tuvia Lwowski

Hannah L. Golden

For someone who just finished law school, Rahel Lwowski is excited to be heading back to school. Rahel and her husband Tuvia, previously the Youth Directors at Congregation Ahawas Achim B'nai Jacob and David (AABJ and D) in West Orange, along with two-year-old daughter, Maayan, will be the new Campus Couple at Yeshiva University's Beren Campus.

Sometimes called the "Shabbos rabbi family," neither Lwowski is looking for that title. "My husband is not a rabbi, and I'm obviously not a rabbi," says Ms. Lwowski, who will be starting work as a

Bronx Assistant District Attorney. Mr. Lwowski works for Bristol Consulting, a finances and recruiting company. "On the other hand, we met in Camp Moshava and I was the *Sgan Rosh Hinukh* [Assistant Education Director]," says Mr. Lwowski. "And I was also the *Rosh Hinukh* [Education Director], and the Camp rabbi and I were the ones who solved the *halakhic* [Jewish legal] issues."

"One central role of the Campus Couple is to provide the students with the sense that they are part of a broader community," explains Ms. Daphe Fishman Secunda, who, with her husband, Dr. Shai Secunda, served as Beren's first Campus Couple. "Shabbat is the ideal time to focus on uniting this vibrantly diverse student body."

"I think our involvement on campus goes beyond Shabbat...one thing we love to do is create an open atmosphere," agrees Mr. Lwowski. To accomplish this, the couple plans to use what they have learned from their years working with

the Jewish community. "We basically had a wonderful time with the program that was already created," he continues, "building up the program [at AABJ and D] and opening our home for cholent, kiddush on Shabbat...anything you can imagine you would open your home for, that's what we did - anything from age three to seniors in high school."

According to Mollie Sharfman (SCW '10), who spent Shavuot with the couple as part of Torah Tours, the Lwowskis are a unique pair. "They changed the way [West Orange] youth programs work," says Sharfman. "They changed the way things are organized, they made sure that kids are there. Not just there, but learning and organized, and with consistency which is hard to find." Sharfman, who has run Bnai Akiva youth groups in her native Baltimore and in New Jersey, was particularly impressed with their enthusiasm and coordination as a couple. "On Shavuot they had pizza-making for the teens," Sharfman recalls. "She gave a *shur* [lecture] and Tuvi, her husband, was making pizza at four in the morning."

The role of *halakhic* decider is not part of the job criterion, but occasionally issues do arise on Shabbat. "We have a strong interest in *halakha*," stresses Ms.

continued on page 4



Courtesy of Rahel Lwowski
The new Beren Campus Couple, Rahel and Tuvia Lwowski, with daughter Maayan.

INSIDE

Profile of Beth Din Attorney Naomi Maryles- 5
Internet and the Modern Celebrity- 10
The Lowdown on Swine Flu- 16

THOUGHTS OF STUDENT LEADERS

The SCW Family

Estee Goldschmidt, Vice President of the Torah Activities Council



Transitions are always challenging. It is difficult to get used to the long hours in college after a summer filled with sports and sunshine. It is even more difficult to come to college for the first time—new faces, new places, new rules and regulations, getting used to the schedule.

I came to Stern College for Women without knowing anyone. I was the only woman coming from a certain seminary. I was extremely apprehensive and nervous as I stepped into the Stern building for two days of orientation. I hoped against hope that I would find a friend very quickly. It took every ounce of strength in me to be friendly, and during lunch I walked over to a table of women and asked if I could join. They were extremely friendly and graciously invited me to take a seat. It took a few minutes for me to realize that I was sitting at the deans table.

After some time, I got used to the idea of introducing myself to anyone. I would introduce myself in the elevators, in classrooms, I would walk over to girls in the cafeteria and ask if I could join. Some people gave me the cold shoulder, however, I made some of my best friends from those interesting actions.

Starting anew in college can become pleasant with just a warm introduction, or even a handshake.

Whether a woman is coming from Michlala, MMY, Midreshet, Midreshet Lindenbaum, straight from high school or transferring from another college, she is now a part of the Stern College family. Each woman, with her uniqueness, has something to contribute to the

wider SCW community.

As a representative of Torah Activities Council (TAC), it is important for me to point out the different opportunities that exist on campus. TAC's goal is to cater to the needs of each individual student, and there are multiple events for people with different backgrounds and world views. There is also room for people to attend events and create new programs. From *havruta* (paired) learning to lectures, Sephardic bellydancing and movies, to Hallel with drums and tambourines, there is something for everyone.

This year in particular, besides for established programs like the Torah Scholarship Series, T-cubed (Torah with TAC on Tuesdays), CnL, Wednesday *minha* (afternoon prayers), iGive and schmoozes with the *mashgihei ruhani* (spiritual advisors), TAC is going to work with different clubs on campus to create interesting and original events.

Shabbat in SCW is a time of huge opportunity. We hope that with your help we will be able to develop a tradition of Stern's own zmirot and traditions. Movies and *haburot* (discussions) with cholent will be held on Thursday evenings in a relaxing atmosphere for all those who wish to prolong their stay in Stern and want to be part of the vibrant night life in college.

TAC will be hosting a Shabbaton with SOY (Student Organization of Yeshiva), September 4-5, which will be filled with exciting programs and lectures. The Thursday before the Shabbaton, a screening of the thought provoking movie "Unsettled" will be held. All students are welcome.

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions or just want to talk, do not hesitate to e-mail TAC (me) at scwtac@gmail.com.

I wish you the best of luck, and together, we can make this year the best one Stern has ever seen.

Judaic Studies is major!

Welcome to Sy Syms

Aliza Wolynetz, President of Sy Syms School of Business



Welcome to all new and returning students! I hope you are having a great first week back to school, adjusting well, meeting new people, arranging your dorms rooms and determining the suitable academic classes for you.

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce you to our wonderful 09-10 Sy Syms School of Business Board: Lauren Lowy, Mor Shoshana and Eden Glaser. Each of these women is hard working, creative and fun, and will add so much to the school environment.

SSSB is a unique and warm place. There is a spot for everyone to fit in and get involved, one way or another. Our faculty consists of great professors who genuinely care about their students and are very approachable. Smaller class sizes help forge relationships between students and their faculty mentors. Additionally, SSSB is a well-

respected business school, with a high success rate of graduates finding jobs. Be proud that you are part of the SSSB community!

The opportunities to be involved on campus are endless but it is important for you to show your face. Even if you do not have any best friends to go with to an event, come, meet people and make new friends. As well, many of our events have unique networking opportunities to enhance your career—so don't miss out.

Save the date for Sunday, August 30, 2009 at 5:30 PM, as we will have our first kickoff event; our annual meet and greet BBQ will take place on the Wilf Campus up-town in Tenzer Gardens, a chilled out setting to meet fellow Sy Syms students from both the Wilf and Beren campuses. Come play some football and throw a Frisbee. It's an event you don't want to miss, with lots of hot dogs, hamburgers and French fries, free for all Sy Syms students.

Our Shabbaton is another great opportunity to meet students and to get to know your student council. It is only a few weeks away, on September 12th, so save that date on your calendar!

continued on page 19

Welcome to College Freedom

Yaelle Frohlich, Editor-in-Chief



Members of our parents' generation often hail the college years as a time of few—or even no—responsibilities; in most cases, with no spouse to answer to, no baby to nurse, and, for the very lucky ones, loans or parental aid to cover the wide array of bills and invoices. My father has always told me that no matter how difficult it is to be a student, it is infinitely more so to be in the workforce and responsible for a family.

Assignments and deadlines certainly comprise a large part of our current responsibilities, of making worth the effort that goes into paying—one way or another—the hefty tuition fees that allow us to remain at Yeshiva University. However, there is another and, perhaps, equally important aspect of the three or four years in which we find ourselves: the creation of a foundation for ourselves, of ourselves, by our choosing.

My father understood this. During his undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering, he spent all the spare time he had, and even some that he didn't, on independent Jewish study. He brought his sub-par, day school Hebrew language skills (the level to which many of us, shamefully, have been confined despite years of Jewish education) to complete fluency, and became as familiar with words of Torah as with those of real-life acquaintances. Eventually, he left mechanical engineering—a sub-

ject at which excelled on the old 9-point scale, but for which he lacked passion—for a field more suited to his interests. But he continues the independent learning he began in university to this day.

Others will take different soul-satisfying paths—dramatic arts, medical research, journalism, musical immersion, business innovation, community service; the possibilities are endless. Whichever endeavors we choose, if we love them and dedicate ourselves to them, the chances are that they will become important fixtures in our lives.

We now have the opportunity to go about crafting who we are and what we wish to become. Most of us, for the first time, get to spend our days studying subjects we have chosen to study rather than a state-enforced curriculum. Many of us do not have our parents' routine responsibilities. And, with any luck, our minds and hearts are still sufficiently welcoming to hope and idealism to go about spreading kindness and justice in a world still riddled with greed and poverty, inequality and genocide.

That's not to say that our interests and priorities won't change at all over the course of our college careers, or throughout our lives. But the nature of many of our life situations (especially at a university whose diverse programs cater to religious observance of Shabbat, kashruth and modesty) is such that we have the ability, arguably even the responsibility, to explore the different avenues of creativity, intellectualism and spirituality that bloom around us.

Hopefully The Observer can provide some good reading along the way.

The Pursuit of Self through Happiness

Avital Bauman, President of the Medical Ethics Society



I never wore hand-me-downs. I always bought brand new clothes which smelled like department stores and were not faded. Most young women would love not to wear hand-me-downs, but as the oldest of four girls, I never had the opportunity. I also do not have older and wiser siblings to advise me on life. Essentially, I am pretty lost and independent when it comes to discovering and knowing what to expect in any stage in life.

I usually view this as an impediment, especially when trying to figure out how to choose a college, career, the best classes, or the right outfit. As the oldest, I am the experimental child; my mom calls me her "first blintz." After much practice and trial and error, she has perfected her technique with each subsequent blintz—my younger sisters—who grew up benefiting from my mother's gained experience.

So, as the experimental first child, I have learned to pave a path for myself without relying on preconceived notions handed down from generation to generation of siblings. Though I consult with my peers for advice on which classes or teachers to take or what to do during vacations, I realized I have to do what is best for me. And college is the perfect opportunity for paving my own path. Not a yellow brick road, but a multi-colored brick road, unique to me.

During my first semester on campus at Stern College for Women, I attended the annual club fair to see what extracurricular activities were offered. As I walked around Koch Auditorium with hundreds of my contemporaries, I thought: "Why don't I become involved in something that

continued on page 18

The Yeshiva University

OBSERVER

Yaelle Frohlich
Editor-in-Chief

Hannah Golden
News Editor

Yaira Dubin
Features Editor

Chaya Citrin
Opinions Editor

Alisa Ungar-Sargon
Arts and Culture Editor

Lauren Burstein
Israel Editor

Rivkah Rogawski
Science and Health Editor

Talia Kaufman
Lifestyles Editor

Sarah Clyde
Layout Editor

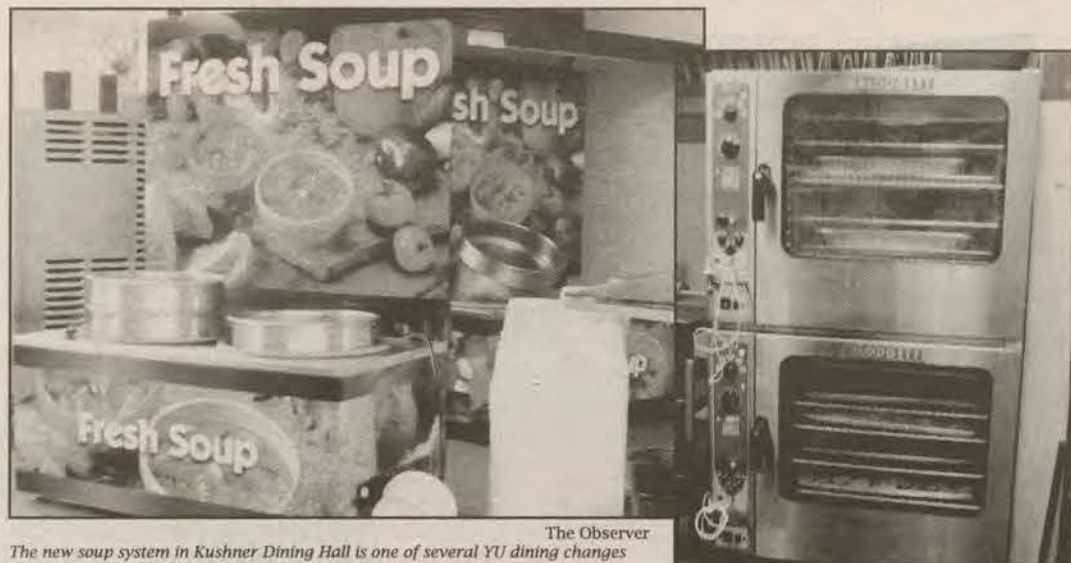
Gila Mandelcorn
Advertising Manager

Avital Pessar
Business Manager



The Observer is published monthly during the academic year by the Stern College for Women Student Council. The staff of the paper retains the right to choose newspaper content and to determine the priority of stories. While unsigned editorials represent the views of the Observer's editorial board, all opinions expressed in signed editorials, columns, letters, and cartoons are the opinions of the writers or artists and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Observer, Stern College for Women, its student body, faculty, or administration. All Observer content is copyrighted and may not be reprinted without permission.

NEWS



The Observer
The new soup system in Kushner Dining Hall is one of several YU dining changes implemented in fall 2009.

The Observer
The new oven in 245 Lexington Avenue will make for a fresher dining experience on the Beren Campus.

New Kitchen on Beren Campus

Yaelle Frohlich

A new meat kitchen has been installed in the Beren Campus's 245 Lexington Avenue Kushner Dining Hall to increase the freshness and quality of dining at Stern College for Women, said Yeshiva University's Director of Dining Services, Bruce Jacobs, on Friday, August 21. "In the past, we used to make food—dinner—in the uptown facility," explained Jacobs. "...We would start preparing the food uptown at 12:00 and the food would sit in a warmer...and then it's transported from Washington Heights to Midtown Manhattan. You can have the best transport, but when the women sit down at 5:30 you're going to lose some of the quality."

The arrangement did not make sense to Jacobs when he assumed his current position two years ago. He evaluated the space in 245 Lexington to see if there was room for a kitchen and came to the conclusion that, by adjusting staffing patterns, there would be. "It made

more customer-friendly sense to do that," said Jacobs. The proposed changes were approved by the YU administration.

Another advantage of the new kitchen is that Beren Campus diners will no longer have to partake of the same menu as their Wilf counterparts if they prefer different meal choices.

Additionally, the Schottenstein dormitory on 29th street will now have a full productive menu, turning out Beren Campus's sandwiches. Other new features in the Beren Campus cafeterias will include new coffee and soup systems, as well as a new, self-serve pizza display—to keep the food hotter and more accessible—in 215 Lexington Avenue's Le Bistro Cafeteria.

There will be no price increases for cafeteria food items this year, and the prices of some of the deli sandwiches will even be reduced by "a couple of dollars," added Jacobs.

The only price increase regard-

ing food will be that of student Shabbat tickets, which will climb to \$15 from \$10. "We know that the food for Shabbat costs nearly \$50 per person," explained Dean Victor Schwartz in an email on August 13, "and at Beren, the university absorbs the cost of the hotel [for male student guests], which, while we get some consideration, is still quite expensive. The small increase helps us a bit to offset our cost, but we are still heavily subsidizing Shabbat on campus. We are really trying to keep up with our climbing food expenses."

Changes have also been made on the Wilf campus, with the sushi line being completely redone, the meat and milk lines separated, the introduction of items like curly fries and hot nachos, as well as decorative changes to make the cafeteria more user friendly.

"Is everything going to work one hundred percent?" mused Jacobs rhetorically. "I hope so. But whatever doesn't work, we'll fix."

Merkin Suit Continues

Hannah L. Golden

J. Ezra Merkin continues to fight New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo's allegations that he deceived and defrauded investors out of \$2.4 billion. According to court documents filed in April, Cuomo claims that Merkin hid his lack of involvement in the management of his company's finances from his clients, including Yeshiva University.

The lawsuit charges that Merkin passed himself off as a financial guru, while taking virtually no interest in his funds. Instead of supervising the investment funds as promised, he gave the controls to Bernard Madoff. Aside from bookkeeping and conversations with Madoff, Merkin had nothing to do with the funds once they were put into his trust.

"Merkin's deceit, recklessness, and breaches of fiduciary duty have resulted in the loss," alleges Cuomo's suit. Despite his harsh words, Cuomo does not claim that Merkin was aware of Madoff's Ponzi scheme; he claims merely stupidity.

Merkin resigned as a University trustee when the Ponzi scheme became public in December 2008. In an email dated December 16th, YU President Richard Joel announced that "Bernard Madoff is no longer associated with our institution in any way. The University had no investments directly with Madoff. Last Thursday night, we were informed by Ascot Partners, a vehicle in which we had invested a small part of our endowment funds for 15 years, that substantially all its assets are invested with Madoff. The Ascot fund was managed by J. Ezra Merkin who has served as a University trustee and chairman of the investment committee." At that time, YU's investment with Merkin was estimated at \$110 million.

Merkin's connection to YU began long before his trustee position; his father, Hermann Merkin, sponsored the Isaac Breuer College of Hebraic Studies in honor of his father-in-law in addition to other charitable donations.

"We don't comment on legal matters," wrote YU Chief Financial

Officer Michael Gower to The Observer on August 24. "But I can say that we are unaware of any YU initiated lawsuits against Merkin and continue to await the outcome of the government's efforts on behalf of investors such as YU."

SCW and Legacy Heritage Fund Launch Jewish Educators Project

continued from page 1

the knowledge-of Jewish teachers. "Over the years," reflected Bacon in her email, "Principals and Educational Directors at schools that have employed our graduates have told us that SCW alums are skilled in content but less so in methodology of teaching, educational theory, and research."

The Jewish Educators Project's director, Mrs. Deena Rabinovich, also hopes the program will enable the participants to become competent teachers in the classroom. Rabinovich, currently a Bi-

General Requirements Changes Take Effect as English Curriculum Gets a Makeover

Gila Shneider

Starting this fall, all incoming Stern College for Women students will be required to complete a new set of requirements that emphasize critical thinking skills. The changes are an attempt to move forward with President Joel's challenge to improve academics at Yeshiva University. The new system will be mandatory for all incoming students and optional for current undergraduates. However, undergraduates who entered SCW prior to fall 2008 will be required to graduate under the old requirements.

Whereas the old requirements consisted of broader titles that did not necessarily convey the ultimate goals of the requirements, the new requirements have titles that accurately describe their purpose. For example, the former "Humanities" has become "Interpreting Literature & the Arts," bumping philosophy courses to the new "Foundations of History, Philosophy & Social Sciences" section.

"These new requirements are directed towards achieving the aims defined by the category title," explained Dean Karen Bacon.

"Restricted Courses" have become "Electives." Previously, in order to fulfill the "Restricted Courses" requirement, students had to take any 3 courses in subjects other than their major, Judaic studies, Hebrew language, studio art or English communications. Under the new system, students can take any four classes, aside from courses in Judaic studies or their major.

There are mixed reactions amongst the student body regarding these new requirements. Elana Stavsky (SCW '11) said she is "ecstatic that the Physical Education section is no longer required."

Other students expressed their frustration with the distribution of the new requirements. For example, under the new "Contemporary US & Global Perspectives" requirement, students must take two courses in the Economics, Political Science or History departments. Under the old "Social Science" three-course requirement, students had the option of taking two of their social science requirements in psychology and

sociology. "These new requirements force you to take certain courses like economics or political science," commented Ahuva Schwartz (SCW '11), "whereas under the old requirements, the student had a broader range of options. I am thrilled that I am able to utilize the old requirements and not have to ever take Economics or Political Science."

To keep up with changing times, the SCW English department has undergone a complete makeover. Dr. Linda Shires, the new head of the English department at SCW, explained that there was a need to update the English department to coincide with modern scholarly trends. The old requirements "privileged history and a survey method alongside a very valuable emphasis on close-reading as the foundation of literary study, without questioning that paradigm," expounded Shires. "Our new requirements privilege the process of meaning, the process of writing, and a sharper awareness about kinds of reading."

In addition, the English Department has restructured its majors: English literature, Creative Writing and the English Communications tracks in journalism, advertising and public relations. Previously requiring 39-42 credits, communications majors will now comprise 33-34 credits, achieved by paring down core and elective requirements and refining the literature requirements to give the programs greater focus. The literature major, on the other hand, jumped from 31 credits to 34 by adding more specific course selections.

Additionally, Dean Bacon confirmed that students of every major will now have a faculty advisor, not just those in the English department.

This is the first time in 20 years that Stern College for Women has conducted a comprehensive review of their general education requirements. The College believes that it is essential to keep up with the modern educational system and to offer their students the best schooling possible. By no means are these modifications final and SCW plans to revisit this issue in the near future.

ble instructor at SCW, will oversee the entire academic program and assist students with job placement after graduation. She will also coordinate the program with YU's Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education to widen the range of the program offerings, enable students to apply for an Azrieli B.A. or M.A. and avoid overlap between courses. Scholars will receive a B.A. upon graduating the program, and will receive an M.A. from Azrieli once they complete the three years of post-graduation teaching.

The program participants will be required to take courses in Judaic studies, methodology of Jewish teaching, general education courses, and psychology. These courses will be required for program participants, but open to all SCW students. Methodology courses will include fieldwork assignments. During the students' senior year, they will serve as student teachers, a job which will include creating and executing a classroom lesson plan along with a cooperating teacher.

NEWS

Beren Campus Welcomes New Campus Couple, Rahel and Tuvia Lwowski

continued from page 1

Lwowski. "We want everything to be halakhic to the letter of the law, and within the spirit of the law." As of the writing of this article, the Lwowskis were in discussions with the administration regarding their role as halakhic authorities. Still, Ms. Lwowski insists, "So even though we have a lot of experience, and have worked with min-yans [quorums], people shouldn't think that Tuvi or us as a couple can work with paskining halakha [giving rulings on Jewish law]."

In their two years on campus, the Secundas made themselves known through their outgoingness, campus conversations and Shabbat afternoon open house. At the end of the spring semester, the couple announced that they would not be returning to Stern in fall 2009. Though they are moving to Israel, the Secundas hope that campus life will continue to improve, and believe that the new couple will do well at Stern College for Women. "We have not met the couple in person, but did have the pleasure of speaking with [the Lwowskis] on the phone," says Ms. Secunda. "They both seem like lovely people and are highly energetic and enthusiastic about coming to Stern... We understand that the Lwowski's are coming to this position with extensive experience in NCSY and youth directing—areas in which energy and enthusiasm are cultivated and prized. We encouraged the Lwowskis to use their particular talents that they developed in those spheres and apply them to infusing Stern with ruah [spirit] and community building."

In addition to their joint ventures, the Lwowskis have worked individually in other areas of the Jewish community. When Torah Chaim Boys High School of Toronto opened their doors to a more religious students population, the school brought in Mr. Lwowski to work on student unity. "Formal education is really what it was," he explains. "Where the students got to talk to each other with respect for each other's sensibility."

To create respect between seminaries, Ms. Lwowski was motivated to begin the Kedma Choir Competition. "I loved to sing, I hated the stereotype that one school wouldn't want their girls to be in the same place with another school," says Ms. Lwowski of her motivation for helping to create the competition in 2000 while she attended Michlelet Mevaseret Yerushalayim. "We had a lot of schools and about 100 people [the first year], and the next year I came back and there were 1000 people." The competition for American seminary students in Israel, which is run by Kedma and Yeshiva University, raises money for underprivileged women.

Working on the competition was Ms. Lwowski's first experience dealing with YU. "You don't have to go to a school to love it and know what's going on there," she reflects happily. "YU was so exciting and really went along. It made my job so much easier and much less stressful."

Over the past five years, SCW has experienced tremendous growth from an average of 50 people per

Shabbat to the point where no one bats an eyelash at seeing 350 people fill 245 Lexington's Koch Auditorium. With that growth, the position of Campus Couple was born. The newness of the role leaves room for each couple to make their mark, which is precisely what the Lwowskis anticipate doing. "We're like the people who run on energizer batteries," explains Ms. Lwowski. "Nothing is ever just a Shabbat or just a weekday position. We talked with Dean Braun about having as many students at Stern over for dinner during the year as possible, even if it's just one room at a time."

New Chief Investment Officer Appointed

Yaelle Frohlich

On August 13, Yeshiva University President Richard Joel announced the appointment of Dr. Sid Browne as Chief Investment Officer of Yeshiva University, a newly created position. Browne, whose resume, according to Joel's announcement, includes a professorship at Columbia Graduate School of Business, a Ph.D. in Applied Mathematics, Statistics, and Operational Research from New York University, as well as top leadership positions at Goldman Sachs and Brevan Howard, will commence his work with YU on September 1.

"[Browne]'s remarkable combination of business expertise and academic experience makes him exceptionally well qualified to serve in a university setting," wrote Joel.

Joel also noted that Browne will partner with YU's Investment Committee to build an investment office, which will be in charge of directing the institution's combined investment portfolio. "The Investment Office will be the professional team responsible for the day to day oversight of the endowment and other investments," explained YU Chief Financial Officer Michael Gower in an email to The Observer on August 24. "We will work closely with the lay leaders on the Investment Committee to ensure the highest degree of oversight and success in connection with the endowment."

Gower maintained that the establishment of an Investment Office had been "in the works and under consideration" prior to both the current economic downturn and the Madoff-related loss of \$110 million (about ten percent) of YU's endowment last year.

Joel's announcement also mentioned plans to create a Center for Financial Economics, though Gower noted that Browne's initial focus will be on the Investment Office's establishment. "Once that [Investment Office] is accomplished," said Gower, "Dr. Browne will suggest steps toward the creation of a Center for Financial Economics to the Provost. Our hope is that the establishment of such a Center will benefit our students as a place where students can intern and gain hands-on experience in the financial world."

Collage of newspaper clippings from 'The Observer' featuring headlines like 'Girls Need Ready Cash', 'Dura Art Symposium Honors Dr. Wischnitze', 'Are you a Yenta?', 'Senate Reviews Auditing Proposal', and 'Exciting Week Planned For Jewish Arts Festival'.

FEATURES

Alumnus Naomi Maryles: From Stern College to the Beth Din of America

Suzanne Mazel

While many people would encourage others to "have it all"—a high-powered career, a family and lots of community work—Ms. Naomi Maryles, an attorney currently employed by the Beth Din of America, would disagree.

"You can't have it all," says Maryles. "Having it all means being everywhere at once." This, she feels, is a poor decision, and something that made her unhappy when she tried.

Luckily for her, Maryles, a Stern College for Women alumnus, found a good balance. Maryles fills the newly created



Courtesy of Naomi Maryles
Naomi Maryles, the new administrative attorney for the Beth Din of America.

role of administrative attorney at the Beth Din of America (the American Jewish court), a role that mostly entails managing the Beth Din's administrative casework. She has been at this job for a little less than two months and now feels like she actually can have it all.

The job is flexible; her schedule requires her to work in the city three days a week, after which she usually catches a 5:23 P.M. train, arriving home by 6:15 P.M. "Coming from a corporate law background, it's a dream," says Maryles.

The Beth Din of America is a Jewish court located in Manhattan. This particular court is connected to the Rabbinical Council of America, the only one of its kind. Maryles says that this status gives the court a certain legitimacy and professionalism. "I know for a fact the Beth Din of America has a very good reputation in North America," she states.

The Beth Din handles marital matters, such as gittin (Jewish divorces), and also end-of-marriage issues, such as division of property. It also deals with commercial matters, such as business arrangements, in a sophisticated and professional manner, akin to the service provided by a secular court, albeit slightly different because the Beth Din operates as an arbitration panel.

Maryles helps with the administrative matters of a case, as her title suggests. She is in charge of the case procedures such as opening case files, drafting and sending summons, scheduling hearings, mediations and negotiations. When two parties disagree and both agree to come to the Beth Din to have their dispute heard, they both speak with her. She functions as the go-between to help them settle.

Maryles estimates she deals with about 30 cases at a time. For that amount of cases, it helps to be organized. "Sometimes you need to take things slow," she maintains. "It's worth looking through a file before sending an email or returning a phone call."

Prior to joining the Beth Din, Maryles worked as the director of Nishmat's Miriam Glaubach

Center, a center that helps women with regard to Jewish laws of marital relations, a good position for Maryles, who "wanted to do something more meaningful on a daily basis than just drafting agreements." However, it was not a perfect fit.

"While I was there, I felt like a little part of me was missing," describes the attorney, "that law part that had been such a large part of my life before. There was nothing legal in the job and I really felt like something was lost."

Maryles received a call from Rabbi Sholom Weissmann, a friend from college who now works at the Beth Din of America, who told her that the Beth Din was looking to hire an attorney to come on at the Beth Din and wanted to know if she knew anyone who might be interested in the job. "The more we talked about the job, the more I liked it and the more excited I got

about it," explains Maryles. "I saw it molding together the two parts of me, the lawyer part of me and the other part of me that wants to make a difference in the Jewish community."

Maryles wants "to continue building a place where people really feel they're getting a good alternative to secular court."

"More and more people, we hope, will be coming to Beth Din when they have a dispute instead of running to secular court," she says.

Part of being a good alternative means helping women feel more welcome at the Beth Din. Maryles says that one of her primary goals is for women to "feel comfortable coming [to the Beth Din] and speaking and advocating for themselves."

"I think it is a misperception that a Beth Din is full of men who are automatically on the man's side," continues Maryles. "I bring to the table the element of a women being there. I'll sit in the room during a divorce proceeding and make sure she understands what's going on and feels comfortable."

"I've also found a lot of women call and ask to speak to me," Maryles says. "I hope in the long run this will make a difference with a woman's comfort level and women should just feel more comfortable coming [to the Beth Din]."

While working at the corporate law firm of Kramer, Levin, Naftalis, and Frenkel, Ms. Maryles would sometimes represent women for free. "I always had this sensitivity to women in helping them find a voice," she explains.

Maryles is originally from West Hempstead, NY and currently lives in North Woodmere, NY. She grew up in a modern Orthodox, kosher and Shabbat-observant home, and with a strong Jewish identity encouraged by her parents. Growing up, Maryles's mother encouraged

her to pursue whatever career she desired.

"My mother feels very strongly about a woman's role in the world," states Maryles. "My sister is a clinical psychologist and I went to law school. We were always taught 'you're bright, you're capable, you can do whatever you want to do.'"

Maryles became interested in law at a young age. Her father was an attorney and she reminisces how "every Friday night at the table we'd sit around the table and he'd tell us stories." The stories were always fascinating to her. Additionally, the widely-watched television show "L.A. Law" also influenced her desire to pursue law. In high school, she was the first freshman accepted to the HAFTR (Hebrew Academy of the Five Towns and Rockaway) mock trial team, and when she switched to HANC (Hebrew Academy of Nassau County), she joined the debate team.

At Stern College for Women, Maryles majored in elementary education because she thought it was a "very practical" and marketable skill. However, the flame of law still burned in her. She took the LSAT in October of her senior year and was accepted to various law schools. She deferred from New York University School of Law for a year to teach at Manhattan Day School and loved it.

Stern prepared Maryles well for being a teacher. She maintains that she had a great undergraduate education and left with good skills. However, she feels that college cannot prepare one to be lawyer; on-the-job training does.

However, Maryles says that Stern did encourage her desire to go to law school. She says it was looked upon as a positive thing and believes Stern to be very proud of their graduates who went on to law school.

Stern "definitely gave me a good foundation," says Maryles, "so that when I went to law school I was very strong in my beliefs and I felt like I was making real informed decisions, and I was a real adult when I got there. It made me stronger because I was on my own and I believed more and more the things I had been taught." Maryles enthuses that law school was the best experience she had.

After law school, Maryles focused on corporate law and was working "crazy hours and crazy long days." One of the reasons she says she left the law firm was because she had three children at the time and was "getting home well after the kids were getting ready for bed."

"I couldn't ask for a more supportive husband," Maryles says of the man she describes as her biggest fan.

Now, at the Beth Din, Maryles has found a position that she finds more comfortable. However, she is still a professional, she says, and [it] makes my brain work and challenges me."

Advice for those who want to follow in her footsteps: "I think that in order to do everything you want to do, you need to think out of the box," she says. It's all about finding that perfect fit.

Top Five NYC Art Museums

Yaira Dubin

As those students that have just arrived in New York are about to find out, Manhattan is a city of culture, from Broadway and shopping to the Rockettes and the Opera. The art museums in New York City too are exceptional, and most of them are just a subway ride away, and with admission of \$15 or less. Whether you're looking for a great day activity, a romantic date spot, or just an opportunity to be surrounded by beauty in all forms, these are the top spots to hit:

1. **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, more commonly referred to as "the Met," is located on the east side of Central Park on Museum Mile, displaying more than two million works of art within its walls. With a colossal range of permanent exhibits, including African art, Greek and Roman art, medieval art, modern art, as well as an array of collections including instruments, costumes, sculptures, armor and pottery, the Met is one of those places that can be explored endlessly. Less famous, but equally fascinating, is the Met Roof Garden which overlooks Central Park and the Manhattan skyline. The Roof impresses with a display of outdoor sculptures and can double as a romantic hotspot. Exploring the Met in its entirety could take days, but taking it just one room at a time can offer endless hours of enjoyment. (1000 Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street. Directions: From East Side of Manhattan: Take the 4, 5, or 6 train to 86th Street and walk three blocks West to Fifth Avenue. Recommended \$10 donation.)

2. **MoMA, the Museum of Modern Art**, is universally acknowledged as one of the most influential modernist art museums in the world. The museum was founded by Abby Rockefeller in 1928. Her husband, John D. Rockefeller Jr., was adamantly against it and funds needed to be raised from outside sources for its opening. Over time, he gradually became accustomed to the concept of modern art and, ironically, became one of the greatest benefactors of the museum, going so far as to donate the land on which the museum is now situated. The museum has expanded over the years to include over 150,000 works of art. Visitors enjoy drawings, photos, books, paintings, films, and sculptures as they walk through the newly renovated museum. (53rd street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues. Directions: Take the 6 train to 52nd Street, transfer to the E or V to 53rd Street and Fifth Avenue. Admission: \$12 for students; free Fridays between 4-8 P.M.)

3. **The Frick Collection** is unique in many ways, most famously for its location. The museum is the former home of steel mogul Henry Clay Frick, who collected paintings and antique fur-

niture and displayed it in the 16 galleries contained within his home. The collection has since been expanded, but new pieces are carefully picked to correspond with his original tastes and design. The Frick Collection includes famous European paintings and unique pieces of French furniture. A trip to the Frick is worthwhile simply to see the mansion; the artwork is merely the icing on the cake. (1 East 70th Street, the corner of 5th Avenue and East 70th Street. Directions: Take the 6 train to 68th Street, walk West on 68th Street, then turn right onto Fifth Avenue. Admission: \$5 for students.)

4. **The Guggenheim museum**, like the Frick, is almost equally as known for its architecture as for its art. The last major project designed by architect Frank Lloyd Wright, the museum looks like a coiled white ribbon with a widening spiral as it twists upward as if toward its large, overhead skylight. Obtrusive amidst Manhattan skyscrapers, the building was subjected to sharp criticism when first erected, but has now become an iconic New York City landmark. The museum focuses on Impressionist, early Modern and contemporary art exhibited around its central spiral. In celebration of its 50th anniversary, the whole museum will have free admission on October 21, and special exhibits will be running throughout the year to commemorate half a century of visionary art. 1071 Fifth Avenue at 89th Street. Directions: 6 train to 86th Street. Walk west on 86th street, turn right on 5th Avenue, and proceed north to 88th Street. Admission: \$15.)

5. **The Whitney Museum** focuses on 20th century American Art. Like MoMA, the Whitney was founded on an influential woman's generosity; Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney contributed most of the works used to start the museum from her personal collection, and continued to be its main benefactor for the first twenty years of its existence. She had offered to donate the works to the Met, but they had refused, partly due to a European bias. She opened the Whitney to showcase not-yet recognized, talented American artists. The museum, originally displaying 700 paintings, is now home to 18,000 paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, and photographs representing the best of 1900's America. (945 Madison Avenue at 75th street. Directions: Take the 6 train to 77th street then head Southwest on Lexington Avenue, turn right on 76th Street, and turn left on Madison Avenue. Admission: \$10 for students.)

Yaira Dubin (SCW '10) is majoring in biology and plans to attend law school.

Please send comments and letters to the editor to scwobserver@gmail.com

FEATURES

School Fees, Shidduch Freeze, Leadership and Technology: CJF's Fourth Annual ChampionsGate Conference

Yaelle Frohlich

The Center for the Jewish Future's fourth annual ChampionsGate National Leadership Conference, hosted at the five-star Omni @ ChampionsGate resort in Orlando, FL from July 16-19, was, at first glance, well described by hotel flat screens as a "retreat." Over 200 religious and lay leaders—not to mention more than 50 main-player Yeshiva University administration such as President Richard Joel and CJF head Rabbi Kenneth Brander, eight YU student leaders and seven Maccabeats—attended the conference from all over the United States and Canada (and, in the case of a tiny minority, Israel). But despite the abundant catered food supply and picturesque setting, the ChampionsGate IV long weekend, made possible by the generosity of Ira and Mindy Mitzner, was not just a vacation.

The conference's goal is to facilitate group discussion among community leaders about pressing issues in the Jewish community. This year, the four topics of dialogue were: increasing tuition in Jewish day schools, the stagnant *shidduch* (Jewish dating and marriage) scene, the shortage of effective Jewish communal leaders and the utilization of technology for the promotion of Modern Orthodox Judaism.

CJF summer intern Chavi Becker (Stern College for Women '10) was impressed by the wide variety of people in attendance. "One of the main things I learned there," said Becker, "was how involved people can be, even if they're lay leaders [rather than clergy] of the communities, and how they want to find solutions and ways to improve problems in the community."

The conference kicked off Thursday night with two short trigger films. The first one, about the tuition crisis, featured plenty of concerning statistics, as well as the stories of a family that sold their house in order to pay for yeshiva day school and a community in Florida that opened a government-funded charter school to evade crippling private school costs. The charter school is open to the general community, and all students—Jewish or not—learn Hebrew. An optional parent-led prayer takes place in the morning, and some students choose to stay after school (which ends at 2:30 PM) for non-curricular Judaic studies lessons. However, this system is not looked upon favorably by proponents of the traditional yeshiva structure of comprehensive

continued on page 18

Summer with the Center for the Jewish Future

Yaira Dubin

This summer, Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future continued its work connecting communities and cultivating leadership by running several influential and innovative programs. Led by Rabbi Kenneth Brander, the CJF strives to strengthen the Jewish community and its leadership from within. Using the values of Yeshiva University as its guide, the CJF hopes to effect change globally by training the student body to act as leaders and builders of the Jewish people.

The YU-CJF Women's Summer Beit Midrash Program, directed by Ms. Daphne Fishman Secunda, brought these ideas to life in the Manhattan Jewish community from July 6 to 29. "It is the overarching goal of this program to create a cadre of learned women who will utilize their Torah knowledge and personal talents as future leaders who will contribute to the Jewish community in meaningful ways," says Ms. Secunda. This program demonstrates for them that they can be agents of positive change for the Jewish community."

The Fellows program was designed for women who have demonstrated a strong commitment to Torah and community. It involved an intensive course of study, during which participants spent three full days each week immersed in advanced learning. Mornings were spent with Rabbi Moshe Kahn of Stern College for Women and afternoons with Dr. Shawn Zelig Aster of Yeshiva College. There was also a biweekly *haburah* (discussion) with Ms. Elana Stein Hain of Lincoln Square Synagogue.

The Women's Beit Midrash Program provided a unique opportunity for those looking for a summer of serious learning. Elysheva Wise, an incoming Bar Ilan student and member of the Fellows program, was searching for just such a program. "I was looking to learn a lot and have my skills challenged and stretched and I found that the teachers and the girls did just that," she says.

Ayelet Mael, a 2008 graduate of Stern College currently pursuing a Master's degree at Bernard Revel Graduate School, agrees. "I decided to do the Beit Midrash Program because I was hoping to learn in a serious way that I have not had the opportunity to do since my year of seminary in Israel," says Mael. "While I continue to learn all the time, there is something different about being in the environment of a Beit Midrash, of being with people who are all committed

to Torah, and I wanted to put myself into that environment for a month."

Spending the summer immersed in a CJF learning program offered young women the chance to develop themselves further into leaders and educators. For recent graduates, "this program offered them a physical and spiritual space with the YU context/family to build upon what they had accomplished in their time at Stern," says Ms. Secunda. All of the Fellows chosen by the CJF to participate in this program have something in common. "They share a passion for learning," says Ms. Secunda, "...and they each recognize the need within the Jewish community and they share an intense passion to contribute in either professional or lay capacities."

As part of the program, the fellows also learned in *havruta* (pairs) once a week with women from the CJF's Community Program, in preparation for *shiurim* (lectures) given by Ms. Yael Lebowitz and Dr. Shai Secunda. "For most of the community women, this was their first encounter with *havruta* style study, and they enjoyed both the interaction with the fellows and the intellectual stimulation of the *havruta* session," says Ms. Secunda. "This is the first summer that we introduced advanced *havruta* prep for the community shiurim, and it was highly successful."

The Community Program was also considered hugely successful. Not only did the morning and evening lectures have continuously high levels of attendance, but the participants were not limited to women from Manhattan. "Groups carpooled into the city from Brooklyn, Queens, Bronx, Englewood, Teaneck and Monsey," marvels Ms. Secunda. "The feedback was phenomenal and there were numerous requests for similar programs during the course of the year."

This was the third year of the Women's Beit Midrash Program, but the first year that the Fellows Program was closely associated with

the Community Program. "There was this sense that this program and the fellows were making a tangible impact on the community," says Ms. Secunda about the integration of the two programs.

The communal integration was not just to benefit the community; the fellows say they gained from the relationship as well. According to Mael, her favorite part of the program was learning with the community women. "It was beautiful and inspiring to see people of all ages, from different places, all coming together to learn in this environment," says Mael. "It was also through this that I had the opportunity to learn with a few older women, an experience quite different from learning with a contemporary student and yet incredibly inspiring."

Estee Goldschmidt, a Stern College junior majoring in Judaic Studies, hopes to extend her relationship with the community women beyond the summer. "The community members I learned with were extremely kind," she says. "They invited me for Shabbat and we hope to resume study during the year." Goldschmidt enjoyed the entire Beit Midrash Program immensely. "If given the chance, I would love to do such a program again," she says. Wise agrees, saying she would do the program again, "without a question."

The CJF hopes that the Beit Midrash Program will continue to expand in the future. An eventual goal is to host the program in different Jewish communities across the world, thereby amplifying its impact. "Our Jewish communities will no doubt benefit from the future inspired leadership of these outstanding female role models," says Ms. Secunda.



Courtesy of Daphna Fishman Secunda
Women from Stern College participated in Center for the Jewish Future's Summer Beit Midrash program.



Courtesy of Aliza Berenholz
Fayga Laya Brisman and Chavi Becker (SCW '10) greet Jewish community leaders at the Champions Gate IV registration desk.

What People Are Saying About Wireless

Alisa Ungar-Sargon

Both campuses are wired with Yeshiva University's latest addition to its technological front: the new wireless network that spans all of the buildings. Since a vast majority of students have personal laptops, many feel that this development is overdue. After years of struggling with awkward and inefficient Ethernet cables, the requests made to the administration have paid off, and wires are now officially obsolete. Students on Beren and Wilf Campuses have mostly positive reactions, with optimistic views on the developments.

"I am quite fond of the idea that the dorms are going wireless!" says Raquel Mendelow (SCW '10). "One less cable to connect while setting up your PC for the 5770 year at SCW! Hopefully, it will be a convenience for everyone on campus!"

Meira Zack (SCW '11) is similarly excited: "We can finally study all over the dorm and not just in our own rooms!"

Eric Behar (YC '10) takes some personal responsibility, saying, "After three town hall meetings of me asking our President [Joel] to get us Wi-Fi, he came through (as I always expected). Now I just hope it's fast."

Others are likewise hesitant to get their hopes up. Chanan Sujnow (YC '11) says, "I think it's great that YU is going wireless, provided that speed and connection is not going to be a problem. I feel that unless YU has some serious bandwidth, because there are going to be so many computers on at the same time, it might be a little slow. If this is going to be the case, then I'd rather have the wired Ethernet cables. If not, then bring on the wireless!"

Chanoch Berenson (YC '12) is

glad, but wary: "I found connecting to the wireless network easier than getting the old ethernet to work... the download speed is about double what I get at home (with Comcast) and the upload is triple... I am very wary that YU will throttle these speeds soon. They seem too good to be true. Of course, not too many people are connected to the network right now... I will continue my "let's see" attitude."

Joseph Novetsky (YC '11) is thinking about a different issue: "I think that it is high time that the dorms get wireless Internet access. However, I do not understand the desire to also get rid of hard line connections. The two systems are not mutually exclusive, and having both would make both faster, as each would have less traffic, so both would have more bandwidth per user."

Not everyone, however, is supportive of the new wireless system.

A SSSB student who wished to remain anonymous said, "I'm very concerned about the wireless for two reasons. 1) Wireless is in fact slower than the standard Ethernet cable hook up. 2) I've always had trouble connecting my computer to the wireless network, and I know of many other people with the same problem. I would take ease and speed over convenience any day."

A YC student who also chose to remain anonymous bluntly states, "The use of the Internet, in private, by a 19-year-old male, without a girlfriend, should not be made even more convenient on our campus."

Let's hope that the improved access will be used for good and not evil.

FEATURES

The Student-Teacher Relationship: an Individual Design

Yaelle Frohlich

The student-teacher relationship is one that has evolved over time, in various educational institutions, and, at least in the Jewish world and psyche, in different continents and countries. Yeshiva University students and faculty shared their own thoughts about the student-teacher relationship with *The Observer*.

"Some teachers only teach the material," says Tzvi Feifel (Yeshiva College '10), "and if they only teach the material and make the subject interesting, that's fine... but I think about my experience in YU and some of the most informative and stimulating conversations I've had have happened outside of the classroom."

Feifel recalls his English literature class of his junior year at Skokie's Fasman Yeshiva High School. "I had a teacher named Mr. Richard Saltzman, who had a fierce reputation," recounts Feifel. "He made English literature fascinating... It was the way he taught it, with a passion in his voice. When we read Shakespeare, he read it like Shakespeare."

Saltzman also taught the class *Beowulf* and romantic poetry. "It was such an experience," marvels Feifel. "He became almost the speaker in the poetry. That to me was revolutionary, because it was the first time in my educational experience that I really loved learning. That was a profound moment for me."

Feifel has also enjoyed cultivating an in-class and outside-of-class relationship with Yeshiva College music professor Dr. Noyes Bartholomew. The music major says he knew very little about music before taking courses with "Dr. Bart."

"When [Bart] teaches, I gain even greater perspective because I know him, and I know what he's bringing to the table," continues Feifel. "... Being able to connect to a teacher on such a deep level is really a gift and it's something I'll cherish forever."

Regarding Jewish matters, "once [one's rabbi] makes a *psaq* [ruling], this is the reality of what we need to do," believes Feifel. "But with regard to theology, I think it's important for a rabbi to... be cognizant of the fact that there are multiple interpretations."

Rabbi Dr. Ephraim Kanarfogel, chairman of the Rebecca Ivy Department of Jewish Studies at Stern College for Women, agrees that it is up to students to choose whether to pursue a relationship with their teacher. "If a student says, 'I've sat in this classroom for ex number of years, and decides to ask questions of *emuna* [faith], I think that's appropriate," says Kanarfogel. "Fundamentally, the student will decide for herself whether she wants to limit the discussion to academics or... talk about broader issues."

Kanarfogel admits he was the type of student who sought his teachers out, mostly as academic or learning models, but that he did become particularly close to some of them. "They became colleagues and friends," he says with fondness.

"I believe that it's also up to the teacher too," continues Kanarfogel.

gel. "...I think the student has to initiate it, but if the faculty is willing to do it [forge a more involved relationship], then they should make it clear that they are willing to entertain further discussion."

Kanarfogel maintains that one cannot ignore his or her rabbi's *psaq halakha*, but that issues of discussion should be flexible. "I would not want to impose on students," he states. "If it's for their benefit, guidance or suggestions, not imposition" is key.

Kanarfogel believes that Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik promoted this attitude. "My sense of the Rav was that he wanted to train students to learn and think well," says Kanarfogel about the rabbi he says had mastered every word of Talmud and yet seemed to perpetually be starting the learning process

anew. "He didn't want to dictate. He wasn't wishy-washy; he was very certain...[but] he wanted to give food for thought. There was a certain modesty there that was remarkable." According to Kanarfogel, Soloveitchik's sharpness of mind and personality inspired tremendous interest in study.

Chaviva Pincus (SCW '10) believes this trait is crucial. "I think the ideal teacher should inspire the students to enjoy the subject matter he's teaching," says Pincus. "The younger the students are, the more of a role model the teacher has to be for the student, because younger children need direction."

"Here in Stern, the Judaic studies teachers influence spiritual development by enforcing Torah values," continues Pincus, who has studied the laws of Shabbat medi-

cal ethics and kashruth at Stern in Rabbi Aaron Cohen's class, "and by inspiring the students to live in accordance with Torah ideals and to practice the commandments."

Cohen would agree. "The teacher is not only supposed to be teaching the material, but also hopefully can also convey a sense of values, and, in the best situation, convey a love and sense of value of the subject being taught."

Pincus recalls a game called "What If" as an effective learning tool from her childhood education. Her teacher would ask "what if" questions, pertaining to either *halakha* or morals. "That was a really good experience," remembers Pincus, who considers transmission of values to be of equal importance as academic knowledge, "because you're learning texts but

you're also supposed to be learning morals."

Helen Unger (SCW '13), a public school graduate enrolled in the S. Daniel Abraham Honors Program, believes that a teacher should be "more of a guide than anything else." In spiritual matters, Unger values "teachers you can relate to, that you can have a conversation with but that you can respect" as well as "aspire to get to their level."

"The best experience I've had with a teacher was this past year," says Unger, "when I was having trouble in a specific course and the teacher was really concerned that I was getting the most out of the course and the material... He really cared." Incidentally, adds Unger, an early admissions student, this

continued on page 19

Yeshiva University History

The following article first appeared in *The Yeshiva University Observer* on May 23, 1966.

Stern College Students Welcome Rav Soloveitchik
Rav Expounds On Teacher And Disciple In Experience Of The Halachic Community

By Marcia Davis and Eilene Klavan
Ed. Note: This represents the interpretation of the lecture by the authors.

The evening of Wednesday, May 18, 1966, marked the occasion of an important "first" (and a profound experience) in the history of Stern College. At 8 p.m., a capacity audience of faculty and students, assembled in Koch Auditorium had the privilege of being addressed by Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik. Rochel Sperling, in introducing Rav Soloveitchik, expressed the hope that this would set a precedent for an annual lecture at Stern College by the Rav, *shlita*.

Commitment to G-d

Speaking on the topic of "Teacher and His Disciple," Rav Soloveitchik prefaced his discussion by an explanation of the nature of the halachic community as opposed to the general religious community, in order to elucidate and deepen our understanding of the Torah concept of the teacher-student relationship. The halachic community is unique in two respects. While the general religious community worships God, the halachic community is committed to God. The concept of worship is one of a mystical, ceremonial and irrational set of actions confined to areas of sporadic religious manifestation in an aesthetic framework, while commitment to God implies a pledged service to Him, based on a contractual relationship between God and Man. It does not consist of a single cultic performance or series of performances; it is service which [sic] halacha insists upon in every field of endeavor, in every ordinary act of living. "Service is mundane in substance and design," explained the Rav. What matters is not the substance of the act "but the compliance with the halachic norm which relates every ordinary action to the service of God."

"Precision is Important"

The second manifestation of the halachic community is that its service must be precise. Halacha is very meticulous, very much concerned with detail. It demands precision not only in thought but in actions as well. "The absence of the smallest element may invalidate the halachic act." In this sense halacha is similar to the mathematical [sic] formula. "Wherever the act of summation is responsible for the emergence of the entity, detail cannot be ignored." Halachic service in outline or in individual arbitrariness is insufficient.

Technical Instruction

In this perspective, we can understand the importance of the teacher in the halachic community and his function on three fundamental levels. The first level is one in which technical knowledge of the Torah is imparted. It is difficult for men to fulfill the will of God unless each one has acquired the indispensable Halachic know-how or skill. At this stage, the study of halacha is purely pragmatic and would more properly be called *instruction* than education for it is "devoid of the creative, cognitive element in education." The term *rav* would be out of context here - the instructor in this instance is a *moreh derech*, and the halacha demands that the student must show gratitude to his instructor. Because of this basic feeling of gratitude which is considered by Bachya and Saadia to be at the root of religious life, we are even required to tear *kriah* for a teacher who taught us only technical knowledge of halacha.

The Illumined Mind

On the second level of the teacher-student relationship, one learns to ascend in his service of God. On this level, one realizes that halacha is not just a code of laws and regulations; halacha is a "method of thinking, a way of acting." One who is halachically committed to God is committed not only in his physical actions; "the trained halachic mind is committed to God" as well. "God demands thinking as well as deed." Teaching on this level is a creative process. The teacher is engaged in fashioning a mind. It is

a struggle between the "primitive, ignorant, amorphous" intellect resisting the imposition of *form* and the rigid, disciplined *method* of thought and expression possessed by the teacher. "Basically, education at this level means subjecting the student to the authority of the teacher."

The status of the teacher is one of creator, fashioner of the student's mind. His rank at this level is one of master similar to the relation of a *rav* and *eved*, as well as one of the teacher in the sense of *rav* and *talmid*. And halacha prescribes *kol m'lacha she'aved oseh l'rahbo, talmid oseh l'rahbo*. All work that a servant does for his master, a student does for his teacher.

"Reasons of the Heart"

The third and highest level of halachic teaching is the experiential level. This is the level of *ta'amu u'ri'u ki tov haShem*, taste and see that God is good. On this level we not only think, we "intuit," we experience through the heart, we become visionaries. The same halachic process, the same precise system which demands that we think in a detached, formal manner to the point of being legalistic, also insists on a n experiential feeling of the heart without which halachic thinking is incomplete. On this level of feeling, man experiences the indefinable, uplifting aura of *k'dusha*.

The teacher, then, must endeavor not only to train the mind, but to give a *grat* halachic experience. To do this, the teacher and student must be bound in an existential relationship which can be understood in terms of Maimonides' definition of education as *chesed*, as extraordinary moral kindness, which involves the opening up of barriers which exist between men, man's sharing his existence with others, as God showed *chesed* in creation by emerging and revealing Himself to the universe. Education is not just eaching a didactic, technical performance or an act of acquisition of the mind. It is the "spontaneous revelation of the teacher." It is the overflow of knowledge, feeling, and hope,

similar to the dynamic inspiration and compulsion of the *navi*, the prophets [sic] who shares his message with all men at all costs. The communion is not just a verbalized message; it is a sharing of an awareness, an experience, a commitment to a great ideal. The Rav noted that the *development* of this communion is one of the main problems of Jewish education in America.

It is this communion which enables us to understand that the Jewish concept of *masora*, tradition, is not just the passing down of laws *mi'dor l'dor*; it is one generation embracing completely the communities past, present and future. We are all in communion with one another.

Four-fold Family

At the highest level, the teacher and pupil must form one experiential community in which teaching is done by inspiring, uplifting and revealing in a dramatic performance in which the teacher acts out his inner convictions. The teacher has now become a co-partner with parents to form Judaism's concept of a four-fold, family community of father, mother, child and teacher, as we have learned *mipi ha'shemu'ah*: "*Banecha - ayilu talmidecha; talmidim k'ru'im banim*." "Your sons - those are your students, for students are called sons."

The image of this father-teacher as a moral force gives structure, hope, and courage to the pupil for future endeavors.

Communion Transcends Distance

Torah she'b'al peh is such that at its apex, when the teacher-pupil relationship has developed into one experiential [sic] community, each member is and always will be an integral part of the other, no matter how far separated they may become in time and space.

It seemed apparent that during the Rav's lecture, the audience did unite into one experiential community with him, and we hope it will not be long until we will be privileged to hear another inspiring message from him.

OPINIONS

New Government, Same Old Story

Benjamin Kadish

Over the past two decades, the unemployment rate in the United States has never been below four percent, meaning that every day hundreds of thousands of Americans search for work. In the current recession, almost ten percent of the American workforce actively seeks employment. Nevertheless, illegal immigration for the purpose of gainful employment has become a universal feature of our economy. Some immigrant workers cherish American freedom and values, but far more desire the economic opportunities that are only available in the United States. In addition, some illegal immigrants will do jobs that even unemployed Americans do not want to do. Thus, illegal immigration is surely the most common serious crime committed in the United States to create such an enormous social and political dilemma.

When law enforcement agencies detect illegal immigrants, they have no choice but to detain them. The latest attempt by the government to revamp the way it detains illegal immigrants illustrates how similar the current policies on illegal immigration are to those employed during the Bush administration. Instead of holding illegal immigrants in aging jails, the government will now keep them in "civil detention centers," although it is not clear how these civil detention centers actually differ from jails. As such, it leaves me to wonder what exactly I, as a citizen of this country, will gain from this new project. The better treatment of people detained in such places is an obvious benefit. Under the current detention system, however, there have been many com-

plaints by detainees of racist comments by guards, poor medical conditions, and, in some instances, holding children for months with little schooling.

Why are these immigrants being detained in the first place? I can imagine only one scenario in which it would be appropriate to hold a human being in such a cell, that being a case in which a person has committed a dangerous crime and cannot be deported immediately. Otherwise, if the government has gathered sufficient evidence to

deport illegal entrants, then why keep them in American detention centers? If the government does not have sufficient evidence, why are such persons detained, and at what cost?

Maintaining these detention centers costs \$2.4 billion a year. I realize that, when compared with the amount of money the government has spent in the current recession, \$2.4 billion sounds like chump change. However, at any given time, up to 32,000 people are being detained, which represents a

huge financial and personal toll.

Even if one excludes the direct cost of detention, it takes real money to keep illegal immigrants in the country. Most do not pay income taxes, so they do not pay for any social services they receive, except in the form of sales tax. The benefits of these social services are farther-reaching than one might imagine. We pay for illegal immigrants' emergency room visits, jail stays, and children's public school education. This burden far outweighs the cost of

preventing their immigration or of deporting them.

With at least 12 million illegal immigrants currently in this country, it is imprudent to ignore the situation. Although the children of immigrants born in this country are granted citizenship, the problem of illegal immigrants will not disappear, because even as older illegal immigrants die out, new illegal immigrants find their way into the country.

Clearly, no amount of radio host outrage will magically eliminate illegal immigrants. What can lawmakers do besides sit back and pontificate about the shame of becoming a bilingual country? I think that the most obvious solution is to remove the "illegal" nature of foreign worker entry. We could allow provisional entrance to anyone who wishes to enter the country and does not pose a security risk. This would alleviate security concerns about unwanted immigration, because some of the systems for illegally bringing people into the country will disband. This system would be quite similar to the current one: there would be a large enough supply of labor to meet demand in key areas such as agriculture, and immigrants' children made citizens under the current law would become full members of society. Additionally, if immigrants who are currently classified as illegal were made citizens or given legal status, the economic burden associated with them would be defrayed by their payment of taxes and contribution to a society that recognizes them as full members. Maybe then we would not have to worry about how we are going to jail them next.



Illegal immigrants cross the border. At any given time, 32,000 illegal immigrants are detained in the United States.

uwec.edu

From Hatred to Harmony

Mijal Bitton

Hebrew is not the only language necessary to truly understand Israel. In only 60 years, this small country has given birth to a complex and multifaceted culture with its own terms, words and lexicon. As someone who has lived in Israel and who has come back to visit repeatedly, I try time and again to understand the mentality and way of life of its people. The experience is often bittersweet. Outside of Israel, when two Jews see each other in a crowded Manhattan subway, for instance, there is an instant connection and feeling of "Wow, a fellow Jew in the middle of the world!" In Israel, this connection exists, but the differences between people seem to overcome it.

During a long bus ride in Jerusalem, an American friend asked me to explain the meanings of the terms given to describe different religious factions: "haredi," "hardal," "dati-leumi" and "hiloni." She could not understand why everyone is so insistent on trying to find exactly the group in which she best fits. What could I tell her? That we are divided as a nation across colorful religious lines? That the hatred and schism that sent us into exile still exists?

Jerusalem on *Rosh Hodesh Av*, the beginning of the Hebrew month during which the Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E., feels somewhat different: the *Kotel* (Western Wall) is filled with men wearing sacks and women crying desolately. However, the reality is that we are a nation divided. Recently, a group of people from a certain religious sect rose up to violently protest a legal action of the government regarding a mentally ill woman incarcerated for neglect of her children. Regardless of who was right in the case, this incident brought to light just how much we do not get along. The media generalized and formed prejudiced opinions about the case based on the religious affiliation of the defendant. Some people resorted to violence in a way that needlessly endangered others. More than one secular cab driver saw me as an opportunity to vociferously complain about those religious "fanatics" and how they are ruining the city. The radio was full of different Jews, each one blaming the other. This feeling of disunity, however, does not just exist in the vacuum caused by this specific incident. Jews often speak of others with tones marked by disrespect and thinly veiled hatred.

Israel always reminds me, though, that glimmers of hope exist and that the potential for *ahavat hinam*, love of every single fellow Jew, is real. Recently, I was walking in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Talpiyot, lost in the heat of the early afternoon. I asked an elderly woman in the street for directions to a *makolet*, a neighborhood store, from which to buy water. She insisted that her house was much closer than a *makolet*; she would not let me go until she could get me a cold bottle of water. The most random of interludes offer inspiration. I struck up a conversation with a girl working in a new Italian ice cream place on Ben Yehuda Street. While I contemplated the different flavors, we realized that we both came from Argentina. Feeling comradeship, she asked me what I was doing living outside of Israel. She pointed at the vibrantly alive walkway outside, filled with Jews of every nationality, affiliation, and culture. After 2000 years in exile, she said passionately, we are all coming back to our land. How could anyone stay away?

This *Rosh Chodesh Av* commemorated three years since the death of Major Roi Klein. The memorial service held for him in *Har Hertzl*, the national military cemetery, was truly touching. Everything that was said about him depicted a man full of life who had the right priorities and ideas about his place in the world. His wife, Sarah, read some of his favorite Torah passages in his memory. Most of the speakers discussed the concept of a nation—how every Jew must see himself as part of something bigger and care for the other. Roi's life and death represent the ideal of Jewish unity. He died hugging a grenade to save the men in his unit, a decision he made in his last seconds of clarity. His last words were the *Shema Israel*—six powerful words affirming the unity of the Creator that every Jew in the world knows.

The day before *Tisha b'Av* (the date of the Temple's destruction and numerous other calamities throughout Jewish history), I found myself in the Shaarei Tzedek hospital, visiting my little cousin, Chani, who had gotten a severe throat infection and was dehydrated. The kindness I saw in those few hours in the hospital gave me hope to believe that maybe the redemption is not so far away. A smiling *Hasidic* man, dressed as a clown, came to deliver laughs and toys to the sick children. An elderly woman from Ezer Mitzion, a charitable organization, delivered a warm lunch to the visiting families. The nurse, a smiling young secular Ethiopian woman, made Chani laugh with her different antics. Towards the end of my stay, we met a family from Gush Etzion. The father had brought his five children to join him in the mitzvah of visiting and bringing happiness to the kids. They left Chani with a bag of cookies, candies and a bright smile.

We always hear that tragedies bring us Jews together. Our history has shown that in times of war or terror we readily run to help each other. Our current challenge is a different one, however. The Jewish people must learn to be united outside of the battlefield and hospital hall—in everyday, ordinary life. Only through pure, unadulterated, *ahavat chinam* will we celebrate the redemption and cry tears of joy—instead of tears of sadness—next *Tisha b'Av*.

OPINIONS

A Resolution For the New (School) Year

Hadassa Klerman

It is that time of year again. The time when bright green leaves on trees turn russet and amber and fall to the ground, in sync with cooling temperatures and rising winds. As the leaves pile up, the students do too, reawakening sleepy college towns and big cities alike as they stream into classrooms and dorms. Tourist hangouts are exchanged for Staples and Starbucks, while beach towels and cold drinks are replaced with notebooks and coffee, that elixir of life.

It is getting close to another time of year again. The mourning of the Three Weeks gives way to the solemn reflection of the month of *Elul* and the *Yamim Noraim*, the Days of Awe. The mournful tune of *Eikha*, the Book of Lamentations, becomes the daily clarion call of the shofar and the voice of our conscience nagging us to examine our ways. We are coming to the end of the calendar. Another year will end, and a new one will commence, borne aloft by a parachute of our dreams, hopes and aspirations.

Another semester of students will soon take their seats in Stern College for Women. They will learn Jewish History and English Composition, Biology and Bible. They will crowd the cafeteria and pack the elevators, rushing through the hallways to class. Safely ensconced in their seats, they will doodle, munch salad, pasta, soup, and sushi, and hopefully acquire new knowledge. If the last school year was any indication, they will also do a fair amount of talking during class. Some of that talking will be related to the lecture, whether in the form of questions, answers, or interactive participation. However, some of that talking will not be directed toward the professor or the class as a whole. Some of that talking will not even have anything to do with the material being taught. Unfortunately, in some classes, the number of such conversations will be significant.

The time has come to reexamine this habit at Stern College for Women. As students, we enter a semester with our personal goals and resolutions, whether they are commitments to practice better study skills or to keep tidier rooms. Professors, too, walk through the glass lobbies of Stern in late August with resolutions of their own. Perhaps they wish to teach more, cover new material or break new ground in their research. New Year's resolutions are classically American, just like so much of college itself, and like most of Stern's students. It goes without saying that New Year's resolutions are classically Jewish as well, and almost inseparable from the months of *Elul* and *Tishrei*. Along with cleaning one's dorm room and hitting the books more often, I propose a New Year's resolution for the new Jewish year and the new school year. I would like to suggest that, as a school, we eschew the side conversations that have, until now, character-

continued on page 10

Chana Scholl

I never thought that I would use a social networking site. I have made a conscious decision not to join Facebook or Twitter. I am not a networker, and if I am reticent to correspond with anyone via good old-fashioned email, I take it as a sign that I should discontinue communication.

Sometime earlier this year, I signed a petition on Change.org that was linked to a STAND email regarding Darfur. In so doing, I accidentally became a recipient of the monthly Change.org communiqué promoting those causes that had received the greatest participation on their site. For some odd reason, several petitions later, I decided to check out the site. I found that, through my minimal activity on the site, I had created a profile listing my name and the petitions I had signed, which they call "actions." After a little more digging, I realized that by using this site, anyone could create any petition; via the home addresses of the signatories, the site would automatically send the letter to whichever predetermined recipients were desired.

Obviously, with a name like Change.org, the site is pretty politically liberal. At the time, some of the site's top agendas were issues such as animal rights, legalizing marijuana and prosecuting the Bush administration. Despite the site's left-wing agenda, I decided that I would test the waters to see what would happen if I formulated a pro-Israel petition. I was really excited, because it seemed that Change.org could be an invaluable tool for promoting pro-Israel causes. Barely anyone I knew had ever picked up the phone and contacted their representative directly, but I assumed that people signed petitions much more readily. I knew that I did. It takes literally a minute to put down one's information, and I did not know anyone that could not spare just one minute for Israel.

Certainly, it is true that multiple copies of what is, for all intents and purposes, the same email cannot strike the same chord as a human voice in advocating for a cause, but I firmly believe that numbers count. Even if representatives (or, more accurately, their staffers) delete each email after doing no more than glancing at the title, they still take note of the number of emails promoting that cause. Presumably, the higher the

number of constituents participating in the correspondence, the greater the odds of it registering in a legislator's consciousness as an issue to rank on the agenda.

I decided that the most crucial issue of the day was the Obama administration's linkage of Israel's settlement policies with the threat of a nuclear Iran. Given how foolhardy it is to wait for progress in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, which the Obama administration believes will be effected by Israel's renunciation of the settlements, before figuring out how to deter the threat of a nuclear Iran, it seemed obvious to me that everyone I invited would sign.

Thus, filled with hope and optimism and expecting that I would certainly get hundreds of signatures in no time flat and meet my goal of one thousand signatures in about a week, I wrote up a petition and invited everyone in my address book to sign. I assumed that people would forward the email inviting them to sign my petition. As such, perhaps I would not necessarily "create change" as phrased by the founders of the site, but at least the petition would let legislators know that this issue concerns their constituents.

Alas, the sad truth is that over the past two months I have had to wrangle a grand total of eighty six signatures from friends via repeatedly sending emails, using my parents' address books, and actively social-networking on Change.org.

As time passed, I realized that Change.org is a social networking site, sort of a higher order Facebook. You see, we Change.org members do not merely network for our own satisfaction at seeing our insanely high friend counts. We network in order to promote the change that we want to see in the world. Thus, we friend each other in order to invite our friends to participate in the actions we consider valuable. Hence, at first, I was really impressed with Change.org. Okay, so I did not exactly subscribe to a lot of the liberal propaganda being advocated, but at least these people were doing something to promote their ideals, whereas most people I knew complained a lot about the status quo, but neglected to take any steps to change anything. Then, after checking out the profiles of some of the people who I had not coerced to sign my petition and

Changing Change.org

had subsequently friended, I realized that on Change.org people are addicted to signing petitions. Correct me if I am wrong, but it does not really make sense that the same forty people who signed my petition, and also a subsequent one attempting to pre-empt any policy of relinquishing Jerusalem to UN control, have signed other petitions promoting agendas akin to halting U.S. aid to Israel until the settlements freeze.

Consequently, I have decided to try to change Change.org by friending signatories who will hopefully forward my petitions to others whom I will friend if and when they sign. This process must continue until I get to some actual Israel supporters, and together we can work to balance the biased Middle East rhetoric and agendas promoted on Change.org.

It is quite discouraging when, on the one hand, a population that is tremendously concerned about the current tone of U.S. policy toward Israel may be unwilling to take the smallest action in order to promote any change, and, on the other hand, people are so caught up in the supposed "spirit of change" that they sign everything they get

their hands on, thereby undermining any credibility they may ever have possessed.

Therefore, please, when someone gives you the opportunity to make good on your talk and actually do something, even if it is as small as sending a pre-written email to your representatives in Congress, do it. In today's crazy age in which our presidential administration has implied that modern Palestinian life is akin to slavery, believes that the state of Israel is solely a direct product of the Holocaust and has condemned the eviction of illegal Arab squatters from land that was owned by Jews prior to the creation of the State, it is more important than ever to take whatever action we can to advocate the truth and rouse others to do the same. Even if ultimately our actions do not make a difference, we can at least try to get the a comparable number of people involved in advocating on behalf of Israel as are trying to save the desert tortoise! Or, better yet, join Change.org, and try to change it with me!

Chana Scholl misses sunny California and needs to get more sleep.

Camp: A Social Misconception

Ilana Hostyk

I have a rather embarrassing and unflattering confession to make. I used to be one of those people who patronized those that worked as camp counselors. In a snobby and pretentious manner, I looked down on the camp culture and viewed working at a camp as something people did if they could not get a real job. It took this past summer—the experience of a lifetime—to show me how truly wrong I was.

Life rarely turns out the way one would expect. This past summer, I was one of those people who could not find a job. Rejected by every paid internship to which I applied, and tight on cash, I took the first job that was offered to me: a position at Yesh Shabbat, a Modern Orthodox camp in Haverford, Pennsylvania. Deciding to bite the bullet and become a camp counselor was not the most difficult decision in the world, but it was definitely a mortifying one. I felt a flush of humiliation every time my friends would ask me what I was doing in the summer; it hurt to admit I was resigning myself to a summer of arts and crafts while my friends were moving political mountains in D.C. and building homes in Cambodia.

It only took the first day at camp to realize how horribly wrong I had been. Every preconceived notion I had had about camp, every stereotype and every vain belief was shattered as I began my summer. I have never worked so hard, laughed so much, been so tired and felt so accomplished as I did this past summer. There is no greater impact that one can have in this world than to transform the life of another human being, and

camp counselors transform the life of every child with whom they come in contact. Every single child is touched, molded, and changed by a counselor's influence and example. I was a bunk counselor for 14-year-old girls. Listening to their issues, dealing with eating disorders, tending broken hearts and dancing the night away are experiences that I will never forget. Being a camp counselor is, without a doubt, one of the most difficult and trying jobs in the world. Monitoring medication, dealing with infections, constantly being a model for behavior while simultaneously trying to comfort and control a group of energetic pre-teens—how could I have ever looked down on this important job? Each encounter this past summer changed me as an individual, woman and Jew.

To the students of Yeshiva University, I apologize. I do not believe, however, that I am the only person to have harbored this unfortunate misconception, and so, in return, I ask a favor from all of you. I propose that we stand up for the validity and importance of the role of camp counselor. Help me stamp out the stereotypes—that counselors are just interested in getting a *shidduch* [match] or in slumming the summer away because such beliefs undermine the importance of what counselors do. We bring Jewish children closer to *Hashem* and broaden their horizons to educational opportunities they otherwise might never have considered. We are mothers, doctors, teachers and friends to our campers. In one summer, we, as camp counselors, manage to affect worlds and change lives.

If you would like to
advertise with
The Observer
please email

mandelco@yu.edu

OPINIONS

Healing a Sick System: An Argument for Healthcare Reform

Ilana Hostyk

A main obstacle to the passage of Congress's healthcare bill is its estimated cost of \$1 trillion, money that is to be raised from increased taxes on high earners.

Although a separate tax purely for healthcare purposes is not mandated, it is fully appropriate—constitutionally, historically and socially—to raise the current income tax of the rich in order to help fund a government-run healthcare plan. As a rudimentary introduction, the Sixteenth Amendment established that the government could levy an income tax and then distribute those funds as needed to the public. Furthermore, America has always had a progressive income tax, and asking those with more income to pay more for the public wellbeing has been the historical norm. The use of income taxes to assist those in need is far from a new concept; income taxes already fund welfare and unemployment benefits. The American government has a responsibility to provide its citizens with access to healthcare coverage, just as it provides necessary welfare and unemployment benefits. Taxpayers' money already provides many social services that act as both post-facto safety nets and pre-emptive measures, and America has reached the point at which healthcare is a necessary social service. As such, healthcare should be represented in the government's budget.

The current state of healthcare is a national crisis. In 2007, nearly 46 million Americans (18% of the population under the age of 65) were without healthcare coverage. 8.1 million of those people were children, accounting for over 10% of all children in this country. Undoubtedly, those numbers worsened due to the ongoing economic downturn, making this a matter of even greater urgency.

One can argue in favor of a government-run healthcare program from a practical, economic perspective. The overall costs that stem from the lack of medical coverage are greater than the proposed tax increase. For example, a man goes bankrupt after trying to pay for a medical operation; he loses his job and goes on both unemployment and welfare. The total cost to society, in terms of loss of productivity and government subsidies, is greater than if the government had assisted him in covering the operation at the outset. A cost-benefit analysis shows a greater financial gain to society by including healthcare in an income tax equation from the outset.

Furthermore, I believe that providing healthcare to the community is a basic Jewish tenet. In "Mishnah Torah" (*Sefer Hamadda* 4: 23), Maimonides lists healthcare as one of the things that a city must provide for its inhabitants. In addition, "Shulhan Arukh" (*Yoreh Deah* 249:16) states that communal funds must be gathered to pay for the medical needs of the poor. Judaism understands that no society can exist with a purely self-serving mindset. The good of the community must be a priority if the

community is to be preserved. An individual in need has always had a place in Jewish law; charity is not voluntary, but rather is required by the Torah (Deuteronomy 15:8). Plainly, Judaism requires a society to take care of its members' basic needs. The plight of the uninsured is a struggle that should speak to each of us, and assuming communal responsibility for the sake of our country is unquestionably the right thing to do.

Many of us at Yeshiva University may have the privilege of our parents' ability and willingness to lend financial support throughout the duration of our education. Others at YU have not had that luxury, and have had to work long hours to be able to pay for healthcare coverage. The Government Accountability Office's most recent data shows that 20% of college students in America are uninsured due to the prohibitively high cost of health insurance. Yet at YU we do not have that option; the university requires each undergraduate student to be covered by health insurance and states that it will not "assume [financial] responsibility" in the case of medical need. Although YU does offer a healthcare option through American HealthPlans, the annual cost of basic coverage for a single student is a hefty \$1,742.00, a staggering amount for working students already struggling with tuition costs.

Beyond college, a major contributing factor to why many young couples expedite aliyah is Israel's socialized healthcare plan. Although making aliyah is a wonderful goal, we do need to question our current system when the lack of affordable healthcare causes citizens to leave the country. Every modern, industrialized country in the world, from Israel to Canada, guarantees health coverage for its citizens, and there is no reason why America should not join those ranks.

Ilana Hostyk is president of the YU College Democrats.

From Julia Child to the Boy Who Lived— The Internet and the Modern Celebrity

Rivkah Rogawski

The return of the Harry Potter franchise this summer, with the Boy Wizard starring in *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince*, sparked a strong bout of nostalgia amongst many Harry Potter fans, myself included. However, not content with merely watching the movie and re-reading the whole series, I took to the Internet, shamelessly surfing fan sites for hours on end. Not a newcomer to the online Potter universe, I had already weaned myself off the likes of Mugglenet and The Leaky Cauldron, the premiere fan sites, two years ago. However, one look at Daniel Radcliffe's faux scar was all it took—I was addicted again, scanning the online websites for tidbits of information and reading editorials. I joined an online reading group to re-read *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, wrenched myself away from beautiful \$200 wands, and would have nearly bought a book about the Potter fan world—if the price of an IMAX ticket had not already left me broke.

For the uninitiated amongst you, Harry Potter fans have enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship with the Internet. I myself began with a little website called "The Unofficial Harry Potter Fansite," back in 1999. There are only so many times that your loved ones will listen to you recite the Hogwarts School song before they place a mouse and keyboard in your hands and introduce you to loads of other people as nutty as you are. "O' brave new world, that has such people in it." People writing poems about Fred and George Weasley, composing editorials about Severus Snape, and pondering that eternal question: will Harry and Hermione end up together? The Internet became a meeting place for Harry Potter fans, and a curious phenomenon began. The "biggest" fans, those with a talent for Potter analysis or web design, began to attract their own fans. Emerson Spartz, Webmaster of Mugglenet.com, has fan-sites of his own, and the podcast-

ers of Pottercast regularly receive presents in the mail. Online Harry Potter fandom became a place for people to distinguish themselves, to develop a life beyond that of the books themselves.

It has been argued that Harry Potter fans have defined the nature of the online fandom—begone, Twilight copycats—but I would like to pose an even more daring assertion. I believe that the explosion of Harry Potter on the Internet highlights the essence of the Internet itself. The Internet is poised to take over the lives of Americans, if it has not done so already. In the past ten years, however, the Internet has done even more than that—it has made fame ubiquitous. One no longer requires a publishing connection to become a writer or Hollywood *protektzia* (connections or influence) to become an actor. Armed with keyboards and video cameras, the nameless, ordinary masses are storming the ivory tower and finding their voices—and each other—in the process. As it turns out, people are interested in idolizing not the liposuctioned, airbrushed privileged. Rather, they are drawn to ordinary people like themselves who have a talent for channeling the emotions of the public. The Middle Ages saw the devolution of power from the kings to the feudal knights; likewise, the 21st century is witnessing the devolution of fame and celebrity through the medium of the Internet.

Examples abound, but the one that springs to mind is another book coming to the silver screen this summer. *Julie and Julia* intertwines the tales of Julia Child, the woman who brought French cooking and coronary embolisms to the masses, and Julie Powell, a foodie blogger. Beginning in 2002,

back in the infancy of the blogosphere, Powell attempted to cook her way through all of Child's recipes in *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* and documented the feat on her blog. Along the way, she gathered a following from across the country, which led to a book deal, TV appearances, and, now, a major motion picture. In her book, Powell describes how she began her project while a secretary in a dead-end job, searching for a way to inject her life with meaning. She was astonished to find that her blog began to attract the attention of people she did not even know, strangers who urged her on to complete the cookbook's last soufflé. Her blog made her famous, but it was a fame borne of an oddball talent, a fame that is unique to a specific sector of society. Others have experienced similar success through blogging. Foodie bloggers nominated Molly Wizenberg, author of the Orangette blog, as their idol, and the previously unemployed writer now has a book deal and an editorial in *Bon Appetit*.

Mainstream media is clearly attempting to absorb the best of the Internet, and many Internet celebrities have made the transition successfully. The Internet potentially allows each one of us to be famous for being *people like us*. Whether you are a rabid Harry Potter fan or have a predilection for stuffing gizzards up a duck's intestinal tract, you can enjoy celebrity for being yourself. I do not claim this realization to be particularly new or ingenious, but it is a consideration worthy of reflection. The Internet allows anyone to be a writer, a moviemaker, a director or a starlet. It is the ultimate user-directed media outlet, and those who program it write its future.

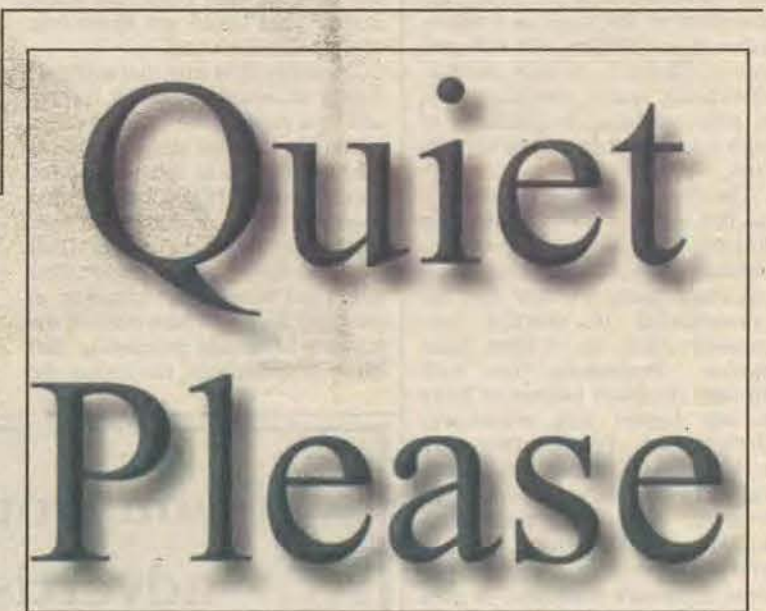
A Resolution For the New (School) Year

continued from page 9

ized some of our classrooms. Our weakness for talking to our friends (and checking our email during class and texting our friends under the professor's nose) gets in the way of our attempts to be good students (or just plain good neighbors to our classmates who are trying to learn) and our professors' efforts to be good teachers. Let's face it: we may not enjoy sitting through class, but our behavior can be childish and inappropriate. Such behavior was not okay back in junior high school, where we first picked up these bad habits, and we have no more justification for them now. It is time to leave these practices on the beach, with the towels and the sunglasses, left to wash out with the tide and the seashells. It is time we say goodbye to the unrelated side conver-

sations and the covert homework sessions that we have allowed to undermine those good student resolutions. It is time we fulfill the promises we make to ourselves at the start of each school year and allow our professors the chance to do the same with their own goals.

The classic college classroom is a several-hundred person lecture hall. The professor drones and gesticulates from the stage in the front, while students sit in rows all around. Yes, a fair amount of those students surf the web and exercise their thumbs on their BlackBerry's, but the lecture hall is silent. It is a disgrace to ourselves and to our school that our classrooms, often barely occupied by fifteen students, experience noise levels many times louder than those in large lecture halls, due not to intensive class participation, but to



Side communication detracts from the learning experience.

printfree.com

distractions, mostly of the verbal kind. And yes, we all know that women like to gab, but women like to succeed, too. College is an environment meant to nurture success, and thus is a fitting setting for the new round of New Year's resolutions. It is time for a resolution for success. It is time for a

resolution for a New Year, both in the Jewish calendar and the scholastic one. Let us resolve to experience a year of quiet classrooms, and let us usher in a new year of success and learning.

Hadassa Klerman is a junior majoring in biochemistry and is known around Stern as "the girl from BJJ."

ARTS AND CULTURE

Bastard Reality

Alisa Ungar-Sargon



In the alternate reality conceived by Quentin Tarantino, World War II was the time for an intensity that played a dual role of war brutality and comic effect. "Inglourious Basterds" is a film that can make you grin at an SS officer's antics during an interrogation, while inwardly cringing because you know what's coming. It can make you laugh because a guy wielding a baseball bat is the only entertainment that a group of soldiers will get until the war is over, when you know exactly what - or rather who - will be at the receiving end of his blows in just a number of seconds. It uses warning music so that you know what's coming, but overuses it so that you're past being horrified once it actually happens.

The film is brilliant at everything it sets out to accomplish, from the 360° camera angles to the charming, good-natured laughs that transcend dialogue in several scenes. The acting is impeccable, if perhaps contrived to generate a specific emotion from viewers toward a character. And they are characters, every single one of them.

SS Col. Hans Landa (Christoph Waltz, who received the Best Actor Award at the Cannes Film Festival for his portrayal) is a villain that occupies the space between superb comedic timing and a German exactness that incurs use of his nickname, "The Jew Hunter." His ridiculous mannerisms never get boring, from his oversized pipe to his childlike excitement at saying the word "bingo." There is Shosanna Dreyfus (Mélanie Laurent), the only survivor of Landa's attack on her family, who disguises herself as a gentle and hides her plots of revenge behind wide eyes and French derision and bluntness. Fredrick Zoller (Daniel Brühl) is a German war hero turned movie star whose sweet demeanor is a typical façade, like many others represented in the film, of German charm. Hitler (Martin Wuttke) makes a number of manic appearances that focus the film's goal. And, of course, there is Lt. Aldo Raine (Brad Pitt); the poster boy himself. Pitt shines in his portrayal, nailing the accent and attitude of the southern bastard character, leader of the Basterds and apathetic regarding anything Nazi.

The Basterds are a group of Jewish American soldiers and their recruits whose sole purpose is to maltreat Nazis and spread their message of fear. They take no prisoners, and all survivors are branded with a swastika carved into their foreheads. The Basterds are all caricatural Jews, who are surprisingly good at what they do - bashing in the heads of Nazis and then scalping them. An unusual depiction of Jews in a WWII film, to be sure.

This representation of Jews

comes as the result of a turnover of sorts, only after the position with which they are more typically associated during the Holocaust. The opening scene shows a brief glance of a familiar arrangement - that of the Dreyfus family hiding beneath the floorboards. After that, however, the portrayal of Jews deliberately puts them in a vengeful light, abandoning the powerless image. Tarantino acknowledges the reality, then intentionally draws away from it to empower every other dark-haired, large-nosed character in the film. The Jews in "Inglourious Basterds" are ones that fight, and it almost feels as though Tarantino is presenting a version of the events that could have been.

The retro motif of the film is evident throughout, in such ar-

eas as the music's recognizable throwback to the melodramatic film noir, in a twisted, unforgiving style. All of the retro references are identifiable as a sly wink of self-awareness, especially with regards to the score. The music accompanying Nazi officers warns of impending doom, but carries on for so long that it has an anticlimactic effect on the actual horror that follows. Other times, it will play for an inordinate amount of time before abruptly cutting off in a scene change. In the third act, one key character shoots another and the music turns soft and tragically passionate before and after the target returns the favor.

Perhaps it is this self-awareness that permits the ingratiating tone and progression persisting throughout the film. There are no

holds barred in the plot's development, allowing for the "right" amount of people to die and the "right" amount of people to triumphantly survive. The blood and gore theme follows right along, giving the rebellious characters - those who don't die, anyway - viewer-pleasing but ultimately disappointing goal satisfaction. Even the "good guys" who don't make it to the ending credits have posthumous success, which, even for an alternate reality of WWII, is just a wee bit idealistic and self-righteous.

Stuck in somewhere among the plans and assassination plots is the appearance of the British contingent, who are risibly unperturbed by the War. General Ed Fenech is played by the versatile Mike Myers, who adds his specific touch to the

already ridiculous scene.

While the memorable characters are clearly the drive of this film, the attention to detail is what highlights their talent. The accent distinctions are of much discussion, being that most of the film is spoken in subtitled German or French. In addition to that are the costumes, the secondary focus on German Propaganda Theater, and a number of scenes that focus on everyday acts: the pipe lit and smoked, the fountain pen loaded and used, and the strudel topped off with cream before being eaten. The continuous camera shots and faceted close-ups mark the notable aptitude shown on screen.

At the end of the film - once the retro credits are rolling; once you realize that the movie wasn't really about Brad Pitt, but that it was specifically made to be about him - there is undeniably a caustic residue left on the conscience of a person, Jew or not, for the unapologetic violence and shocking sequences utilized for the past 152 minutes. The horrific and macabre acts of war permeating the film to its core have a slight benefit, however, in that the ample storytelling and character observations are always accompanied by a reminder of Holocaust lessons learned during childhood.

Alisa Ungar-Sargon is a senior at Stern College. A supporter of artistic intelligence, she will provide for The Observer as long as is necessary.



Tips for Freshmen:

* Hopstop.com will give you directions to and from anywhere in NYC

* Book ahead to take the inter-campus shuttle!

212.960.5200 (to Beren)

212.340.7800 (to Wilf)

Quentin Tarantino's latest film "Inglourious Basterds" shows what an alternate World War II would have looked like.

ARTS AND CULTURE

The Half-Baked "Prince"

Chana Scholl

For the majority of the population - i.e., non-militant Harry Potter book fans - the movie rendition of "Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince" by J.K. Rowling is great. It contains all of the funniest moments in Harry Potter movies thus far, the effects are fantastic, the plot is absorbing, and the trio of actors playing Harry (Daniel Radcliffe), Ron (Rupert Grint), and Hermione (Emma Watson) have become markedly more proficient in their craft. As usual, the score was good, the cast excellent, and the cinematography and set design incredible.

For militant Harry Potter book fans, however, watching this film is analogous to having a child (or so I've been told); specifically, if memory persists of how painful the experience was last time, you would never do it again. Every time I watch a Harry Potter movie I go through the same process. Forgetting how anguished I felt after viewing the last one, I go in with high expectations and end up inordinately frustrated. The reason for this is very simple. It is downright painful to see Warner Brothers spend hundreds of millions of dollars on keeping the movie true to the essence of the books, from the huge special effects of the Brockdale Bridge collapsing to the minuscule skating snowman on the Weasley's Christmas cake, and still insist on misusing all of their time and effort by making the most ignorant mistakes because they refuse to humble themselves enough to consult with a real book fan during the screenwriting and production process.

This movie is absolutely riddled with mistakes, many of them being obnoxiously irresponsible to the fans. For one thing, Ginny's character (Bonnie Wright) is entirely wrong. It truly sickens me that the book's Ginny has been slandered in Warner Brothers' blatant effort to keep as much attention as possible focused on Watson. The awkward lines that Ginny is given undercut any progress that has been made in her fleshed-out character development of Book 6 - the wry, charismatic, and magically powerful figure has become one dimensional and unappealing.

Even worse is the despicable neglect Ginny suffers aesthetically, making it seem as though she was

deliberately made to look sub-par to every other beautiful person in the film. The distortion of the books is also evident in the fact that Hermione has never been the buck-toothed girl with huge hair described in the canon, and there is overwhelming evidence that points to the film's contrary priorities in actually flattering Watson's face and figure. In contrast, there seems to have been no effort made to render Ginny even remotely as attractive as Hermione, what with her ragged hair, unmade face, and plain and androgynous clothing; never mind the dense, stilted lines that she is given.

As a result, the foreshadowing of the Harry-Ginny relationship is so difficult to believe that it is almost laughable. One particular shoelace scene was simultaneously comical and discomforting in its awkwardness. Thankfully, the Ron-Hermione relationship is far more convincing, aside from the fact that Ron is needlessly unaware that his crush on Hermione is reciprocated.

Other characters have also been misrepresented in this film adaptation. Professor Horace Slughorn (Jim Broadbent) is among those slighted, though there is no latent danger present in this Slughorn. Instead of being characterized as a well-meaning but manipulative and ambitious figure, Slughorn is a quixotic, elderly gentleman played almost entirely for laughs. While this particular characterization seems to have been a calculated departure from the book, the cold demeanor with which Hagrid (Robbie Coltrane) treats the main trio appears to be an honest blunder. Similarly shameful, the character of Bellatrix (Helena Bonham Carter) is hyper-sexualized in a manner that is too self-indulgent to indicate authentic insanity.

The Unbreakable Vow scene between Severus Snape (Alan Rickman) and Draco's mother, Narcissa (Helen McCrory), should have been longer and edited better. The scene is cut and pasted together in the interests of conserving time, yet it was deemed necessary to take up precious time for a contrived and nonsensical scene involving dramatic chases through a wheat field before the Weasleys' house is set aflame. Likewise ridiculous are the scenes in which Death Eaters march through Hogwarts, de-

stroying things at random without challenge by a single teacher or member of the Order of the Phoenix. A far better scene would have been a flashback to Voldemort's parents, or at least the very best scene in the book, when the Minister of Magic accuses Harry of being "Dumbledore's man through and through."

The worst mistake in the film appears when Professor Albus Dumbledore (Michael Gambon) is meant to be down on his knees, begging - but does not. Nothing further need be said, except that this singlehandedly gives away the most intriguing mystery in the series.

There were also positive aspects

to the film, which were actually improvements on the book. Lavender's (Jessie Cave) cringe worthy, over-the-top personality; McClaggen's (Freddie Stroma) creepy lady's man persona; the recurring theme of both Harry and Draco's (Tom Felton) chosen status; and the absence of the wretched Tonks-Lupin soap opera. Draco's regression toward utter self-hatred and despondency is utterly believable, the Quidditch scenes are phenomenal, the pacing is steady, both of the young actors who play Voldemort in flashbacks (Hero Fiennes-Tiffin and Frank Dillane) are absolutely perfect in their emotionless portrayals of a psychopath, and Harry was hilarious as a stoner

under the influence of Felix Felicis. At long last, Dumbledore has become likeable, the flight of Katie Bell (Georgina Leonidas) is suitably horrifying, the Inferi are like an army of eerie Gollums, and Ron is pitch perfect from his first snog to the last choking tremor.

For all its faults as a book adaptation, "Half-Blood Prince" is still light years ahead of most of the rubbish out there and holds promise for the next installment. Undoubtedly, I will probably go see it as well, complete with high expectations and convenient amnesia regarding previous experiences.

Chana Scholl misses sunny California and needs to get more sleep.

An Intimate Night of Dysfunction

Yael Schick

Mental illness, electroshock therapy, and severe family dysfunction may not seem to be typical themes for a Tony award-winning Broadway musical. But, then again, "Next to Normal," currently playing at the Booth Theater, is not any old musical. With its small cast, rock score, and heart-wrenching story, no other show on Broadway comes close to achieving its emotional intensity. Behind the scenes is director Michael Greif, who also directed "Rent." As Ben Brantley of the New York Times put it, "this is not a feel good musical. It's a feel everything musical."

To feel everything in a two hour and 20 minute show is a tall order, but, without seeming manipulative or melodramatic, "Next to Normal" manages to tug at every one of your heartstrings. It quite accurately depicts the pain, pitfalls, and undying hope of a family caught in the throes of mental illness. It tells the story of suburban housewife Diane (Alice Ripley), who struggles with the effects of her bi-polar disorder, which includes delusion and severe depression, among other symptoms. As she stumbles her way through various treatments and therapists, her illness often causes her to be both selfish and neglectful of her family's needs. They in turn must grapple with their attempts to be supportive of Diane, with varying levels of success.

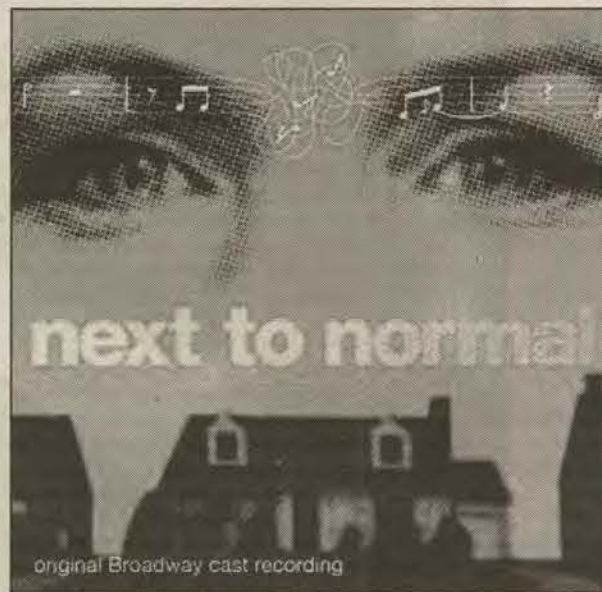
Dan (J. Robert Spencer), Diane's husband, is relentless in his determination to find some form

of normalcy for his family. His stalwart devotion to Diane leaves room for little else in his life, his days consisting of work, driving Diane to and from her psychiatrist's office, and "living on a latte and a prayer." Natalie (Jennifer Damiano), their daughter, grows

minimizes the pain and turmoil that its characters are living, and their raw emotion is evident in every word they speak. Therein lies the show's power: watching "Next to Normal" is watching a family unravel at the seams, with nothing separating the audience from

the actors. It is shockingly intimate and, as a result, incredibly personal. There comes a point where all the characters seem to be so entirely wounded that it almost becomes difficult to watch, yet turning away or shutting them out is impossible. Perhaps it is simply because the characters and story are too compelling, or because viewers see too much of themselves in the characters. Even those whose lives have not been affected by mental illness will recognize themselves in the ways different characters cope or collapse in the face of their struggles. Ultimately, the audience leaves the theater feeling as though they too have gone along on this emotional roller coaster, and that they too have learned, as does Diane, that "you don't have to be happy at all to be happy you're alive."

"Next to Normal" is not suitable for everyone. There is frequent profanity, and some scenes involving electroshock therapy and drug use are frighteningly explicit. Yet if you are game for a night of true theater - for something that will reach inside of you and prick and pry its way into your soul - you will find that this is a show that will change the way you view musical theater.



"Next to Normal" won three Tony awards this year.

Wikipedia



Courtesy of Alisa Ungar-Sargon
Daniel Radcliffe stars in the mediocre sixth installment of the Harry Potter film adaptations.

The Observer

wishes all students a successful semester!

ISRAEL

A Summer of Hope at Yad Vashem

Mollie Sharfman



"Ashrekha Yisrael, mi khamokha" ("Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee?")
-Deuteronomy 33:29

71 days ago, I turned 21 years old. 21 is a scary age; the 'one' changes everything. Answers to

very specific questions are expected from you. What are you majoring in? What are you planning on doing with your major? What are you doing after you graduate?

My answer to the latter two is usually, "I don't know."

But there is one thing I do know, that I have always known: I have a passion for learning about the Holocaust. I was very close to my grandfather, of blessed memory, a Holocaust survivor. I always asked him questions about his family, his life in Europe and how he survived the war. I was always searching for more information about the family that I had lost; my great-grandparents, three great-uncles, nearly a whole family wiped out.

I had always dreamed of interning at Yad Vashem, the Jewish people's living memorial of the Holocaust, located in the heart of Jerusalem.

This summer my dream was actualized.

Established in 1953, Yad Vashem has become the world's center for Holocaust commemoration, documentation, research and education.

When my friends asked me, "Mollie, how is Yad Vashem?" I would respond, "It is amazing. I am so happy. I love Yad Vashem!" They would give me a funny look and try to understand why I was happy to work at what they thought of as the saddest place in the world.

It isn't the saddest place in the world when you work in the International School for Holocaust Studies and watch husband and wife team Ephraim Kaye and Stephanie McMahon-Kaye direct over 30 educators from the four corners of the world in their annual International Seminar for Educators. Ephraim Kaye, wearing his kippah proudly on his head, asked the group an interesting question on their first day at Yad Vashem: "How many of you were afraid to come to Israel?" The bold ones raised their hands, and, eventually, more hands went up. He told them, "Don't worry, we are going to take care of you with what we call Jewish hospitality."

I had the distinct privilege of being the Kayes' summer intern. While I photocopied and asked visitors for their passport numbers, I was able to take part in the seminar, listen to fascinating lectures and go on trips around Israel. I also spent a beautiful Shabbat with the group. We showed them how Jews celebrate the holiest day of the week.

I witnessed a true *Qiddush Hashem* (sanctification of G-d's name) every day at work. The educators, who were not necessarily Jewish, arrived at Yad Vashem with many pre-conceived notions about Israel from what they had heard on the news. They were now meet-

ing Israelis of all kinds: Holocaust survivors, soldiers in the Israel Defense Forces, Israeli storeowners on Ben Yehuda Street. They came to acquire a new perspective on the Jewish State. And they did.

During Yad Vashem's intensive three-week seminar, educators set out on a journey of Holocaust studies carefully planned by Ephraim and Stephanie Kaye. The seminar has three components: the academic, the pedagogical, and the experiential.

The academic component takes the educator through the history and culture of the Jewish people. It is a complete historical experience. World-renowned scholars such as Yehuda Bauer and Dr. Alan Rosen, a student of Elie Wiesel, give lectures on the history of the Jews before the Holocaust, anti-Semitism and Jews in interwar Poland. Once the educators are familiar with the pre-Holocaust history, they are taught about Hitler's rise to power, life in Nazi-occupied Germany, the stages of the final solution, life in the ghettos, concentration camps and the Jewish response, including uprisings and different forms of resistance.

The pedagogical component supplies the educator with tools to translate the academic content into educational materials that are age-appropriate for their students. They are presented with different teaching resources developed at the International School for Holocaust Studies.

The experiential component includes meeting with over 12 Holocaust survivors, whose testimonies personalize the Holocaust for the educator. Many of educators have never met a Holocaust survivor prior to coming to Yad Vashem, and thus hearing the survivors speak provides an emotional angle from which the educators may view their academic studies.

"We are grateful for you people to come here to take the message to teach others," said Ruth Brand,

a survivor of Auschwitz, addressing this year's group. "In 1944 the Germans wanted to kill me, but I am alive in my own country."

Why do scholars come so far from places like Shining Tree, Ontario and Boambee, Australia to Yad Vashem to learn about the Holocaust? Because these educators are committed to teaching tolerance to the next generation. Many of them are already involved in Holocaust education at their respective institutions. Dale Martinelli, a teacher at Vancouver Technical Secondary School, heard about the program from his colleague. She told him that there is nothing like the International Seminar anywhere else in the world; Israel is the place to go for the best Holocaust education.

Martinelli collaborated with King David High School, a Jewish school in Vancouver to create a Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Memorial Day) program this past May.

Antonella Tiburzi, a researcher at the Institute for Contemporary History in Rome, Italy, has been coming back to Yad Vashem yearly since 2004, when she first took part in the International Seminar.

"Yad Vashem is the best place in the world to study," stated Tiburzi. "It has the best library and the greatest historians in the world. Not only are they excellent historians, they are excellent people. The best of humankind works at Yad Vashem."

Tiburzi's grandparents were anti-fascists during WWII and would tell her about what happened during the war in Italy. This spiked an interest in her to learn about the Holocaust, and as she grew older she felt obligated to engage more closely with Holocaust studies. "I felt I needed to go deeper," Tiburzi explained. "The memory of my grandparents was not enough anymore. My interest became much more intense when I first met a survivor of the Holocaust."

Israel is an essential part of the

experience. It places the Holocaust within a context. The creation of the State of Israel only three years after the Holocaust ended is the continuation of Jewish history, and educators need to understand how important Israel is in the journey.

John Capin, principal of an elementary school that is part of the Rainbow District School Board in Sudbury, Ontario, has heard many anti-Israel statements in his lifetime. While attending the seminar, he was very impressed with Israel and the quality of the people. "This is the best country in the world," he remarked to an Israeli soldier he met while walking in the street. "Keep doing this good of a job."

Seminar participants became connected to Israel during their stay. "I love Jerusalem a lot," remarked Tiburzi. "I feel much better here. The air, the weather—I love it." Martinelli agreed. "The smell, the doves—I felt like I was coming home," he said.

Co-coordinator McMahon-Kaye had an interesting journey to Yad Vashem. A convert to Judaism, she chanced upon the subject of the Holocaust when a required writing course at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota happened to be covering the topic.

McMahon-Kaye attended an International Seminar before she came to work at Yad Vashem in 1997. When asked how she feels about coordinating seminars for other educators, she becomes elated. "Meeting people from all around the world and to have interactions with teachers from different venues is an extraordinary experience," reflected McMahon-Kaye. "One man who came on a seminar is a pastor from Whales who shepherds a little church. His church is committed to the people of Sderot, Israel. To have him come to a seminar so he can go back and actively fight anti-Semitism in the United Kingdom, to meet someone like that is a privilege. When you see what another person can

and is willing to do, then running and teaching the seminar is the easy part. The hard part is to make sure these people have the tools they need to go out and be on the frontlines."

Above all, Yad Vashem is a place of hope. There is more life here than anywhere else, for, while it commemorates the past, it also inspires the future.

When educators come and learn about the Holocaust, they see that we, the Jewish people, gather our strength and rebuild no matter how bad the situation may be, because we are lovers of life. We are dignified even in the darkest hours. We never give up.

After my incredible summer in Israel at Yad Vashem, I went straight to Berkeley, California for the wedding of my cousin, Natan Kuchar, to Lili Nelson. That doesn't sound too unique, does it?

What if I told you this was only my second time meeting Natan? What if I told you that I lived my life in Baltimore, Maryland and he in Sydney, Australia, and that we did not know of each other's existence until about two years ago, when my mother and his grandfather, Michael Neuhauser, reconnected through a mutual friend from Melbourne?

Natan and I share the same great-great grandmother, Perel Braun, who was murdered in Auschwitz at the age of 75. I wonder if she thought when she was walking into the gas chamber that she would have a future. I wonder if, in her wildest dreams, she thought that she would have great-great grandchildren living lives that are committed to Judaism. I hope she can see us, and I hope we are making her proud.

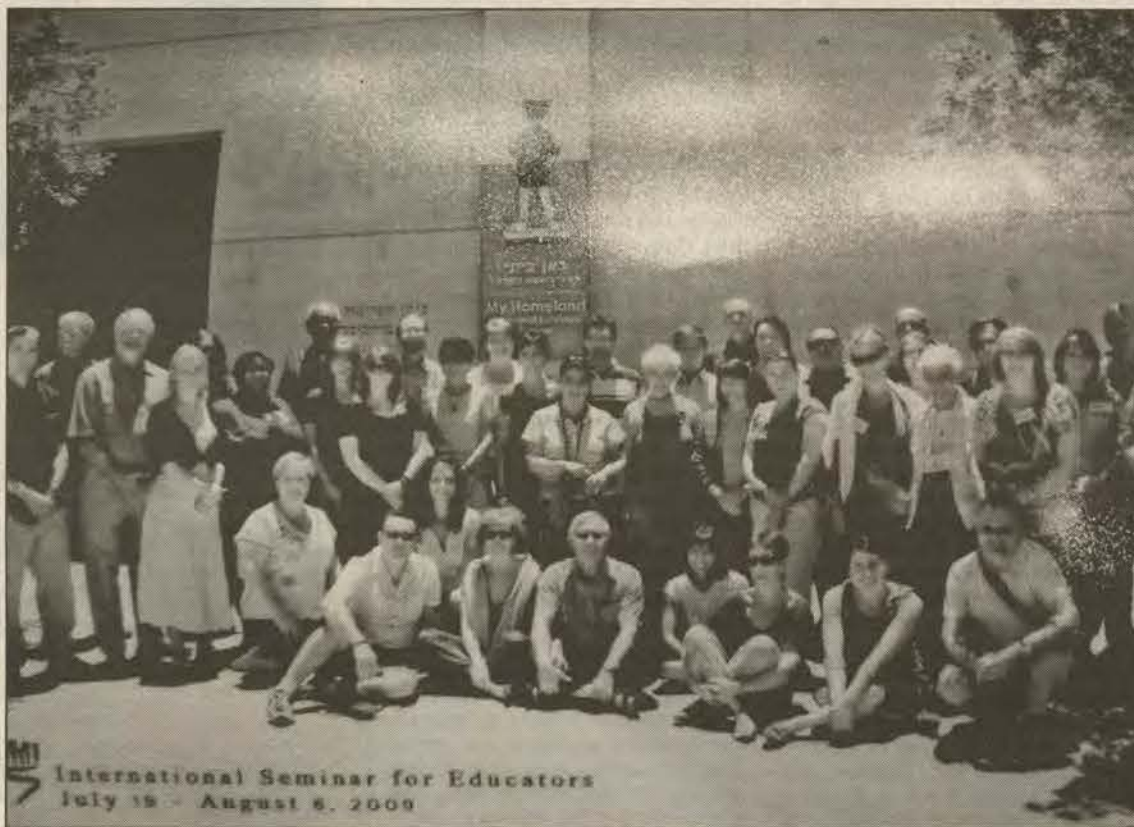
This summer I witnessed a national victory of the Jewish people at Yad Vashem. Despite what Hitler tried to do, the Jewish people are alive and in our homeland, teaching tolerance to the world.

I also had a personal victory; my family was reunited. Despite Hitler's attempts to tear us apart, we came together from different sides of the world to celebrate a family *simha* (celebration).

This victory is one in the same; we have prevailed.

After working at Yad Vashem this past summer, I still don't have answers to the questions regarding my plans for after graduation. But I do know one thing: I have never been more proud to be a part of the Jewish nation.

Mollie Sharfman is a senior at Stern College majoring in Judaic Studies and English Literature.



Each year, educators from around the world participate in Yad Vashem's International Seminar for Educators.

Courtesy of Mollie Sharfman

Please send
comments and
letters to the
editor to

scwobserver@
gmail.com

ISRAEL

The Longest Month: My Journey on July in Jerusalem

Deborah Wiseman

When we first came together for the month of July, no more than two people here and there were actually close friends. While some of the boys knew each other from classes at Yeshiva University, most of the girls were strangers to one another. Some participants had been to Israel before, either for a year post-high school, or on family trips. Others had never been there, and were, therefore, grateful to finally have the opportunity to visit the Jewish state. The program was mainly comprised of YU students, but there were a few people from other colleges and high schools. There were also varying religious backgrounds amongst the individuals in our group; some were religiously observant from birth, some were *ba'alei teshuva* (people from secular backgrounds who have become observant), and some came from traditional homes. And yet, with all of the diversity that encompassed our small community, we did have one thing in common: we chose to study for one month in Israel through "July in Jerusalem."

The Gerald and Mary Swartz July in Jerusalem program is a Yeshiva University-run program that is geared towards students who did not have the post-high school year-in-Israel learning experience, and is meant to be this experience packed into one month. Following the death of Gerald Swartz, his wife, Mary, decided to donate money for a program that would inspire Jewish students to maintain their religious observance. Students from the Mechina and Basic Jewish Studies programs at Yeshiva University were encouraged to participate in the program, especially because it is run by the Mechina and BJS professors, Rabbi Zev Reichman, Mrs. Shoshana Schechter, and Rabbi Uri and Mrs. Nava Orlian. We learned Judaic Studies every morning, and then toured around Israel in the afternoon to attain a greater appreciation for the land and its inhabitants. Some of the trips included *tiyulim* (hikes) in the Galil (Northern Israel), the *Kotel* (Western Wall) tunnel tours, and *chessed* (volunteer) trips to places like Meir Panima and Yad Sarah. We also took a trip to the Knesset, where we witnessed the beginning of a meeting and got an inside look at the Israeli government. At night, we listened to different speakers, including Gila Manolson, who spoke about *shmirat negiah* (the prohibition of touching a member of the opposite sex); Rabbi Orlian, who spoke about the Holy Temple; and Rabbi Rimon, who spoke about different questions raised by members of the Israeli Defense Forces. We had amazing experiences, such as listening to a private concert by Rabbi Chaim Dovid on his roof overlooking

the Temple Mount, or hearing the Chief Rabbi of the Old City of Jerusalem speak exclusively to us in his living room.

There's a moment when a group of individuals become a community, when the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. I can't tell you when exactly our rag tag group became a community—when exactly we began to exist because of each other. But I remember a weekend where we began to see each other differently. We spent our first *shabbat* of the program in Safed (*Tsfat*) at a place called Ascent. On Friday night, we had our own private *oneg* (a post-meal celebration that is centered around a table, where people sing and eat). We shared stories of our most in-

tell jokes with each other. And, as importantly, we learned that when it's boys against girls for who can pack more neatly and efficiently, the girls always win.

The most important place that we visited, at least to me, was a children's home in Netanya called Beit Elazraki. The head of this home, Yehuda Cohen, made it his mission to break the cycle of abuse in families that live in Israel. Yehuda and a team of volunteers work to give over 250 children that were taken out of their homes by the Israeli government a fair chance at life. They sit with each other for *Shabbat* meals, go to school and are tutored so that they will be top in their class.

Holiness comes in many different forms, but this children's home was the holiest place on the face of the earth because of the wonderful work that everyone put into changing the future of the children there; I spent my second *Shabbat* on the program in this place, and I was so moved even in that short amount of time that I know now that I always want to be involved in working or volunteering there, offering my services in any way I can. Yehuda and the staff of Beit Elazraki succeed in stopping the abuse and pain that is felt by

many Israeli children, and they are continuing to build *shalom bayit* (peace in the home), which is one of the most important foundations of the Jewish faith. These children have every reason to be bitter and upset about their lot in life, but listening to them sing *zemirot* (songs) or laugh and chatter with each other, you would never guess the troubles that brought them to Beit Elazraki. These children had nothing, and yet maintained hope that their lives would be better one day. It is my sincere belief that the future leaders and *tzaddikim* (the righteous) of the Jewish people will be the graduates of Beit Elazraki; they will be the foundations of the Jewish people and our merit towards the third Holy Temple.

During the fun times and the more challenging times that July brought to us, our group learned a few important lessons. We learned that while there may be winners and losers, there's no end to *rugelach* pastry after a sketchy scavenger hunt in the *shuq* (market in Jerusalem). But our most important lesson of the trip was that the end of *sinat hinam* (baseless hatred of the fellow man) would only begin if we tried to stop it. When our mentors spoke to us about the destruction of the Holy Temple, attributed in Jewish tradition to *sinat hinam*, we sought to improve our relationships with one other. And, ultimately, we learned to live the words "*Am Yisrael chai, Od Avinu Chai*"—"The Nation of Israel lives; our Father lives."



July in Jerusalem participants and mentors.

Courtesy of Deborah Wiseman

spirational moments in Judaism. On *Shabbat* afternoon, we went on a walking tour of the Old City of *Tsfat*. We stood at the same place where *Kabbalat Shabbat* (welcoming of the *Shabbat* through prayer and song) was first established. On *Motzei Shabbat* (Saturday night), a few of us went to pray at the grave of Rabbi Isaac Luria, also known as the Ari (a Rabbi known for his inspirational Kabbalistic teachings). It was nearly too fantastic to believe. How did a group of individuals, varying in backgrounds and religiosity, come together to pray at the grave of one of the most influential rabbis? How was it possible to experience such wonderment with other young adults, with Jews, who, like me, yearned to delve deeper into the world of Torah and Zionism?

During the three weeks, a period of intense mourning in the Jewish calendar, we forged closer connections within our group. When you can't listen to your ipod on the bus (because of the custom not to listen to music during the mourning period), and when the seats are too uncomfortable to sleep in, even if you're a miniature gymnast, you end up becoming closer to people by default. We spent every waking minute of the day with each other; we spent our mornings learning together, and our afternoons on group *chessed* trips or on *tiyulim* that explored the country. We learned to laugh with each other, to smile with one another. We learned to cry to each other and to

COUTURE
DE
BRIDEBY
Tova Marc

BRIDAL GOWNS FOR EVERY STYLE

Buy or Rent any Kallah Gown from our extraordinary collection, or have a Custom Gown designed unique to you. Bring your magazine pictures and ideas and we will custom make your dream gown and matching veil.

SPECIALS AVAILABLE FOR
YESHIVA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

406 Cedar Lane
Teaneck NJ 07666
www.TovaMarc.com
(201) 357-4877



SCIENCE

Neuropsychology Research at Stern: A Look at Dr. Lauren Harburger's Lab

Lauren Burstein



On May 21st, the first day of summer vacation, Stern College for Women's Beren Campus experienced an exodus as most of its students packed

away their belongings and exited their dormitory. However, unbeknownst to a large proportion of the student body, Beren Campus was occupied by another class of individuals—researchers capitalizing on the summer months to work on their experiments.

Dr. Lauren Harburger, Assistant Professor of Psychology at Stern College for Women, has headed a neuropsychology research lab since she joined the Stern faculty in fall 2008. Her research focuses on the effects of age and sex on memory and spatial abilities. During the fall and spring semesters, Dr. Harburger, along with ten undergraduate students, conducts experiments and analyzes data. The data is collected from a single experiment that is performed on numerous participants. The experiment consists of two tasks: the first tests the subject's spatial abilities, while the second tests the subject's object memory. In the first task, which is called the Mental Rotations Test, the subject is asked to look at a three-dimensional object. Adjacent to that object are four other three-dimensional objects. Two of the four objects are identical to the original object, but they have been rotated so that they appear to be completely different shapes. The subject must identify which two objects have the same shape as the original object. There are various questions of this type on the Mental Rotations Test, and the questions become more difficult toward the end of the task.

The second task is called the Objects Array Test, and it examines the subject's object memory. In the first part of the test, the participant is asked to glance at an array of objects for sixty seconds. When the sixty seconds are complete, the subject is asked to look at another array of objects. Some of the objects in the second array are the same as the original array, and some are different. The participant is asked to identify the repeated objects. The second part of the test requires the participant to stare at a different array of objects for sixty seconds. After the sixty seconds are over, the participant is asked to look at a new array of objects. In this array, all of the objects are the same as the first array of objects, but some of the objects are in different places from their original positioning. The subject is asked to identify which objects have changed positions.

Dr. Harburger uses three categories of participants for the experiments: young, middle-aged and elderly adults. The participants must write down whether they are male or female, and the females must answer questions regarding their menstrual cycle. Dr.

Harburger is not only examining the performances of males versus females and younger versus older adults, but she is also determining whether female sex hormones such as progesterone and estrogen have an effect on females' performances.

Dr. Harburger notes that her research is based on a previously published project in which she concluded that men and women did not differ in their spatial abilities, but that women scored much higher on the objects test. "I expect that young men will perform significantly better on the spatial task than young women," notes Harburger, "which is consistent with previous reports" (see Burton, et al., 2005; Driscoll and Sutherland, 2005; Masters and Sanders, 1993; Maylor et al., 2007; Peters et al., 1995). "However," she adds, "I believe that this sex difference will decline with age. I also expect an overall age-related decline in spatial performance. Women of all ages will probably have better object memory than men, and I expect that older subjects will exhibit worse object memory relative to younger subjects."

While there is not enough preliminary data to draw conclusions from the research thus far, Dr. Harburger's lab continues to run experiments and investigate the hypotheses. Danielle Taylor, a junior at Stern, worked full time in the neuropsychology lab over the summer months. "Working with Dr. Harburger in the psychology lab was an extremely rewarding experience," says Taylor. "I was exposed to many aspects of carrying out a research study." She explains that she was responsible for cold calling, recruiting participants and scheduling and administering the study. "I was also required to score the tests, organize data and review past literature," Taylor details. "Not only did I get to work with many different types of interesting participants, but working with Dr. Harburger was both educational and inspiring."

The data collected from Dr. Harburger's project could not only advance our knowledge about the topic, but also help improve the administration of treatments to the elderly. "This research is important," says Harburger, "because it will improve our understanding of how men and women age differently. These findings may eventually be used to create better treatments for age-related cognitive decline specific to men and/or women."

As the summer comes to an end and students begin to fill the corridors and dormitories of Beren Campus for fall semester, Dr. Harburger's lab will continue to conduct research. During the 2009-2010 academic year, the lab plans to focus on spatial abilities and object memory in adult men and women. Students who are interested in becoming involved in psychology research at Stern are encouraged to contact their professors for more information.

Lauren Burstein is a junior at Stern majoring in English Literature and Psychology.

A Beginner's Guide to Research, Scientific or Otherwise

Hadassa Klerman

Research. That grand word summons up the image of a solitary figure, mixing chemicals in the lab or poring over dusty books in the back rooms of a library. It arouses fear in the hearts of students when it is succeeded by the word "paper." The aspiring young researcher may very well throw her hands up in despair at the prospect and turn her back on the scientist, the lab and the library. However, when successfully executed, research attests to the brilliance of the researcher, representing knowledge, discovery and achievement.

The time has come to rescue research from the dark recesses of the science lab, polish her up, and show her true face to the world. Properly defined, research is a tool that deserves a beloved place amongst the school supplies of every student, if for no other reason than that research is a part of every discipline of knowledge and comprises the best way for us to learn about...anything. Research is simply the exploration of a topic conducted in a rigorous and reproducible manner.

Let us begin with the determination of our setting. Research can be found in any academic department of a university, although it is most commonly associated with the sciences, both hard and soft. The hard sciences include biology, chemistry and physics. Research in the hard sciences may be wet lab research, which is performed in a lab with chemicals, molecules, cells or animals. It may also be clinical research, which refers to the study of human subjects. This dichotomy represents a more general classification of research, cutting across disciplines, which divides fundamental research from applied research, the latter having more immediate effect in practice. Organizing research in this manner permits the rise of translational research, an in-between category especially popular in medical research that seeks to merge the two forms of research and expedite the process of experimentation and discovery from the bench to the bed. The soft sciences include psychology, sociology, economics, history, and political science, all of which use research to explore the vagaries of human interactions. However, research can also be found in English, art, music, and, not least, Judaic studies, as scholars of these disciplines seek to extend the boundaries of knowledge in the humanities.

In order to earn the questioner the title of researcher, the process of exploration and discovery must be subjected to a rigorous and properly designed procedure that is reproducible at the hands of another. "Properly designed" reflects the need for appropriate controls, which are measures taken as part of the experiment to ensure that the data can be interpreted properly. Controls place the data collected in the appropriate context and help ensure that results are not misinterpreted due to equipment malfunction, multiple variables, or other complications.

A positive control is a test similar to that which will be performed as part of the experiment and which is known to produce

a positive result. For example, if a researcher wishes to determine the taste of a purported artificial sweetener, perhaps testing the hypothesis that the sweetener tastes sweet, she might use natural sugar as a positive control, since sugar is known to taste sweet. A negative control fulfills the opposite purpose; it demonstrates the negative outcome in a test that can be referred to as "not-X". For a negative control, the researcher can use salt, which does not taste sweet, or perhaps a tasteless white powder. The researcher has thus set the standard for "sweet". If the sugar does not taste sweet to the subject, the researcher may use this clue to discover that the subject has lost his or her sense of taste. Instead of attributing the not-sweet taste of the artificial sweetener to the failure of the manufacturer, the researcher understands that her result was the product of an unforeseen error. Controls help a researcher interpret positive and negative results and eliminate potential sources of error and complications. (For greater understanding of the various kinds of controls and their use, the aspiring researcher is referred to David J. Glass's *Experimental Design for Biologists*, a manual on research design that seeks to fill gaps in undergraduates' research knowledge.)

Error is the researcher's nightmare, for error devaluates the result of the researcher's hard work. To combat error, a researcher repeats the experiment and collects sets of the same data. Results are generated as statistics of these multiple values. If error is the enemy of the researcher, statistics are the weapon in the researcher's arsenal. With statistics, a researcher can understand how representative any single data point is, using such familiar tools as mean, median and standard deviation, as well as more complicated measures. The aspiring researcher is strongly encouraged to consult a textbook on statistics (such as Stanton A. Glantz's *Primer of Biostatistics*) or to take a course in the subject.

Researchers whose projects require human subjects will quickly encounter the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The term is a generic one for the oversight institution that safeguards the rights of human subjects, ranging from the protection of confidential medical information to the safeguarding of biological tissue samples. Since each research institution sets up its own such committee, an IRB may officially be called by another name, yet its function remains the same. The IRB reviews every research project that involves human subjects, both before and during the course of the research. It ensures that experimental procedure conforms to ethical standards as determined by human rights documents, such as the Belmont Report and the Declaration of Helsinki, and that the rights and wellbeing of human subjects are maximized at all times.

The IRB checks that human subjects are fully informed through the use of consent forms along with verbal communication and disclosures, understand the risks

involved, and participate voluntarily. Any changes in protocol must be reported to the IRB, which must approve the changes or dictate the appropriate alternative actions. The federal regulations involving IRBs were created primarily for the biological or medical laboratory and clinical research, although they govern social science research as well. Social scientists are often critical of IRBs and their related legislation, arguing that the precautions and conditions amount to bureaucratic limits on social science research and do not reflect an understanding of the nature of such research and the risks involved.

Regardless of the field of research, all researchers must master the writing process and gain skill and proficiency in writing up their results as papers. Although the details of the publication process may vary across disciplines, researchers aspire to publish their hard-earned data in peer-reviewed journals. The format of these reports is similar to that of common college and high school laboratory reports, with a short background, detailed methodology, data, results, and a discussion or conclusion highlighting the significance of the findings and possibilities for the future. The background is generally more concise than that of laboratory reports and cites previous papers, showing how the current study builds on previous research. The completed paper is submitted to a journal, which recruits researchers in the same field to review the paper. This process of peer review, whereby researchers review studies done in their own field, serves as a sort of quality control. The reviewers should be both knowledgeable in the fields of research related to the manuscript and unbiased, allowing them to objectively evaluate the findings. Peer review prevents the dissemination of unsubstantiated claims, erroneous data or analysis, and shoddy research. For similar reasons, the peer review process also applies to grants and applications for project funding, a world in which a young researcher can hope to someday (soon) engage.

Armed with this preliminary knowledge, the aspiring researcher is once more urged to set aside any hesitations and join the glorious world of research. Opportunities abound at Stern College for Women, from beginner-friendly science classes for majors and non-majors alike to scientific clubs and extracurricular activities. Professors often involve interested students in their own research, and hard science students who have already entered the world of research are invited to share their findings and experiences at

Student Undergraduate Research Group Exchange (SURGE) meetings that are held throughout the semester. College is a good time and place for the hesitant, yet curious, student to roll up her sleeves and plunge into the world of experimentation and discovery. She may yet emerge as a young researcher, who considers the lab or library a very friendly place indeed and a gateway to an exciting world.

SCIENCE

iGEM: The Biology of the Future

Rivkah Rogawski

It has been said that where the 20th century was the century of physics, the 21st will be the century of biology. The past generation was shaped by applications of theoretical physics, most notably the advent of nuclear power. Similarly, basic biological research, especially with the recent sequencing of the human genome, has advanced to the point of significant practical application. The annual International Genetically Engineered Machines Competition (iGEM) provides a community and a framework for undergraduate biologists to explore and discover for themselves such applications. The competition, hosted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), bills itself as the "premier undergraduate Synthetic Biology competition," explaining that synthetic biology is an interdisciplinary field located at the interface of biology and engineering. Indicative of this interaction is the fact that participants are given MATLAB software, an engineer's programming language, along with an add-on for biological applications.

The competition began in 2003 as an MIT winter course in which students created cells that could blink, and has since grown to include 120 teams from diverse schools such as the Nanyang Technological University of Singapore and the Bristol Center for Complexity Science. At the beginning of the summer, the students and their advisors are given a kit of biological parts, which they are to use to engineer a biological system. The teams present their projects, along with a poster and 20-minute presentation, at the iGEM Championship Jamboree in November. Past projects have included an arsenic biosensor, banana smelling bacteria and self-titled "bacto builders" that can assemble structures organically suited to changing environments.

This is the first year that Yeshiva University (YU) will be sending a team to the November Jamboree. Sophomore Rafi Huntley learned about the competition while visiting his sister at MIT, and subsequently volunteered at the Jamboree. Inspired to bring such a "nerdy endeavor" to his own school, he involved chemistry professor Mike Machczynski, and the two obtained funding for a YU team. The team also includes biology professor Neer Asheerie and Stern College for Women undergraduates Fage Seligman and Julie Meir.

The team is working on a molecular version of an alarm system—a theme common to many iGEM projects—in which bacteria are genetically engineered to detect the presence of a specific molecule and then "sound the alarm" by producing a marker protein. Up until now, the marker protein has remained inside the cell and constant surveillance is needed to detect when the bacteria begins to produce the marker protein, often a fluorescent or glowing substance. Dr. Machczynski compares this to a light bulb. "You have to be there to see when it was turned on," he says.

The YU project proposes a solution to this problem that cleverly capitalizes on the anatomy of E.Coli, the guinea pig of lab bacterium. E.Coli has two membranes—inner and outer—with a space in between called the periplasmic space. If the outer membrane is weakened through genetic manipulation, proteins will diffuse from the periplasmic space into the bacteria's medium. This diffusion can be measured and quantified using mathematical models. The iGEM students are developing protein codes that can transport the marker proteins to the periplasmic space, as well as working on creating cells that will leak the proteins from this space. Hopefully, these codes and cells can be applied to extant biosensors and allow scientists to track exactly when the bacteria sensed the presence of the molecule they are interested in. This is somewhat like attaching a timer to the light bulb's electrical circuit to keep measure how long the light bulb has been on.

The students involved in the iGEM project are each given a different aspect to tackle. Huntley is working on creating cells with "leaky" membranes, Meir is using mathematical techniques to calculate diffusion and Seligman is building a library of genetic sequences that can be used to transport the marker protein. Seligman uses the Biobrick system, which she calls "Lego, but with DNA."

The idea of biological Lego underscores the sort of inbuilt science-fiction feel of the iGEM competition.

To many, bacteria that can sense things, build structures and blink may be a new concept. For Huntley, the attraction of iGEM lay in experiencing the science behind the fiction or product. "The iGEM project," Huntley states, "has allowed me to see the entire process... determining the way in which you can synthesize the mechanisms involved via synthetic biology. Usually, as consumers, we are only able to see the end result."

For Seligman, the benefits of participating in iGEM are similar; as opposed to working on another scientist's project, iGEM allows the undergraduates to design and test their own biological fantasies. "The concepts are transformed from theoretical textbook-style ideas to real ideas that I have tested," explains Seligman. Scientific techniques and critical thinking processes are applied to move beyond exploratory science to the creation of both pragmatic solutions and funky biological chimeras. This could very well be where the future of biology lies—and iGEM students might just be engineering it.

The Lowdown on Swine Flu

Dani Lent

It caused fear and paranoia wherever it hit. It ended summer camp for children around the country. Media coverage of it over the summer was rivaled maybe only by the death of Michael Jackson. H1N1 "swine flu" mania has taken the world by storm.

Those infected with swine flu exhibit symptoms of fever, sneezing, headache and sore throat. It spreads by touching contaminated surfaces or being sneezed or coughed upon, and most hospitalizations occur when the individual has an underlying condition or compromised immune system. None of this is unusual for a seasonal influenza; so what makes swine flu so different from the regular flu?

This disease is being caused by a new strain of influenza that emerged from a mutation in the H1N1 category of the virus. Existing vaccines were thus ineffective against this strain, and most young people have no immunity to it. After the initial outbreak in Mexico in April, the virus continued to spread until the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the situation a pandemic, or a worldwide epidemic. In fact, so many people worldwide have contracted the disease that on July 16th the WHO suspended its tallying of the number of confirmed cases in each country. As of August 21, 2009, there have been 7,983 hospitalizations and 522 deaths related to H1N1 flu in the United States. As of August 13, the WHO reported over 182,166 confirmed cases and 1,799 H1N1 deaths worldwide. However, as countries are no longer obligated to test individual suspected cases, the WHO states that the number of cases is probably greater than reported.

While the deaths are tragic and the disease can be quite serious, the situation is unlikely to near the scope of the worldwide disaster that was the 1918 Spanish Flu. This outbreak of bird flu, that the media often mistakenly refers to as "swine flu" as well to draw a dramatic connection, infected up to 1 billion people and killed anywhere from 20 million to 100 million. It is this possible scenario that has the world quaking and governments and scientists scrambling to prevent mass infection.

While currently the symptoms are quite mild and the deaths are confined mostly to those with existing medical conditions, the great concern is that because the virus is new it could easily mutate to a more dangerous form. It is fear of this that causes the Center for

continued on page 18

How to Have a Happy and Healthy New Year

Tzippi King

Welcome to a new year at Stern! By now you might be feeling a little overwhelmed with being back in school, and are perhaps wondering how you are going to get through it all. Well, here is an excellent way to cut back on stress in the coming year: stay healthy. Maintaining a healthy mind and body means that you will be able to stay focused on your work, have energy for your all-important extracurricular activities, and improve the outlook for your future wellbeing. Whether you've never given your health a second thought or you are practically a hypochondriac, these tips will help you have a healthier, happier and more productive year.

Hand Hygiene—Keeping your hands clean is the number one way to prevent infection. Wash your hands with soap and water or apply antibacterial gel regularly, especially before and after eating, after using the bathroom, and after being in a public place such as the subway or the library. Splurge a little and get soap with moisturizer along with the essential antibacterial components. Keeping your skin smooth not only looks and feels better, but also keeps your body's first line of defense intact.

Sharing is not caring—Think twice before you ask to borrow certain belongings of your roommate, and be careful about lending out your own things. These include hairbrushes and combs, unwashed linens and towels, earrings, eye-drops or lens solution, and any type of eye makeup applicator. Even if neither of you appear to be sick, sharing products

can mean passing an infection that, if left untreated, can develop into something serious. There is absolutely no reason for you to feel bad about refusing to lend something that could compromise your or another's health.

Clean the Environment—Keep your dorm room clean. This means: don't leave dirty dishes in the sink for too long, clean up spills right away, and don't leave food lying around. Sweep up or vacuum every once in a while, and don't let the garbage cans overflow. A clean environment is a healthy and more productive one. If you have a problem with an overly messy roommate, talk to your R.A. (Residence Advisor). For really big messes, ask security for help.

Beauty Sleep—We've all been told for years to get enough sleep. You feel better after you've slept a full night (6-8 hours), and you are more productive. You'll also be less stressed and less likely to get sick. So listen to your mother and plan your day so that you have enough time to sleep.

Ask for help—Getting sick, no matter how much you try to prevent it, is usually an inevitable part of life. If you feel under the weather, first make sure that your roommates know you are sick. Next, go to the Health Center located on the 2nd floor of Brookdale Residence Hall, or call 212-340-7792. You will get basic care there, and a prescription if you need one. If it turns out that you have something more serious, the Health Center will arrange for doctor's visits and tests. Finally, make sure to follow all advice and medication regimens accurately.

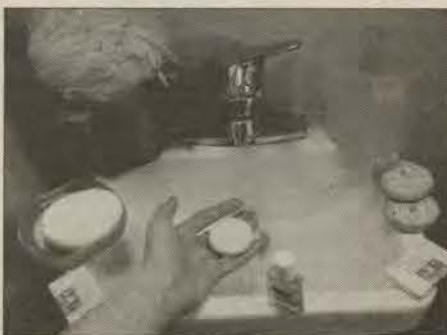
Student Health Services at Stern extend beyond the Health Center to include Student Counseling Services as well. This free service offers confidential personal consultations, as well as group sessions and referrals. The Counseling Center (917-326-4942) is located on the 4th floor of the Schottenstein Cultural Center.

Hopefully, these tips have reassured you that there are actions you can take to stay healthy in

college, and that if you do get sick there is help available. If you've still got questions, visit the Student Health Center or the Counseling Center. You can also visit the Student Health Services website at www.yu.edu/studentaffairs and click on the Health Services link on the sidebar.



The Observer
Carry hand sanitizer in your purse to clean your hands after riding the subway and visiting other public places.



The Observer
Washing your hands lowers your risk of infection.



The Observer
Let your soap join your washing cup as a pre-meal V.I.P.

LIFESTYLES

Who Wears the Pants Now?

Leigh Cohen and Lillian Rishty

As we enter into the fall season, we will be faced with many new fashion trends worn around hallways of Stern College and all around the city. One major trend this season that is taking people by storm is menswear. On TV, in magazines, as well as on the runway, designers are showing all types of menswear items for women.

From the runways to city streets, women everywhere can be spotted walking like men. From timepieces to toes, masculine-inspired accessories such as large men's watches

and oxford-inspired pumps will be everywhere.

Everything from work suits, tuxedo shirts, boyfriend jeans and wide-leg trousers, seem to be taken from his closet but tailored to fit her curves. Traditionally masculine fabrics and prints such as wool, plaid, tweed, pinstripe, hounds-tooth and argyle are being used for women's skirts, jackets and coats. Even the structured silhouettes seem to have been taken from traditional menswear.

Menswear for women represents all that is crisp and classic. A white button-down truly envelopes all that menswear stands for—tailored, conservative and cool. Major department stores such as Saks Fifth Avenue are showing the basic button-down by designers such as Alexander McQueen, Armani, Burberry, and Carolina Herrera. However, you don't need to splurge to be one of the boys; similar looks can be found in more affordable stores such as H&M and Gap.

The signature piece of the menswear trend this season is the blazer. The classic jacket is both collegiate and preppy and creates a striking contrast when paired with ruffled dresses or delicate blouses in more feminine shades. Designers have been showing blazers in a variety of styles and fabrics. Whether fitted, loose, cropped or oversized, the blazer this season is a key element in every woman's wardrobe. Yves St. Laurent showed blazers in the fall 2009 ready to wear collection in both black leather and grey pinstripe. Blazers can polish up a professional look or, when cuffed (often with the lining showing), add edginess to a more casual ensemble.

Even the less daring can incorporate the menswear trend into their look with accessories such as vests, suspenders, ties, fedoras, loafers and oxford shoes. Many women especially are wearing fedoras this season, as seen on celebrities such as Jennifer Aniston and Reese Witherspoon. Fedoras express a look that says "I stole this from my boyfriend." This accessory is being worn for summer in materials like straw and linen, and is carried over to the fall in heavier materials such as wool and tweed. These hats accessorize a simple daytime outfit adding an element of trendiness.

Whether or not you are into the menswear look this season, you are bound to see it all over the New York streets; some of even the most feminine looks this fall are menswear inspired. The boys better watch it, because the girls will be raiding their closets this fall!



Look for menswear-inspired outfits on 34th Street this fall.

The Observer

The Star and The Stylist

Talia Kaufman



Celebrities have had a longtime romance with fashion; everyone on the A to Z lists is graded on what they wear. Whether

you are a leading lady, celeb, reality superstar or American Idol hopeful, you've got to flirt a bit with the fashion industry to truly look the part. Perhaps it is because the entertainment and fashion industries have so much in common.

As celebrities can go from hot to not as fast as any trend, they must stay hip, edgy and constantly reinvent themselves. However, today stars are taking their relationship to a whole new level, and showing more commitment to their favorite designers than the average celebrity marriage. Ever since the fall of the supermodel in the early 1990s, celebrities have been the modern-day supermodels; designers look to their perfect figures to display the latest looks in hopes that the star's status will turn their adoring fans and wannabes into fashion consumers.

The hotter the celebrity the hotter the trend will spark. That is how many designers choose their muse. However once the

relationships between the stylish and fabulous begin to flourish, the possibilities, from freebies to paparazzi pics, are truly endless. Designer Hubert de Givenchy not only designed Audrey Hepburn's signature Holly Golightly little black dress (in addition to many other costumes and red carpet gowns) but also served as a close friend and confidant. Giorgio Armani, as, bizarrely, the "bff" of Tom Cruise, outfitted the star's entire wedding of the century back in 2006. But other designers like to milk the fame of their celebuddies in less subtle ways.

The immortalized Hermes Birkin bag was named for British actress-singer Jane Birkin. After twenty-five years of popularity, the six thousand dollar bag still has a two-year waiting list. Today, designers are all about naming their products after celebs, with Marc Jacobs and his Rihanna Bag and Kooba's Blake Tote named for the Gossip Girl herself; today you're a nobody if you can't wear your own name on your arm.

Not all celebs look to inspire accessories for attention. Some stars boost their careers by making headlines with their wacky wardrobes. Lady Gaga designs her own oft-pantsless outfits and pairs her infamous beehive and liquid eyeliner with her grunge garb. But the wackiest in the tabloids today goes to Katy Perry. Perry's wild

wardrobe choices show that she is just as close to being stylish as she is a positive role model. With every outfit, whether it be New Year's grandfather clock-inspired little number, the merry-go-round mini dress or the half-bride, half-groom tuxedo dress that she wore to the MTV Europe Music Awards, she seems as confused about her fashion identity as, well, other things. Any press may be good press, but definitely not good style.

Not all stars resort to tacky attire for paparazzi attention. Some stars look to fashion simply to express themselves. Back in 2007, Rihanna cut her hair into a bob and donned many leather outfits to inform everyone that she was edgy. Madonna likes to put on pantsless leotard outfits to assure the world that she is indeed premenopausal—thanks Madge!

However, the greatest form of self-expression is indeed the celebrity clothing line. Today, many celebrities in addition to (or, in many cases, instead of) being uber-talented, are expanding their brands by designing their own lines of clothing. Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen have found multi-billion dollar success with their empire of affordable-everything for tweens at Wal-Mart, spreading their name and fame in one-horse towns that may or may not have their own gas station. Disney

The In-Towners' Dilemma

Adina Erdfarb

As we kick off a new school year with move-in day, many Stern College for Women students have adopted their own definition of "move in." Stern has created a new phenomenon among its students, as many of the young women here are locally-based "in-towners," or "semi-commuters." Despite living in Stern dorms during the week, they take the ride home nearly every weekend by train, bus or car.

Whether the presence of these out-of-towners has created a divide between local and non-local students is an entirely separate debate. But the overwhelming population of in-towners at Stern College also raises the question of what it really means to "move in" to Stern. For students with such a dichotomous living arrangement, what exactly does moving in entail? To solve this quandary, two and a half main strategies have been developed by Stern students.

1. The Room Raider: An offshoot of the "You Never Know" mentality, the plan is to bring as much as you can to school, with the attitude of, "I'll leave it in my dorm room, just in case." Though this certainly has its advantages—you will rarely run out of clothes and you will usually have anything you need on hand—it can also create a number of problems.

First of all, space is not always freely available in the dorms. Luckily, a myriad of organizational apparatuses, from in-closet shoe arrangers to under-the-bed storage drawers, are on sale at your local Bed, Bath & Beyond and can help eliminate this concern.

Still, space, or lack thereof, is not the only issue involved with keeping all of your possessions at school. There is also the risk of leaving that essential tank top, that outfit-completing headband, or that necessary bottle of makeup in Midtown, only to realize your error when you need it right before *Shabbat* or on Saturday night. Nonetheless, since the majority of the week is spent in school, many students prefer to adopt this strategy and risk lack at home rather than at school.

2. The Perpetual Packer: Reserved for those advanced planners out there, the second tactic is to keep most of your possessions at home, and bring a few outfits back and forth every week. The advantages: you will rarely be short of anything on the weekends, and, even better, your dorm drawers and closets will not be cluttered. The drawbacks: when you accidentally spill your morning coffee on one of the four tops you packed for the week, you might need to hit up your roommate for a t-shirt to borrow. Or what if you make last-minute plans on a school night and find yourself lacking the perfect outfit? And how do you deal with unexpected *Shabbat* invitations that you would be happy to accept, if only you had something to wear? In such situations, having a similarly-sized friend who adopts strategy #1 would help, though even that might not solve every issue.

3. The Two-Timer: The ideal solution is option two-and-a-half, a partial strategy that can be combined with either plan 1 or plan 2. This tactic requires you to double up on as many items as possible and keep one of each at home and at school. Though this can prove to be a costly method, it is clearly the most convenient. Having two sets of tank tops, cosmetics or chargers will definitely save you a lot of stress when it comes time to pack up every week. For example, try to find a friend who used to have the same cell phone as you, and ask for the charger. Without needing to carry it back and forth, you eliminate the risk of forgetting it one week and scrambling to find a girl in your dorm with the same phone as you.

No matter which option you choose, a good idea would be to keep a list of things you need to pack each week, whether you are bringing them from home to school or vice versa. If you adhere to your list and pack wisely, you will frequently avoid putting yourself in the aforementioned situations and save yourself a lot of stress when it comes time for your weekly trips home.



In-towners and out-of-towners alike storm these lockers to ship their bags to their dorms each orientation.

The Observer

Princess-turned-vixen Miley Cyrus is following in the twins' cheap but trendy footsteps, collaborating with BCBG designer Max Azaria to create her own affordable line for Wal-Mart. "I wanted clothes that I could wear every day," says the star of the line, whose products cost no more than twenty dollars. Perhaps this is the best executive decision of the one-hit-wonder's stage dad dijour, Billy Ray, since his 1980s mullet, seeing that his daughter is headed in a similarly cheap direction.

Today, in the image obsessed, stalkerazzi-run world of Hollywood, you truly are what you wear and anything is possible. A star's red carpet outfit can have them labeled "hot" or "not," and a designer's label can take off once the right star is snapped sporting it. But one thing will always remain the same: the love affair between the famous and those who make them fabulous is truly a beautiful thing.

Talia is a junior at Stern College, and also serves on Student Council.

THE OBSERVER

CJF's Fourth Annual
ChampionsGate Conference

continued from page 6

morning religious studies followed by secular studies in the afternoon.

The second video, about the *shidduch* crisis, featured 20-somethings from the Upper West Side and Washington Heights talking about not wanting to venture past the "friends" territory with acquaintances of the opposite gender. Several matchmakers described the hairsplitting questions asked by today's singles—regarding Shabbat tablecloth color and other details of *hashkafa* (philosophy)—about their potential first dates. One of these marriage brokers, in the same interview, spoke both about not wanting singles to feel pressure to date and about her high stress levels when she was in the process of marrying off her own children. The video—as well as other *shidduch*-related discussions—left many audience members audibly tutting, and even prompted some to consider trying to set up the student leaders.

To some conference participants, the films indicated that the expensive Jewish education system may not be worth all it's cracked up to be. As one rabbi remarked in a breakout session following the films, "the second video is an indictment of the first."

Still, the CJF views these issues as ones to overcome rather than by which to fall. "Tuition crisis" was scratched in favor of "tuition challenge," and "*shidduch* crisis" for "*shidduch* challenge."

The conference continued at a rapid pace, with information sessions about all four issues crammed into Friday morning.

The afternoon was devoted to dividing into Task Forces about the separate issues. Participants could choose which Task Force they wanted to join, and, indeed, if they wanted to join. The expectation is that the Task Forces will meet regularly to discuss and take action regarding the issue at hand.

Student leader Stephanie Kimmel (SCW '10) said she felt "somewhat comforted" that leaders from all different communities were discussing and facing the challenges together. "As a student, I felt it was very empowering," said Kimmel. "We're in a place in our lives where we get to decide how we want to live, and it was exciting to discuss the future of *Am Yisrael* [the Nation of Israel] with current leaders."

Kimmel was particularly interested in the issue of tuition. "I was very interested to see and hear how communities are dealing with the tuition crisis, so to speak," she explained, "because how we educate our children will affect the future of the nation." Kimmel noted that it was not just money that came into the discussion, but also "how the prototype of the Jewish school is supposed to be."

Kimmel also was interested to hear different perspectives on the year in Israel, and how some people are questioning whether it would be more developmentally appropriate for Jewish adults to spend their junior—rather than

freshman—year abroad, as in other colleges. Kimmel noted that the accepted importance of the post-high school year in Israel raises questions regarding the expectations of Jewish grade school education. "Is everything until *shana aleph hefker*?" she mused, wondering if schooling prior to that first year in Israel is just a write-off. "It all kind of connects, and I found that interesting."

Mordechai Siev (YC '11), one of whose favorite parts of the conference was meeting people from different communities in America and becoming open to moving to places he'd never previously considered, found the session on technology most interesting. The session included suggestions like creating a Modern Orthodox Internet search engine. Siev found it compelling that leaders were considering how to "spread the message and flavor of Modern Orthodoxy using the Internet," even though he was disappointed that some of the conversation got sidetracked towards criticizing YU's website rather than staying focused on the exploration of technological ideas.

Shabbat evening consisted of Maccabeat-enhanced prayer services, a *tisch* (evening of religious song and stories) led by President Joel—during which he revealed that Chavi Becker's grandparents set him up with his wife, Esther—and a cholent competition won by the Houston crock pot (the students, to their chagrin, didn't make the top three).

Daytime Shabbat events included comprehensive lectures about topics that included the Odyssey Years (post-high school to early post-college), women's leadership and issues of conversion in the United States and Israel (a joint effort of Washington D.C.'s Rabbi Barry Freundel and Israel's Rabbi David Stav). In the afternoon, participants were treated to an address by Dr. Malcolm Hoenlein, President of the Conference of Presidents, the central body organization of 52 Jewish organizations that advocates on behalf of Jewish issues in America and the US-Israel relationship. Saturday night featured a *melave malka* (post-Shabbat party) with YU Medical Ethics Society past presidents Aaron Kogut and Avi Amsalem soliciting cheek swabs for the Gift of Life bone marrow registry.

Sunday was wrap-up day, and the color-coordinated tablecloths and office supplies, Shabbat foosball table, board games and sourcebooks—courtesy of CJF Senior Events Coordinator Aliza Berenholz's imagination and organization—were cushioned, sealed and sent back to New York.

The question now remains whether the discussions of ChampionsGate IV will translate into effective action. "I think it's hard to answer the question now," says Kimmel. "I think the purpose [of the conference] was to have a conversation and use it as a springboard; what will come of it we'll have to wait and see."



Sivan Kerem (SCW '10) and Stephanie Kimmel (SCW '10) serve ice cream at the ChampionsGate IV Conference *melave malka* in Orlando. Courtesy of Aliza Berenholz

The Pursuit of Self through Happiness

continued from page 2

not everyone else is interested in doing?" I knew all the pre-med students would sign up for the biology or pre-med club, the psychology majors for the psychology club, the English majors for The Observer. So, I looked around and saw a less crowded table promoting the Medical Ethics Society's (MES) annual conference. Who knew that one conversation and a quick email would lead me to where I am today? Who knew that I would create friendships, learn invaluable leadership skills, and gain knowledge in Jewish medical ethics? At that point, I surely did not. But I offered to volunteer at any opportunity for MES. I was the one hanging up flyers around campus with my heavy backpack weighing me down, pieces of scotch tape dangling from my fingers, and flyers flying everywhere while I tried to hang them perfectly straight. That year, the conference on fertility and modern medicine attracted 500 participants! This seemingly small task as a first year student on campus ultimately contributed to MES's success.

During my second year, the opportunity arose to apply for a humanitarian mission to Nicaragua over winter break. I was excited to experience a new culture and lifestyle, one which is different from my own, but important to understand and acknowledge. In Nicaragua, Boca de Matanzas was my home and Laura, Henry, Osmar, Alexandra, Nubia, Carlos, Juan, and the other Yeshiva and Stern College students became my family. It was shocking to see a makeshift eye clinic provide eye care for 3000 patients in four days, a medical clinic without proper provisions, and the village which we drove 30 minutes (and then walked two kilometers) to visit. On this trip, I helped build a bridge across a river and witnessed severe poverty in a developing country. But beyond that, I gained insight and knowledge for myself as an individual trying to become an active participant in society. The American culture and lifestyle is time consuming, busy,

and hectic, and Nicaragua was an opportunity for self introspection. I learned from my Nicaragua family that one of the most important aspects in life is to be happy. My excitement and enthusiasm during the eye-opening experiences throughout the trip was because of my happiness there. Hopefully, the lessons I gained from this experience not only impacted the people I encountered in Nicaragua, but will continue to influence the way I interact with my family, friends, acquaintances, and colleagues as I continue on my journey to create my own vibrant path.

You create your own path; you decide your journey. So, my message to first year students, seasoned juniors, and seniors who have experienced almost everything until heading out into the "real world"—do what is most important to you. Fulfill all of your dreams, which enable you to be happy and content. Do not be afraid to have new experiences, develop new relationships, and become intellectually creative. As Robert Frost writes, "Two roads diverged in a wood/And I took the one less traveled by/And that has made all the difference." Take the road less traveled and make it your own.

College is one of the only opportunities for you to explore your environment and the people around you. Stern College for Women has a myriad of extracurricular opportunities to help you develop yourself and be a part of society and the Jewish community. "*Aseh lekha rav*," seek out a mentor, and take advantage of the professors you meet; they will provide insight and advice to solidify the bricks on your path. When you are walking through the streets of New York City, reading a history textbook, or traveling around the world, take the time to educate yourself about anything and everything. College is a great time in your life, so make the most of it. Be a part of it. Create your niche. Become yourself. And, most importantly, be excited to embark on each new stage in your life.

The Lowdown on
Swine Flu

continued from page 16

Disease Control to urge individuals as well as businesses, schools and hospitals, to develop plans for widespread outbreaks. Many overnight camps this past summer sent home any child with a fever to prevent the spread of a possible swine flu case. Chinese officials, in addition to checking a visitor's passport, are checking their temperature and quarantining any person with flu-like symptoms.

The Chinese vigilance is probably due in part to their leading virologists, such as Dr. Guan Yi of the University of Hong Kong, who predict the greater possibility of the genetic exchange of material between this virus and the highly fatal bird flu virus. Overall, the international community is waiting with bated breath to see how the virus will behave come autumn, a time when most viruses, such as the 1918 Ann Spanish flu virus, tend to evolve and become more virulent. As Ann Schuchat of the Center for Disease Control stated, "that 1918 experience [when the violent flu epidemic was preceded by more mild cases in the spring] is on our minds."

On August 21, 2009, the WHO published guidelines on its website regarding the use of antivirals to treat H1N1: "Emphasis is placed on the use of oseltamivir and zanamivir to prevent severe illness and deaths, reduce the need for hospitalization, and reduce the duration of hospital stays."

The race to develop a vaccine for swine flu began once the disease began to spread internationally. As of now, a newly developed H1N1 vaccine will likely be available in the fall, but possibly in limited batches. Clinical trials on humans have recently begun and are not slated to be complete until at least the end of 2009. However, due to the possible immediacy of the need for the vaccine, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is likely to approve the vaccine before the completion of the trials, barring any blatant side effects. Currently, researchers are trying to determine whether one dose of the vaccine will be enough, or if two doses will be necessary. If multiple doses are necessary, the number of available vaccines will be halved and are unlikely to cover everyone who wants it, or maybe even those who need it.

Currently, the worldwide paranoia of the swine flu situation is being fed largely by the media. With the constant updates on the number of people infected and the related deaths, few realize that the symptoms are typically no worse than and the number of deaths is on par with that of the seasonal flu. Should the virus mutate, the symptoms become more severe, and the number of deaths increase, the hype and the painstaking precautions will be justified. Until then, it is simply recommended to get the vaccine when it is made available, wash your hands, and step to the side when that woman begins coughing on you on the subway. More information about the H1N1 situation is available on the Yeshiva University website: <http://www.yu.edu/healthalerts/>.

THE OBSERVER

The Student-Teacher Relationship

continued from page 7

same teacher fought for her to be allowed to attend her school's graduation ceremony.

Anna Socher (SCW '10), home schooled from grades one to twelve, experienced her first real classroom setting at Jerusalem's Midreshet Harova in 2006. "In terms of parent mode and teacher mode [in the home schooling experience] it's all the same thing," she says, "because your parents are your primary teachers."

"I think that some professors are more open to relationships than others," says Socher, "and you have to figure out who those professors are. Once you find out, then you can create an intellectual back and forth relationship with them."

Socher believes that the best student-teacher relationships are ones that can exist independent of the classroom. One of the professors at Stern to whom Socher feels closest teaches in a different department than that of Socher's Art History major. "I think you have to find someone you could be friends with in a different forum," she maintains.

Socher also had very positive experiences with teachers at Midreshet Harova. One of her best experiences there was when she came later for class one day. "I walked up to [my rabbi] to apologize for being late and he said, 'I have something for you,'" recalls Socher. "I thought it would be source sheets, but it was a little *minha-ma'ariv* [prayer book] engraved with my name."

While some students seek out like-minded teachers with whom to foster relationships, Alec Gold-

stein (YC '06), a student at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS), particularly valued a class called Psychology and Religion, which was co-taught by a religious Jew and a secular Jew, Maury Silver, whom some people have revered to the point of calling him the "secular posek [Jewish legal authority]".

"It was interesting because a *frum* [observant] and secular Jew were teaching it together, for the sake of the student body" says Goldstein. "And for the most part, everyone was respectful."

Goldstein believes that a problem with the current Jewish educational system is that while people emerge knowing how to follow a great amount of *halakha* to the letter, they lack what Goldstein terms a "spiritual center." For example, "my brother-in-law knew the *halakha* for putting on his shoes, but could not name the three prayers that we are supposed to say every day," says Goldstein.

The RIETS student attributes his own spiritual development to his community rabbi, as well as to extensive individual study and thought.

"I'm beginning to think that you can get a lot of things done with a light touch," says Goldstein. "If you make people happy and feel welcomed, you can give them the tools that they'll need to look back and say, 'this rabbi or this teacher really touched me.'" That can be much more than what you learn in the classroom."

Kanarfogel sums up the student-teacher bond: "It's a matter of intellectual chemistry, of spiritual chemistry."

Welcome to Sy Syms

continued from page 2

Look out for more details about our career fair where you will get to meet our wonderful club heads, and have the opportunity to sign up for a club and become active members. Clubs include Finance, Accounting, Marketing, Fashion Marketing, and Real Estate, to name only a few.

We'd love to get to know you all, so, if we haven't found you, come and introduce yourself to us! Come to us with questions, concerns, ideas; we'd love to hear from you.

I look forward to meeting all of you and making this a successful year for the Sy Syms community.

If you would like to advertise with The Observer please email

mandelco@yu.edu



THE YESHIVA UNIVERSITY STUDENT MEDICAL ETHICS SOCIETY AND THE YESHIVA UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR THE JEWISH FUTURE PRESENT
THE FULD FAMILY MEDICAL ETHICS CONFERENCE

THE FULD ALBERT EINSTEIN

JEWISH PERSPECTIVES ON MODERN GENETICS

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2009
YESHIVA UNIVERSITY, WILF CAMPUS
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

RABBI EDWARD REICHMAN, M.D.
CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN

REPRODUCTIVE GENETICS
CANCER GENETICS
LAW AND GENETICS
AGING AND LONGEVITY
DNA AND FORENSICS
PERSONALIZED MEDICINE



PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED. GO TO WWW.YU.EDU/MEDICALETHICS
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT US AT MEDICALETHICS@YU.EDU