



The Yeshiva University OBSERVER

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Tweet, Tweet #RJC2012

By Tamar Schwarzbard

The RJC Presidential Candidate Forum hosted by the Republican Jewish Coalition on December 7 seemed to confuse “the last candidate standing” with “last comic standing.”

I was fortunate enough to be a part of the nine-student delegation that attended the forum, which was held in Washington D.C. The experience was not only an educational experience but also a thoroughly entertaining event. The Republican candidates donned their metaphorical boxing gloves as they vied for the “most Israel-loving, Ayatollah-hating” title.

In all seriousness, the candidates discussed big and pivotal political stances in this upcoming election, including but not limited to the economy, repealing Obamacare, and the Iranian threat. Each candidate had a generic approach with a unique twist to each issue. Though completely unintentional, it was these distinct nuances that, perhaps, lead to the Great Republican Comedy Act of 2012.

When I had heard only days before that Herman Cain had suspended his campaign, I was disappointed. His abdication of the political throne, and return to pizza king, meant that he would not be attending the RJC forum, and that we, the audience, would suffer the loss of a headliner comedian. But G-d pulled through, and bestowed us “lord fearing” Republicans with six candidates: Rick Santorum, John Huntsman, Rick Perry, Mitt Romney, Newt Gingrich and Michelle Bachman. I am so grateful to them as they provided me with

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Interview: Sitting Down with Ron Jones

On the night of November 16, SHEM brought Ron Jones to speak to YU students about the educational experiment he conducted with the students in his 1967 high school class. The study of his experiment — facilitated by the book and film The Wave — has become a staple in Holocaust education. Before he spoke, representatives of The Beacon, The Commentator and The Observer were privileged to have an intimate meeting with Ron Jones. The following is a transcript of that conversation.

Ron Jones began the session by setting the scene of his high school classroom.

The students were in Cubberly High School in Palo Alto, Califor-

nia. The year is 1967, the time is somewhat important; it was a time of war in Vietnam. It was also a time of Cultural Revolution and a racial segregation [that] was happening for the first time so the school was in a state of constant chaos. The students were sophomores. They would be a typical sophomore class in Palo Alto at that time. There would be the athlete that would sort of stumble and fall over his desk. There were two very bright women that sat up front, Elaine Levine and Wendy Brody. They would always ask the questions in the class and answer them. There was a child that sat in the very back of the room; his name was Bomber. He was very dangerous. There was another student, a

black student, the only black student in that class, Norman Morgan, and he sat in the back, gold tooth smile, seldom participated. And there was Steve Caniglio...It was Steve Caniglio who asked how could the Germans behave as they did after the war, and that was the genesis of our experiment called “The Wave.”

When you were going into the experiment, did you think it would be this effective? Were you aware of how quickly people would be attracted to the idea?

Well I had done simulations prior to this. For instance, to teach about apartheid, I didn't allow the students to use the bathrooms. You might be living in South Africa
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Arayot – What is in the Name?

By Hannah Dreyfus

Arayot. Is there something intrinsically offensive about the word? I never would have thought so. As I have since discovered, some are inclined to tempestuously disagree.

Sorting through my emails this past week, I too came across an email publicizing about a *shiur* [lecture] Rabbi Wieder would be offering titled *Arayot*. Well, I thought good-naturedly, I'm glad they're having a presentation to address the topic. I'm proud to attend a university that addresses these subjects from a halakic perspective. Will I go? Maybe, maybe not. Depends on my workload. I continued scrolling through emails, unperturbed, undisturbed.

I did not give the title of the *shiur* a second thought. That's why the visceral reaction of another student to the same seemingly benign email came as quite a shock. My only frame of reference for the word *arayot* comes from its usage as a common euphemism. In high school, the word was used to address any sexual subject matter upon which the teacher felt uncomfortable elaborating. In seminary, the term conjured up, in one, clean sweep, the nebulous *unconjurable*, producing knowing nods fast enough to put the matter out of mind with most efficient alacrity. *Oh. Arayot. Got it. Next.*

The individual with whom I casually entered into dialogue about the upcoming *shiur* had very different associations with the word, in no way benign or innocent. Having emailed Rabbi Wieder to find out exactly what the *shiur* would be about, she informed me it was intended to predominantly discuss homosexuality. Speaking with individuals who have hitherto attended the *shiur*, this proved to be an accurate delineation of the *shiur's* content. The individual posited, passionately, that titling a *shiur* specifically about homosexuality as *arayot* was extremely offensive. She asked, question weighed down heavily with expectation
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Julia Siegel

“Brookdale lights up midtown” and other Hanukkah memories, on back page.

The Battle Against Apathy on Behalf of Israel

By Sophie Felder

Washington DC — In the early hours of the morning on November 30 four buses pulled away from Yeshiva University's Beren and Wilf campuses carrying 190 students on their way to the nation's capitol. Their mission — to lobby on behalf of Israel and her interests. The trip was planned and executed by YUPAC, the campus group dedicated to political activism on behalf of Israel. Led by Dena Muskin and Ethan Wasserman, YUPAC was able to secure generous grants from the ICC Israel Advocacy Grant as well as the

Avi Chai Foundation, making the entire trip free for students.

With a panoramic view of the Capitol's dome in the background, Rep. Debbie Wasserman-Schultz welcomed YU students to Washington DC and commended them for their activism. “Be passionate about the issues close to your heart,” she implored, indicating that college in particular is the time to get involved.

Wasserman-Schultz was only 26 when she was elected to Florida's House of Representatives. Rep. Wasserman-Schultz commented

that she approaches politics from “a uniquely Jewish perspective” and is proud that she can bring her love of Israel to work with her. The Representative also noted President Obama's continued support for Israel evidenced by the unprecedented level of aid dollars and his making clear to Palestinians that “anything other than bilateral negotiation is unacceptable.”

Students went from the AIPAC office to Capitol Hill for the numerous meetings YUPAC had scheduled with Senators and Representatives on both sides of the

aisle.

The points to lobby included imposing tougher sanctions on Iran, opposing Palestinian Statehood at the UN and backing Foreign Assistance. However, says Ariella Gottlieb
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FROM THE EDITORS

The Campaign to Bring Israelis Home

By Renee Kestenbaum, Editor-in-Chief

In our last issue, Chana Brauser explored the Knesset's advertising campaign to draw Israeli citizens living abroad back to their homeland ("Higiya HaZman Lachzor La'Aretz: The Campaign to Bring Israelis Home"). The campaign has since become the notorious center of extensive complaints from the American Jewish community for the way it portrays Jewish life in the United States: inevitably unconnected to a Jewish or Israeli heritage.

The campaign entailed a series of billboard ads around the country, in addition to several 30-second television commercials, whose message seems to be that the Israeli identity becomes eroded in America. "You will always be Israeli, but your children won't be," states many of the ads, in which children of expatriates call their fathers "Daddy" instead of "Abba," or speak of Christmas instead of Hanukkah. The ad that received the greatest share of ire features a young Israeli woman silently observing *Yom HaZikaron* [Memorial Day] while her partner wonders why she is so sad.

Many assumed that the partner is an American Jew — unaware of Israeli culture. Several American Jewish groups, especially those that volunteer numerous hours, and dollars, to support Israeli

causes, felt this campaign undermined the ties that do exist between Israel and themselves.

As these groups complained, the Israeli government apologized. Netanyahu himself canceled the campaign.

With all the outrage of American Jews who were offended by the Knesset's ad campaign, JTA reports that Israelis living in America responded positively to the campaign. I am dissatisfied, however, on their behalf.

Danny Danon, deputy speaker of the Knesset and chairman of its Committee for Immigration, Absorption and Diaspora Affairs, explains the Ministry's position in an op-ed I saw published in "The Jewish Standard" on December 16.

"There are certain trappings of Israeli culture that cannot be emulated in America," Danon writes, "such as bustling streets freezing completely in time while pedestrians and drivers commemorate our war dead, or sufganiyot and latkes lining the windows of shops rather than gingerbread. These are the charms that our governments hopes to portray to woo our talented expatriates back home."

Who are these "talented expatriates"? Danon specifies, "Thousands of well-trained, highly skilled Israeli professionals who are leaving the country to find em-

ployment elsewhere."

His explanation shows the true way in which the campaign missed its mark. Lulling its citizens home with the "charms" of cultural beauty and belonging, the Knesset ignored a crucial reality. The most effective step the Israeli government should take to not only lure their ex-pats back home but *keep them there* in the first place? Improve the standard of living for educated, trained, "talented" middle class couples and families.

Considering the tremendous popularity of the housing protests last summer, the Israeli government's advertising ought to center on their improvement of socioeconomic conditions. These changes should not only be made in the form of extra benefits to returning citizens, but should be available to all.

The only change the ad campaign might have enticed expatriates to make is to visit Israel more often, or perhaps to send their children to the local Hebrew charter school so that "Abba" will come to their lips as readily as "Daddy."

To effectively draw Israelis home, the Knesset ought to focus on improving the standard of living; many Israelis are drawn abroad for financial reasons, so finding the good life in Israel may be their ticket home.

Regarding the Beacon

"The Observer" regrets the circumstances under which one of YU's student publications not only brought tremendous upset and tension among the student body but also attracted a whirlwind of negative attention from external media outlets.

The "Beacon's" article, "How Do I Begin to Explain This?" raised the important, yet sensitive, topic of "underground" premarital sex in the Modern Orthodox community. Though it raised awareness, its potential to create meaningful dialogue was unfortunately never realized, due to the article's shock value, possibly-fictional status, dubious literary quality, and, yes, the very nature of an online publication, in which readers are invited to instantly publish indignant, vacuous comments. While a society ought not to sweep its problems aside, raising awareness without meaningful dialogue is seldom effective. "How Do I Begin to Explain This?" left important questions about young adults and premarital sex unasked, the answers unexplored.

Please take care of yourselves. Stern women who struggle with the same concerns as the "Beacon's" anonymous author, and wish guidance, have several university services available to them. The Counseling Center has counselors available to address any issues in a student's life, with the understanding that each student's concerns are not only different but valid. "As would be expected in a vibrant college population," said Dr. Yael Muskat, Associate Director of the Counseling Center, "those issues include anxiety, stress, identity, family dynamics, depression, and relationship issues. Topics of discussion range and include academics, personality, coping skills, relationships with significant others, communication, sexuality, and complexities of being an Orthodox young woman and navigating relationships in today's world." Of course, all sessions are confidential. The Counseling Center can also refer a student to other community resources. Students can make appointments by calling (917) 326-4942. In addition,

Mashgichim Rabbi Blau and Rabbi Hochberg are equipped to discuss a woman's religious concerns, while the Student Health Center can provide confidential medical assistance.

To clear up one final point: "The Observer" is an independent student publication. It is not, and has never been, subject to censorship by the university. We continually strive to provide relevant, quality content — in a responsible manner. Nor do we shy away from sexuality and other sensitive topics. To name a few examples: 2008's series on sexuality and Modern Jewry by Olivia Wiznitzer and explanation of the health center's birth control policy by Aviva Miller and Gavriella Pike; 2009's coverage of the "gay panel" and interview with Rabbi Blau about sexual abuse in the Jewish community; and 2010's article on abusive dating relationships in the Orthodox community, by Estee Goldschmidt.

We thank the Stern student body for its support this year and look forward to the new semester.

The Yeshiva University

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NEWS

Empty Bottles Provide for Needy Kallahs

By Naomi Schwartz

Anyone can make a difference in the world, not by spending extra money or donating hours of our time to volunteer work, but by using readily accessible resources that would otherwise be considered trash.

On that note, ever wonder how many bottles of soda students at Stern College consume per day? Sarah Ganchrow and her roommates recognized the sheer amount of bottles that pass through the Stern Caf daily and decided to make a charity case out of it. The red boxes situated all around the Stern and Syms buildings aren't just there for decoration. They are there waiting to collect soda and water bottle caps for Kaps4Kallahs, an organization started to help brides in need of funds.

The number of bottles of soda consumed per day by students at Stern College is less than 1000, but not by much. Workers stocking the fridges in both cafeterias confirm that 35 24-bottle crates of soda are needed to refill the giant refrigerators in SCW daily. This means that on average, Stern girls drink about 840 bottles of soda each and every day, a staggering number considering our relatively small student body.

Both cafeterias were quick to assure me that the number of water bottles sold was even greater than the number of soda bottles,

and don't worry, the purpose of this article isn't to advertise a new exercise club or a new healthy-eating campaign. 840 bottles is not a criticism, it is a fact. It's what Stern can do with these bottles after they are empty that interests me, though. We can make a difference in the world by using what we already have, and would have otherwise just thrown away.

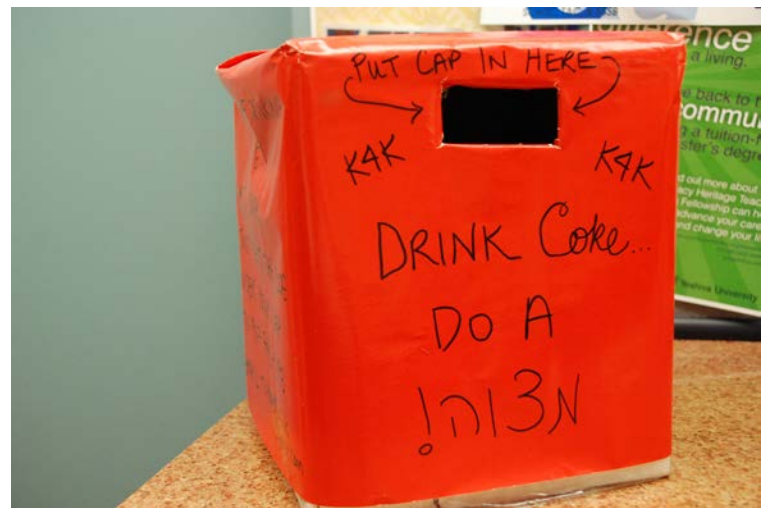
During Reading Week of Fall 2009, SCW student Sarah Ganchrow and her roommates were staring at the "MyCokeRewards" label on a soda bottle, and they were inspired. Regular Americans use Coke bottle cap points to "purchase" household items for themselves, noticed Ganchrow, and "it suddenly hit [her] that we could do the same thing [with our bottle caps]... except on a larger scale, for needy brides."

It all snowballed from there. Each code on a Coke cap (or Diet Coke cap, or Coke Zero cap, or Sprite/Diet Sprite cap, or Fanta/Diet Fanta cap, or Powerade cap) is worth three points towards prizes once typed into Coke's website, and the roommates set a goal of collecting enough points to purchase something that would be useful to a new bride, such as a set of pots or pans. Most worthwhile prizes, however, cost over 1500 points/500 bottles of soda, and that's when Ganchrow and her roommates decided

to turn the project over to Stern. A few girls can't drink 500 bottles of soda, they reasoned, but an entire college full of them can, and thus, with the advertising help of Laure Salabi, Goldie Spetner, Tziona Rosenzweig, and Leah Portman, Kaps4Kallahs was born.

Once the goal of *hachnosas kallah* [assisting a new couple in setting up their home] was established, the next step was to find an appropriate organization to donate the items to. They discovered that Down the Aisle, a *kallah gemach* [free loan society] in Passaic, New Jersey was always willing to accept more items for needy brides, providing that the items were new and still packaged. Since Down the Aisle encourages donations of any unneeded household items, they don't often receive complete sets, and therefore Kaps4Kallahs's contributions were really appreciated.

"No one gave us an entire set of pots until Kaps4Kallahs came around," reported Onit Brodsky-Zisserman, one of Down the Aisle's coordinators. "They contacted us and asked us if we wanted to accept a donation — they already had all of the points necessary — and I was very excited [to say yes]," she explained. Whenever the appropriate amount of points is collected, Kaps4Kallahs lets Onit know that she should expect a delivery, and away it goes: Coke even



Julia Siegel/YU Observer

pays for the shipping. To this day, Kaps4Kallahs has donated seven mixing bowl sets, a set of pots and pans, a stainless steel utensil set, an ice cream scoop, a sandwich maker, and a salad spinner, for a total of over 26,000 points collected!

Kaps4Kallahs has made it easy for you to donate your codes and join in the *mitzvah*. You can email the codes to kaps4kallahs@gmail.com, type the codes into their website at tinyurl.com/kaps4kallah, text the codes to 917-742-9198, or simply drop your caps into the red boxes found all over the school (in the main cafeteria and on the front desk of the Syms

building, to name a few) and they'll type in the codes for you. You can collect the caps at any time: Rav Doniel Neustadt of Detroit has *paskened* [made a *halakhic* ruling] that one can even collect them on Shabbos in order to send them in afterwards. Every cap makes a difference, and with the hundreds of soda bottles emptied each day in Stern, we can really help Klal Yisrael, one *kallah* at a time. To put it in the words of Kaps4Kallahs' slogan: "Drink a Coke—do a mitzvah. Spread the Cappenation."

"Ethical Eating": Social Justice Meets Dialogue on Beren Campus

By Tamar Shmaryahu

YU's Social Justice Society recently invited the Orthodox social justice organization Uri L'Tzedek for an evening of in-depth dialogue on workers' rights. Uri L'Tzedek activists have been protesting a case of social injustice at Flaum Appetizing, a kosher food distributor that in 2008 was charged with exploiting workers. Three former Flaum's employees, who are currently involved in extensive disputes over their underpayment and maltreatment, addressed students as part of the evening discussion.

The November 29 event began with a *shiur* on the concept of *tzedeck* [righteousness] by Rabbi Ari Hart, a founder and executive board member of Uri L'Tzedek. Hart began by discussing the principle of justice in Judaism and its importance in helping create an effectual society. The Creation story, the mitzvot, the Talmud and several *halakhic* sources point to the idea of *tzedeck* being embedded in the Jewish tradition, Hart said. Although social justice causes seem to be neglected in the Jewish community, *tzedeck*, Hart indicated, is in fact an integral component of our tradition, and therefore it be-

came the founding principle of Uri L'Tzedek. Hart concluded the *shiur* by encouraging the participants to "hear the Biblical echoes in these stories we hear tonight."

Maria, a former Flaum's employee, addressed the students. Maria reported that she worked for 60-75 hours weekly during her five years of employment, was never paid overtime, and had no vacation or days off. Involved in the production of matzah balls, spices, blintzes, and hummus, Maria shared that upon requesting vacation on July 4th she was told by Flaum's employers that she had no right to observe the holiday since she was not an American. Maria also bleakly noted that the manager often referred to the employees as "cockroaches." Injuries incurred on the job would find no compensation and nonstop work was demanded until the workers reached a level of extreme fatigue. Two additional former employees corroborated Maria's comments and urged the audience to contemplate all the factors involved in the production of kosher food.

Following these testimonials, Daniel Gross, executive director of Brandworkers International, a New

York-based non-profit organization that represents employees facing mistreatment in the workplace, reviewed the Flaum's legal case. Gross explained that the labor disputes have not yet been resolved. Although a judge decided against Flaum's in 2009, the workers still have not received the compensation owed them. During the whole ordeal, 17 workers were fired and, Gross further noted, "Substantial evidence shows Flaum's owes hundreds of thousands of dollars in unpaid minimum wage and overtime to the workers, in addition to the compensation mentioned above for illegal retaliation." The case to resolve payments of minimum wage and overtime is still in process.

The company, Gross continued, is now making allegations against the citizenship status of some workers, although this was never their concern for several years of service.

Flaum's requested that one of their representatives attend the event to portray their side of the story, though in a press release issued a few days after the "Ethical Eating" event, Flaum's claimed it was "unable to represent itself at

[the Uri L'Tzedek] safe working conditions dialogue."

Their press release further claims the testimonials presented to YU students were not representative of the company's typical working conditions. Flaum's has maintained, since the labor dispute began in 2008, that the allegations "concerned only 11 employees of the thousands of people that [sic] have worked at Flaum's."

Though the dispute concerns a small number of workers, Flaum's further asserted that the International Workers of the World "has used the labor dispute to promote its own agenda." The press release directed readers to <http://www.re-alflaums.com/dispute> for Flaum's' understanding of the labor dispute, concluding by stating that Flaum's "has always acted within the National Labor Relations Board and maintains a safe, working environment at its 20,000-square foot plant in East Williamsburg, Brooklyn."

Dassi Fruchter, an Orthodox student at Queens University and volunteer at Uri L'Tzedek, concluded the evening with a dialogue asking her own burning questions as an Orthodox Jew passionate about

social justice issues, such as, "Why is Israel the only issue that will get us out to the streets?" or, "Why are debates more common than dialogue?" Fruchter highlighted that we as YU students have an incredible power of bridging the gap between the two worlds of Orthodoxy and social justice activism. To drive this point home, Fruchter encouraged participants in the evening discussion to join an education and awareness rally at a Queens supermarket at 11 a.m. on Sunday, December 4. Flyers were distributed to consumers at the rally, educating them about the Flaum's case and asking them not to purchase Flaum's products.

Through Uri L'Tzedek's efforts, over 65 prominent Manhattan supermarkets have decided not to sell Flaum's products. Tnuva, the world's largest kosher dairy company, discontinued its relationship with Flaum's.

To get involved, contact Uri L'Tzedek at info@utzedeck.org or (212) 284-6540. To get involved in Social Justice Society, contact Aviva Kott at aviva.kott@mail.yu.edu.

NEWS

Interview: Sitting Down with Ron Jones

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ca and you're black, and this might be what its like to feel like you're not allowed to do certain things or go certain places. To teach about capitalism I had students bring in food items to sell in a market and to experience the entrepreneurship. For socialism I had students collect money and go out and buy things for lunch. To teach communism I had everyone give according to their ability and receive according to their needs, so it was just chaos. I had done these simulations and it worked. So when I entered into The Wave, it was meant to be a one-day thing and I thought it would work. I thought — I can introduce students to a totalitarian environment. I can darken the room and play music. I can have them sit in certain postures, I can have them go outside the room and come back in, in an orderly manner, and that would be enough to let them feel like what it's like to be in a dictatorship or totalitarian state; one day only.

So they knew to some degree that this was an experiment?

I was a very young teacher at a very bombastic time and we were always experimenting with social behavior.

In your classroom, were there students who didn't participate in the experiment?

I think everyone participates in their own way. And this is what's interesting. Some young adults would relish the thought of being a part of something. It gave them identity and purpose for the first time. That was definitely true for Robert who sat off to one side; and he became my bodyguard, for instance. Some participated in a joking manner. They think they'll just "go along with the experiment" and think it will run its course [and think] I don't have to intercede in any way, it's a game, it's a simulation, it's Mr. Jones doing another one of his activities. There was one woman who resisted. She was excluded from the class the very first day. But she returned to school on subsequent days and put up banners.

Is there any reason that you think that she was the only person who resisted? Was there any specific quality that she had?

I know she came from a military family and I know that she was moved around a lot, and I know that she was not a part of the school population so she probably didn't have immediate friends. That might have led to her feeling immediately separated from the experiment and free to act. [And so] she questioned me. She did something to indicate she had ideas of her own. And immediately I was trying to eliminate that kind of proposition.

You said that you were planning on doing it for one day. What

made you continue?

Well, I walked in the second day and found them in the same position that I had left them, sort of this feet together, backs straight, books and things under their desks. And they had these zipper-like grins on their faces, you know, in anticipation [of] what's going to happen next. So I thought about it, should I continue, because I didn't really know where it was going. But [then] I went to the blackboard and wrote "strength through discipline" which was the first day's edict, then I wrote strength through...and I thought about what would come next. And I wrote "community". You know, if you want to be a part of something important, you have to have a sense of family, community, *la raza*. You have to have identity, a group of people rather than just yourself. To be successful in life, discipline is important but community is crucial. So I got swept up in the idea and spontaneously thought — what is community? So I had students whisper chant like things and I had them stamp their feet on the floor [in unison]. I introduced them to membership cards.

Did you have any of your own rules to The Wave, or did people kind of apply their own?

I would write a lesson plan, sort of the rules of the day. But they were abstract. One of the students suggested a name for our group and a salute. So now we had a salute and a membership card and a sense of belonging and being. I marked several of those cards with a red X — you're special in this community. "If you sense something going wrong, alien to our community or objecting to our community rules, let me know." So kind of an early Gestapo was established.

So even though this was a bottom-up creation, people interpreted it as all coming from you?

So that was surprising. You'd think that I initiated a lot of this. But what happened was, I set up a situation where the students were empowered to some extent. As a teacher you always see the students sitting up front who are very bright. And you see the children in the back, the Bombers and the Normans. [But] sometimes you miss those in the middle...All of a sudden it was that middle group that was generating a lot of excitement and rules and behaviors and being a part of this.

And you encouraged them to initiate these behaviors?

Of course. One of the things was, "member[s] of a community must help each other." This was revolutionary in a high school classroom. We're going to give one grade, it might be an A, but you have to work together to get this

grade. So the bright students were like, "Oh sh—t, what's happening? Now I'm not in front anymore." But there was this exchange of information in the sense that could all be successful together and that was pretty heady.

Were you swept up into it?

Oh yes, by The Third Wave I was guilty of enjoying it. There was a certain sense of adulation, power. All of a sudden you're walking down the hall with escorts that are all giving the salute and students from around the school are joining the experiment so the classroom is just full of energy and excitement. There were beginning to be students from other schools beginning to join.

Was there a common enemy or common idea that you were against?

I think the evil, that I was probably mentally attacking, is the acquiescence of a school to a dangerous situation. The acquiescence to a school that had "laneing" that I thought was inappropriate. In "laneing" some schools are placed in "A" groups, "B" groups and "C" groups, and kind of divided the population into those that are smart and those are dumb. I was teaching a class that was the

"dumb students." They were called "The Executioners," they were a car club. And I just thought that was wrong- because I saw innate intelligence in that group as I saw it in the middle group or any other group. So if there was something that I was combating intellectually, it was that — that the school was fraudulent in its approach to education. For instance, the blacks coming into a white, Palo Alto for the first time, the black students were identified as guests — f-ck-ing guests! And we were supposed to be the hosts. I thought to myself, that is so wrong. So, that's the intellectual enemy that I was probably thinking to myself that we could change that somehow.

In these types of experiments, do you feel that there is a line that cannot be crossed or a point where the experiment has gone too far?

The fine line is very clear. It is when people are in danger, that is when you've crossed some great divide. [And] I could see it. During The Wave there was evidence that students, on their own, again, would set up desks to solicit membership for the wave. And if a student didn't want to join they might be hit, they might be at-

tacked, their name would be taken down. There's [sic] all kinds of authoritative activity that could be dangerous. People could be getting hurt. I think that's the line I saw affecting me as much as my wife [saw it too]. [My wife] commenting about — "you're no longer playful. You've lost some of your sense of joy." And, it's dangerous.

Do you think that using the group dynamic is okay depending on what the motive is?

I trust people. Fundamentally I believe [that] good is basically trusting yourself and others. And I think evil is being driven by fear of yourself and others. So I've always trusted myself and I've trusted others in a social context.

But doesn't The Wave teach about the harm in trusting others?

Well, I think The Wave is the phenomenon of trusting one voice. One leader. And *that* I think is dangerous.

Was your leadership ever challenged?

Probably so, in ways I'm not aware of. Comedy is an interesting thing. If you see resistance against Hitler for instance, you would look for sensations or evidence of

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Breakthrough in Stern Academics: Nutrition Shaped Major

By Rachel Daniels

SCW is now offering a shaped major in nutrition in conjunction with NYU. This is not a combined program, like that with NYU or Johns Hopkins for nursing, or like many of the other combined programs that SCW offers. There is no guaranteed spot in NYU's graduate program, which also means there is no rigorous supplemental application process or condensed period of graduate study.

Still, this new agreement is extremely helpful for any Stern student considering the field of nutrition. Before this academic major addition, it was not an easy feat to pursue a career in nutrition here at Stern. With the introduction of this particular program, Stern students will be much better prepared to apply to a graduate program in nutrition post graduation. Instead of still having a year or two of undergraduate courses post-graduation, this shaped program helps students complete a large portion of necessary prerequisite classes for nutrition programs.

The shaped major can be finished in six semesters on campus following a year of study in Israel and consists of thirty credits at Stern and twelve credits (or more) at NYU. A student who decides to complete this major will take all

of the courses at Stern that fulfill prerequisites for many nutrition graduate programs. The recommended sequence of this major includes the following science courses here at Stern: Principles of Biology, Essentials of Chemistry, Nutrition, Physiology, Microbiology, and Genetics. This is in addition to the general education and Jewish studies requirements.

During their last two semesters on campus, students will take four classes at NYU. Students will apply to NYU as a visiting, non-degree student, but have full access to all of the resources the large university has to offer, including access to the library, fitness facilities, and numerous student discounts in the downtown area. Course options at NYU include Introduction to Food and Food Science, Food Microbiology and Sanitation, Food Science and Technology, Diet Assessment and Planning, Nutrition and the Life Cycle, and others. This is a comprehensive sequence that involves a breadth of courses in biology, nutrition, and food studies.

I am the first student to be benefiting from this agreement. I am currently taking two courses at NYU, planning to take two more during the Spring semester, and applying to nutrition graduate

programs. The classes are interesting and stimulating, and it was extremely easy to register and apply. Stern College connected me with one of the nutrition advisors, who was happy to help and sign me in to any class in which I needed to enroll.

I have met women at NYU who did not have an undergraduate nutrition major in their respective schools and they reported it will take them about four years to graduate, two years of "making up" undergraduate classes and two years of graduate courses. After completing this shaped major at Stern, graduates will be eligible to apply to and begin some graduate programs almost immediately.

Overall, this is a wonderful addition to the different majors at Stern. My hope is that students will recognize and embrace this new opportunity. Nutrition is an ever-growing field. There are numerous opportunities available, especially for women, including clinical work, research, private practice, education, and writing. Take a few minutes to look into the field, especially as another option if you are considering a career in the sciences. Ask the academic advisors for a detailed sheet about this major.

NEWS

Interview: Sitting Down with Ron Jones

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comedy, or theater, or evidence of laughter or posters or ways of protesting. I suspect there was that, because there was this one woman doing her banners. And I suspect behind my back there were all kinds of quiet resistance. But that's the problem with quiet resistance. Quiet resistance has to, at some point, stand up. I think what happens when people get to the position of — I'm going to just watch and wait. My fate is to watch. My fate is to step back. Everything is really okay. We'll let Mr. Jones do what he's doing. I think there was that presence in that room. It's natural. It's in all of us.

As a teacher, what kind of changes did you notice in the students?

One of the things that stunned me was when I realized that that large middle group was generating such large activities...they were really helping each other, and getting almost smarter, and being able to answer problems and enjoying the education process. And I was going, "Oh my, that really works." And that means I should

almost go back to rote learning. That's what we were doing. There were answers to questions, and there was a simplicity to what we were doing. So maybe instead of having lesson plans based on activities all over the room, where students were doing a lot of investigatory activity, maybe I'd just give answers and let students work toward those answers. So as a teacher I was kind of questioning my own teaching style. It went from very exploratory and playful, to maybe more rigid.

When did you realize you had to end the experience?

I think there were moments when I knew I went out over the edge. One of those moments was with the student Robert. The students weren't allowed into the faculty room. And there is a faculty member sitting there as I walked in followed by Robert. And this faculty member addressed this child and said, "What are you doing in here? You're a student you don't belong here." And Robert saluted this teacher and said, "I'm not a student, I'm a body guard."

So, I knew at that moment he had crossed that mental bridge. It was no longer a simulation or a game. He was engrossed in this. And I realized at that same moment that I had crossed that same bridge. I was in engrossed in it as well. I liked the power, the adulation, again, the sense of changing things. The idea that you could change things for the better was an opiate of some kind. And the school at that time was involved in a lot of racial tension. Black students were taking over the bathrooms, burning the trashcans. There was just chaos. In the sense that maybe this wave would be a way to introduce some discipline and benefit the whole school.

Shortly after the experiment you stopped teaching high school. Was your departure connected to the experiment?

Two years after [The Wave] I was kind of asked to leave that school. And I ended up working in Mt. Zion Mental Hospital. I worked for 30 years at a recreational center for the disabled, physically and mentally. And I always brought with

me a sense of play. I don't think it was actually [connected]. People always think it had to be. But in fact the school went on for another two years. And I was probably dismissed for being involved in the war in Vietnam, for being involved in the protests against the war. I was a really young teacher and older teachers had their way of teaching. And I think that my presence might have challenged that to some extent. I did for instance, something called "IF." It was an idea forum. On any Wednesday, students could bring onto campus a topic that they wanted to discuss: astronomy, finance, painting. And on that Wednesday there'd be teachers, any teacher, student, parent, professional, with a huge list of proposed activities or themes called "Idea Forum." And I think that was frightening to some of the traditional teachers because of the topic matter or because of the freedom. Again, the war in Vietnam was happening, and the students were beginning to question that by bringing speakers on campus. And it was a

challenging time. And I was associated with that. I was the head of the Black Student Union. And then I was head of a group called the United Student Movement. When I say I was the head of — for these groups to exist on campus they had to have a faculty sponsor. So I gave them that privilege of being on campus and speaking out, but I think that challenged some of the traditional teachers. They didn't want a Black Student Union on campus. They did not want protest to the war on campus.

Do you keep in touch with any of the students? I know you worked on the video together.

Oh, yeah. I'm really lucky. You know I live in San Francisco. One of the students still has their parents living in Palo Alto. So historically, students have always dropped by the house. Bring me their kids to look at, say hello. One of the [students,] we go to basketball games together pretty regularly.

Were you active in other experiments besides The Wave?

I think you can be an activist in

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How is Torah U'Madda Reflected In Kanye West?

By Rachel Benaim

"We don't just *daven* and *shuckle* because everyone's looking. What defines us is what we do behind closed doors — when no one is watching." So says audacious YC junior, Adam Neuman regarding the question he raised at the Town Hall meeting on November 3. After some witty banter with President Joel, Neuman got to the crux of his question: why is inappropriate and offensive music, forbidden to be publicly played anywhere else on campus, allowed in the shuttles?

Though Neuman asked his question in a rather jest-like manner ("Sometimes I take the shuttle and my mom calls me and asks 'Adam what's that lovely music playing in the background'...If I repeated some of the words, it would offend every person in this room.") there was substance behind it.

"The shuttle is a service, not a public cab!" Neuman stated adamantly. "It has YU's name on it, it is a YU service and just like anything else with YU's name on it, the shuttle has to reflect the morals and integrity of the school."

According to the "Beacon's" report of the Town Hall Meeting, although President Joel "poked fun at the question" by claiming the shuttle would only play Maccabeats, ultimately he recognized the validity of the question and told Neuman, as he recalls verbatim, "consider it done."

"President Joel didn't refute me in the end," said Neuman. "Yeah it was funny, my tone was light, but

at the end of the day he agreed with me [and modified the university policy]."

The response around campus has been mixed, with special attention paid to Joel's rash answer, "consider it done." According to Neuman, "Five faculty members actually came up to me and really thanked me for my question. One professor told me that she doesn't take the shuttle for that reason [the offensive music], so she really appreciated [my question]."

Neuman's question was by no means a criticism of the university, nor was it a question stemming from "an Israel flip out." His underlying motive was not "to change university policy — it was just to raise awareness." Neuman assured readers that he is not "attacking English music — look at Jack Johnson, Train — there is nothing actually wrong with [those lyrics], but I promise you the words in the shuttle songs would offend everyone [at the Town Hall meeting]."

"Listen to it in your own time, put in headphones," he explained, "great, but from a [university] policy standpoint, that music and those lyrics — if they do not belong in the caf, and not in the gym, then they don't belong in the shuttle."

Unfortunately for Neuman, who has been defending his question for the past month, his opponents are more prevalent than his supporters.

Interestingly, Miriam Apter, SCW '13 and treasurer of TAC, has a

completely different take on the aforementioned headphones. "This [complaint] is just a case of students acting entitled," Apter said, "and that while yes, it is true that we pay tuition and this is a service for us, there is a necessary amount of respect for people providing us with that service. Considering the fact that [the drivers are performing a service], we should allow them to do it in a manner which they are most comfortable, so yes, if you have a problem with their music choice, put on some headphones."

Elianna Pollack, SCW '12, has a similar perspective. "The drivers spend their entire day providing an incredible service for us," Pollack said, "and they should be able to do what they can to make their continuous loop more enjoyable. As long as the music isn't so loud it is so unfair to prohibit it..."

In retrospect, Neuman acknowledged Pollack's point as valid and reiterated that he has no problem with appropriate English music. "Again it's a policy issue [not about English music]," Neuman said.

Don Cantor, YC '13 and president of the Republican Club, said, "I always thought that the music was more for the drivers, so it's upsetting for me on that front. I wonder how they take it because they're the ones sitting in the vans the whole time."

When asked, beloved shuttle driver Aubrey Brown "wasn't aware of the new policy." Ironically, Brown's perspective is quite accommodating.

"I don't mind," he said, "whatever the kids want. Music, no music. I'm not here to cause trouble, I just drive. I don't care, I do what I'm told."

"People think of this issue as an attack on shuttle drivers and their liberties," pointed out Zev Kehane, YC '14. "But the truth is, this is not an issue of afflicting the shuttle driver. It is an effort to ensure that our university is providing us with a consistent atmosphere of appropriateness. The shuttle is a YU service paid for and organized by YU for the benefit of its students. If offensive rap music isn't played in the school building, why should it be played on the shuttle?"

On that note, Yakov Danishefsky, YC '13, said, "If the guard sitting in from of the *Beis Medrash* or even in the lobby of the dorms was blasting loud offensive music, no one would find it offensive to respectfully ask him to not do so....The shuttles are YU-owned and operated vehicles, it is in no way different than any other part of campus."

All things considered, there is something to say for the fact that this type of music is prohibited from being played anywhere else publicly in the university. The Roshei Yeshiva and administration would be ashamed if such lyrics were playing at an event where donors were present. In that respect, Neuman's claim makes sense: "Mean what you say and practice what you preach — [offensive music] doesn't hold up with YU's policy."

Lately, after the policy change and a brief silence, some shuttles have begun playing music again.

Neuman reacted with equanimity. "It is definitely strange that it's back, but you know, at the same time, my whole point wasn't changing policy, it was to raise awareness. I think I did that. I wanted to just make people think, 'is that appropriate?' I'm a big believer in YU and their [sic] policies."

However, the reinstatement of music in the shuttles is adhering to a different aspect of integrity and policy — one of respecting the drivers performing a service for the students.

On which side of the policy scale will the balance fall? Towards treating the shuttle drivers with courtesy or towards consistently instituting practices reflecting Torah U'Madda values that are present elsewhere on campus?

While Neuman maintained, "There can be reconciliation [between the two sides]" by implementing "kosher" English music on shuttles, a select survey of the student population said, as summed up by Elana Lipschitz, "Who cares? It's not a big deal."

So when you call your mom at the end of the day, she won't ask about the shuttle music, but think, what is YU doing behind closed doors?

FEATURES

Occupy College: In Defense of the Undecided Major

By Chana Brauser

College is an identity moratorium. At least that's what my developmental psychology textbook tells me. According to psychologist Erik Erikson, as adolescents transition from teenagerhood to adulthood, they engage in a struggle to achieve a sense of their adult identity that can often get overwhelming. Enter college, a socially acceptable excuse for not yet having achieved that elusive identity, a time to explore interests, passions, and plans for the future.

So why is it, dear Dr. Erikson, that I am asked over and over again by friends and family and, quite often, total strangers, what I am majoring in? It seems that I am past my prime. "What's your major?" is now the equivalent of "What do you want to be when you grow up?" and suddenly, an enthusiastic "I'm not sure yet!" is no longer met with the indulgent smiles and encouragement it engendered in the days of yore. I often feel like I might be better off just reverting to the ideal dream job I entertained as a second grader and simply declaring, "Why, I'll be a children's book illustrator, of course!" Alas, I find it hard to believe that even the most enthusiastic of tones would fend off the skeptical looks and doubtful follow-up questions that particular admission would evoke. If college is an oasis amidst the turbulent seas of identity formation, why must I be constantly be expected to answer probing questions about my future? The amount of times I've been forced to bubble in "undecided" alongside a seemingly pointless question about my major on various surveys and program applications is verging on ridiculous.

I'd certainly like to think I'm not alone in this. Surely, there must be other Stern College students who flip through the Spring course schedule and seem to find a course within every department that appeals to them, who believe equally that "Survey of Economics" or "Introduction to Video" or even "Molecular Biology" might just be the very thing to tip the scale, a delivery from the ambiguity of indecision that would send them, finally, scuttling off in the direction of an established career.

Could it be that we are the 99%? That we are the college students who fit the Eriksonian mold by failing to fit any particular mold?

I'd like to argue that we are.

It might not be technically true; at times, Stern College seems populated almost entirely by ambitious biology majors, who seem to have made up their minds sometime around preschool regarding their future careers (usually some-

thing practical in a health-related field). But the rest of us spend our college years considering a range of different majors, taking a variety of often unrelated courses, and sometimes even actually attending those random events aggressively promoted in a flood of sstuds with the vague hope that maybe this particular event will shed some serious light on our goals for the future.

And I'd like to argue that that's okay.

At times it gets hard to keep face and stay strong in this indecision. I find that I need to constantly remind myself that there is nothing wrong with taking classes that are interesting and engaging even though they might not directly fill any general requirements and might not even ultimately count towards my eventual major. But as the 99% I contend we are (though this might just seem like another twisted way to make myself feel better, but you'll indulge me), are we making the worst mistake of our lives? Are we whiling away precious time by refusing to settle in with a practical major and stick with it for the long haul and instead dabbling in an eclectic mix of courses?

Research suggests that the appropriate answer would be a resounding "no." A 2010 "New York Times" article reports no direct correlation between a given college major and eventual career salary, but noted a high correlation between college GPA and salary. So, wonder of wonders: the practicality of your major means zilch in the long run if you can't make the grade in that particular subject. This hits a personal note: sometimes, when I'm particularly craving the security blanket that is a "practical" major, I'll whip around to the first person I see (too often, it's my own reflection, the poor thing), and aggressively ask why exactly I can't just be a biology major. Can't I do anything I put my mind to? Aren't I capable of majoring in just about anything if I really wanted to?

The answer, technically, is yes. I could major in biology and take the well-worn path to medical school, if I really wanted to. The question is not "Can I?" but whether I really want to. Why would I choose a major that would involve hours behind a microscope and nights memorizing the functions of a particular organelle if the information would not excite me in the slightest? While a biology major might be as sensible as a good pair of orthotic lace-ups, if I haven't the feeblest twinge of interest in the topic, I'm unlikely to be willing

Student Accounts

Do you think the world is coming to an end?

2012 is about to begin, and some believe this spells the beginning of the end for planet Earth, as the Mayans had predicted. Students respond:

Sara LeVee: Of course the world is going to end. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if it ended tomorrow. I mean, if you really think about it, every hurricane, tornado, and blatant fashion mistake is just an indicator that 2012 will be the last year of our lives.

Better start preparing now.

So let's explore all of our possibilities here. If the world ends because of global warming and we are all forced to swim because of the melting icecaps, then why not build a boat? A 21st Century-style Noah's ark. I mean, come on, that's going to be one rocking boat. Someone will bring a Wii and we will generate enough electricity via water (they'll be enough smart people on the boat to figure that one out) and we'll have a good time doing it.

If we usher in an ice age because of global warming, then, hey, it wouldn't be so bad to be an Eskimo; it would actually be fun if you think about it.

Nuclear bomb sent from outer space? The world combusting randomly? A person dressing like it's the '80s again? These are all situations we can handle! All we have to do is realize, it's going to be okay, it'll all end in an instant, no need to panic.

And if our planet is going to be demolished to build a highway? Well then, get your towels now.

And what if the world just ends? Then I have a question: why are we even worrying about it?

Rachel Minkoff: I don't think the world is going to end in 2012 because Newton said it would happen in 2060. I'd like to believe Newton's theory over an unfin-



AP/Marcio Jose Sanchez

Christian broadcaster Harold Camping, who resigned last month after several of his predictions for the date of the world's end had come and gone without the world ending, among them September 6, 1994 and May 22, 2011.

ished Mayan calendar. But that's just me...Plus, I don't feel like graduating college in time for the world to just end.

Sarah King: I believe in The Messiah. The idea of an apocalypse is not, as many may believe, an outlandish one. Jews, too, have apocalyptic literature. Jeremiah, Haggai, and Melachi (among other prophets) speak about the 'end of days' and the wars, destruction, and judgments that will take place at that time. This apocalypse, however, is not commonly referred to in the negatively-perceived "apocalypse" nomenclature, rather it is known as *Mashiach*, the Messiah, the long-awaited savior of our people who will lead us back to our Holy Land where we will finally live at peace with the world and G-d.

As a religious, G-d-fearing Jew living in the 21st Century, it is impossible for me to believe that the world is going to end at any given point, leading me to reject other apocalyptic theories (such as the Mayans, for example, who believed that in the year 2012, Earth would

reach the end of a cycle and self-destruct). Our Rabbis teach that it can come at one of two times — *Bi'Itah* [at its appointed time], or *B'Achishenah* [sooner than its appointed time] — and we are also taught that the appointed time is at the end of 6,000 years. We are currently living in the year 5772, meaning that if we are waiting until the year 6000, we have another 228 years to go. We are also taught to believe that *Mashiach* can come at any moment and that we should be prepared for it all the time. Following this logic, *Mashiach*, with its preceding war between *Gog* and *Magog* (the 'Jewish Apocalypse', if you will), very well could come in the year 2012. In conclusion, to the question, "Do you believe the world will end in 2012 as the Mayans predicted?" I would have to answer, "No." To the question, "Do you want the apocalypse to come in 2012?", if we're referring to the Jewish apocalypse, then I have only one response: "Apocalypse Now!"

to put in the effort it would take to do well.

A college student who chooses to take a variety of classes that appeals to his or her passions would seem to be taking precisely the appropriate path for ultimate career success. If study materials are intriguing and research reports cover a particularly compelling topic, it is only natural that the student will be more inspired to work harder and thus be more likely to achieve both a higher GPA and presumably a higher salary — and even, quite possibly, that warm, fuzzy feeling that comes with doing something you love. To the student that finds his or her

particular interests pointing in the direction of a major that happens to be practical and career-focused, more power to you. You'll be able to dive right into things from the very beginning of your college career — so long as it is you're doing what you love, it's all good.

I might be coming off as a starry-eyed idealist, but I contend that I do not stand alone in my search for the major that truly hits the spot. There are others out there, just like me: you might call yourself undecided; you might be terrified of majoring in history or English for fear of being branded impractical; you might even be a biology major who's still some-

how not quite sure. Whoever you are, wherever you are, know this: we are the 99% and these years are ours to savor. Open your eyes, open your mind, and occupy college.

FEATURES

Homeless By Choice

By Sophie Felder

One YU student's decision to brave the elements and Manhattan, and take to the streets.

A Cardozo student we'll call "David" sat down with The Observer to discuss the unique decision that took him out of his comfort zone and onto the streets of Manhattan in an effort to experience challenge in life.

OB: We really appreciate your being able to talk to us.

D: For sure

OB: Because it was something very interesting, when we found out we were all like, "Hmm, why is he doing that?" and I think that's the first question that people hear, when they find out that someone is homeless by decision.

D: So first of all I just wanted to start off by saying I moved into my old apartment on November 1 because it started to get cold and I realized I may be tough but not capable of withstanding freezing temperatures for the whole winter.

There are a bunch of reasons. So I've kinda been planning this since this spring....I experienced the ultimate problem of mine, which is not having any problems. I know a lot of people with that same issue. People that [sic] are experiencing serious things in their lives like a disease or financial problems or things like that, people will say, "How could you be so ridiculous, how could you say not having any problems is a problem?" But the fact of the matter is, is that my life, it's really easy.

OB: Were you in Cardozo already?

D: So I'm in my second year at Cardozo and I already had an internship of my dream job. And I already had it set up for the summer and, like, my running was doing well, I didn't have romantic problems, and no financial problems, and my apartment was great, and the weather was great, and just everything was so good; yet I wasn't satisfied, my life just felt meaningless because I didn't have really any challenges so you know, just thinking back on humanity and mankind, I've realized that it has always been difficult for humans to survive until recently with technology and everything.

So I don't think that early man, Neanderthals and people a thousand years ago ever struggled with this feeling of boredom because they didn't have any problems. I kind of wanted to model my life after that a little bit and make my survival more difficult, so I could just give myself a problem. With that said, it's a problem that I can control and stop it whenever I want...and it's a problem that's difficult but not impossible to achieve.

OB: So how exactly does this work?

D: The way that it's working out is I have a gym membership, NY Health and Racquet club, and there's one right around the corner from Cardozo and that's my home base. The organization is probably the hard part about this. So I have four lockers and NY Health and Racquet club has showers and I shave there. It has shampoo and soap and all that stuff.

OB: Do they know you're there?

D: They don't know that I'm homeless, but they know that I'm there all the time and they kinda have a running joke — "Oh David, is this, like, your third time working out today?" You know most people go to the gym, they go to work out, I go to organize my stuff and leave stuff there, coming and going from school, or my internship, or running. They always see me and joke. They don't even make me scan my card anymore because I go in there so often. Nobody there knows that I'm actually living out of that gym

So I have one locker for running clothes and laundry, one for dress shirts, one for dress pants and one for miscellaneous things. And also each locker has a spot for shoes at the top so that's really good.

I had to really reduce the amount of stuff that I had. I had to get rid of everything that's nonessential. I only have, like, five dress shirts, five dress pants, some running clothes that are necessary and then obviously sweatshirts and stuff. Other than clothes I don't really have a lot of stuff, just stuff for shaving and brushing my teeth and books. I have a school locker too, so that helps.

I also have access to my school. Its open until midnight and then opens again at 8 a.m. so I nap there a lot. There's this one room in the library that has couches and I nap there during the day when I have breaks in between classes. At night I try and stay in there as late as possible so I can get the maximum amount of warmth. So I'll leave there at midnight and go find a spot and then NY Health and Racquet club opens at six. So I really only have six hours outside, so its not unbearable.

So I guess you might ask how I find a spot?

OB: Yes, I was going to ask how those six hours are spent?

D: I have a "go-bag." You know how during Hurricane Irene Mayor Bloomberg wanted everyone to have a go-bag? So I have a bag, which consists of the things you need to survive. I bring that with me every night and I always make sure I have it before I go to sleep. It has my blanket, three sweatshirts, sweatpants, two pairs of nice long socks it has a toothbrush and mouthwash — I'll show you —

[shows the mouthwash]

So I make sure that I always have that with me.

The way that I find a spot is, the later it is the easier it is to find a spot. Less people are out and it's darker and quieter. I look for a dark nook. The first requirement is that it's out of the way, I don't want to be in anyone's way when I'm sleeping. The second thing that's nice but not necessary is that its dark. Obviously I prefer dark because it's easier to sleep and I don't like people being able to see my face. I don't know, just in case someone knows me. I like having a cover overhead, and also having a corner, so I can put my head on the corner. I put my stuff on the inside of me so that no one can take my stuff or else they'll wake me up.

Some parks in Manhattan close, and just in the six weeks that I've been doing this I've learned which parks are closed and which ones are open. There's one park in the Heights that's really good. It's on 175th and Fort Washington. They are nice, safe spots, I feel out of the way.

One of the reasons I did this was for the freedom. I can sleep at my job or internship, wherever I can find a spot. I'm not obligated to finish the day in one place, I'm not chained down, and I can really sleep anywhere. I can find a spot on almost any city block, there's always a spot somewhere. I've made a couple of mistakes with spots. I think I've only really picked two bad ones.

OB: So what are the bad ones?

D: My first mistake was one night, I was close to Cardozo and I got a spot, a little delivery nook that servicemen use for a building and early in the morning at like 5 a.m., a deliveryman had to wake me up. That was a bad spot because I was in someone's way and this past Saturday night, that was a bad spot because it was too busy, like I heard one couple and they were like, "Oh that's just depressing," when they saw me.

I really do look the part, with all my sweatshirts and blankets, there's just no difference between me and other homeless guys. But one of my favorite parts about this whole thing is in the morning, and slowly being able to strip off the layers one by one and before you know it, I'm completely normal, all my clothes are in my bag, I flip my hair up and just walk down the street. Especially at my internship, no one knows that I'm doing this, mostly only close friends know. So I really like to think to myself, "I'm homeless."

OB: Do you ever want to tell people?

D: I don't really want to tell people. For the most part, they're shocked. It takes a lot of explain-

ing before anyone realizes that it's not the most ridiculous thing in the world. When people first hear about it, they're like, "That's so dangerous, you're insane." Sure there may be some element of danger and questionable judgment, but I really don't think it's that big of a deal. I'm just afraid that someone will make a rash judgment and I don't want it to affect their opinion of me.

To be honest, when the weather is nice, it's amazing. It really is just great. I go to sleep and its great and wake up feeling so good. It's the same feeling when you don't want to leave your covers, its enjoyable. But obviously, when it gets cold, probably from 4 a.m. to 6 a.m. are the toughest because it's the longest since the sun has been out and you haven't moved for that long you're kinda [sic] getting cold. So I'll have to get up and jog in place to warm my body.

OB: Can I ask if you've met any other homeless people?

D: Absolutely not, that's my first rule. I stay as far away as possible from other homeless people and maybe it sounds terrible but one of the rationales behind it — people think I'm doing it to get to know the homeless and get to know their culture. And that's not true. Maybe I'm getting to know their experience, but by introducing myself and trying to meet them would just be asking for bad things to happen. They'll be like, "Oh there's this yuppie guy and he has money," or, "He's a normal person with nice clothes and he's trying to be homeless." I don't want people to really know that I'm out there, don't want to be a target. So I just stay as far away as I can. I don't want to take their spots; I don't want to mess with them. It really kind of scares me, to be honest, as bad as that sounds

OB: That's interesting that you're doing it, but you find the other people scary...

D: Right, it scares me because I think if I took their spot or they saw me in normal clothes and then put on my homeless clothes they might get upset or try to rob me. I dunno. A lot of people say, including my mom, "David, this is dangerous and stupid, don't do it." That's one of the precautions that I take. Not to put myself at risk.

OB: Have your opinions or feelings to the homeless changed at all because of this?

D: I think one of the things I definitely believe is, if your average homeless person spent 30-40 dollars a month on a gym membership, they could shave and shower, keep warm for most of the day, maybe stay fit and like they'd have a good opportunity to look at jobs, and maybe another 20 dollars a month to store stuff. I'm just surprised that people don't do this

more often.

OB: You mentioned your mother's saying it's dangerous, were there other comments you had to field?

D: My mom is the one that really kills me, the main argument against doing this, is my mom, because I love my mom and I feel like I'm taking years off her life because she always calls me and tells me that she can't sleep at night and she's always worrying like, "My own son! Homeless! I can't believe it!" But I did try and spend a long time telling her what I was going for with this and the experience and the adventure and exploring the city, and the logic. It saves time. You know, all the little ways we waste time in our homes, watching TV or cleaning. I feel like there's a substantial amount of time I'm saving by not having a place.

OB: So what do you do instead?

D: I spend a lot of time in Barnes and Noble, a lot of time in Whole Foods reading newspapers and eating. Those are my two favorite things to do.

One of the other reasons why I don't equate easiness of life, with quality of life, I think that a little bit of difficulty and a little bit of challenge is a good thing and this might not be the challenge that most people think of when they think of giving themselves a challenge, but to me it's a good way to get in touch with my ancestors and being interested in survival.

OB: I want to know if you'd recommend this for other people?

D: One thing that I definitely see doing being a "homelessness consultant." There are so many people that are getting foreclosed on and have nowhere to go. The fact of the matter is, I would say that maybe [by investing] 100 dollars a month...in gym and lockers and equipment, it can be done. I wouldn't recommend it for someone it wasn't a necessity for. But for someone going through hard times, it can be done and you can be a normal person just because you do it. Just because you sleep outside for six hours a night doesn't mean that for the rest of the day you can't be shaved showered, in clothes, acting normal and doing normal things.

OB: I want to bring up the stigmas related to being homeless; I think that's what people are scared of — being homeless. So have you ever had a stigma like that? Has it changed [since your experience], do you see it changing in other people?

D: I think we might start to see a change in the definition of homelessness. As the unemployment rate rises and foreclosures are happening. People on the streets aren't the people you'd suspect to

continued on page 9

FEATURES

Profile: Avital Chizhik

By Rachel Benaim

This Stern College for Women English Communications major reflects on YU Points of Light, family, and the future as she looks back at her college career thus far.

For a few minutes, at least, she answers a series of tough, lightning-round trivia — Crest or Colgate? Penne or Linguini? Full House or Boy Meets World? Boxers or briefs? — while enjoying her coffee and Blueberry Chobani yogurt. Amid writing an essay, an Arts and Culture article for “The Commentator,” and composing her next award-winning fictional short story, Avital Chizhik took time to reflect on her latest honor: YU Point of Light, 2011.

She walks the halls just like any other SCW student, but beneath her humble exterior lies a master author. Aliza Abrams, an avid reader of Chizhik’s writing, saw those creative and eloquent aspects and nominated her for the Point of Light honor. “I honestly don’t know why I was profiled,” says Chizhik, “but President Joel’s speech was all about my writing [and its influence].”

On December 11, Chizhik, donned in her flowing navy gown — which Chizhik dubs “a slight fashion risk” (it was a success) — and classic pearls, took the stage with President Joel to entertain the attendees of YU’s Hanukah dinner, but also to join the noted ranks of the YU Points of Light profile-ees.

A natural public speaker, Chizhik recalls, “I was really nervous — more nervous than usual! I’m not a nervous public speaker, but with improvise-public speaking I have to be on my toes.” She jokes, “I was so nervous that I stalked President Joel down and made him promise he wouldn’t embarrass me on stage!” Well, job well done, because there was not a single embarrassing moment for Chizhik on stage, only a glowing review of her character and achievements.

Reflecting on her award, Chizhik reveals, “I think its very humbling. The previous recipients of this honor have done so much more than I’ve done. Seeing that is motivating and inspiring to do more in the future.”

Chizhik, however, is selling herself short: she has, at the young age of 20, has accomplished more than many hope to accomplish by 50. Besides for being the former Features Editor of the “Beacon” and current Arts and Culture Editor of the “YU Commentator,” Chizhik has also has work published internationally as well. To list a very select few of her accomplishments in the most overwhelming and impressive way possible, she has had her journalistic work published in JPost, Haaretz, and the Jewish Week; she received an Honorable Mention in The Atlantic Monthly’s 2010 Student Writing Contest; she was a finalist for the Charles Johnson Student Fiction Award 2010; and she received the 2010 Professor Laurel Hatvary Award in Creative Writing.

Her love for Israel and Israel advocacy has also led her to become the president of the Israel Club on the SCW campus, and YU’s World Zionist Organization (WZO) campus representative. “It’s funny,” she laughs, “I didn’t go to Israel — which by the way, not many people realize, I was a real

Stern freshman — but that doesn’t make me any more or less passionate about Israel or Zionism.” Chizhik is fluent in Hebrew and is well versed in Israeli and Zionist history. In fact, her senior thesis discusses, as she describes it, “[the modern Israeli author] Amos Oz’s ‘A Tale of Love and Darkness’ and the conflict of setting.”

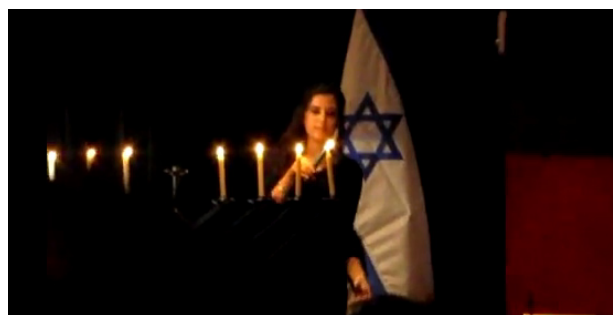
This love of Israel inspired her to participate in the CJF Counterpoint mission this past summer to Arad. Chizhik, along with other YU students, was an ESL teacher for local, impoverished children and gave them an increased love for Judaism, and Zionism.

The irony is that Chizhik is “humbled” by her Points of Light Award, and sees it as more of a motivating factor to do more in the future rather than to celebrate what she’s done. The truth is, not only has she “done so much” herself, but she, unknowingly, is a source of motivation and inspiration to the student body.

Shmuel Rosenblatt, YC 12, and Hanukah Dinner attendee, explains, “Avital is profound and inspiring.” Naomi Katszl, a SCW ‘12 and classmate of Chizhik shares “I really think she is one of the most energetic and inspiring people I’ve ever met.”

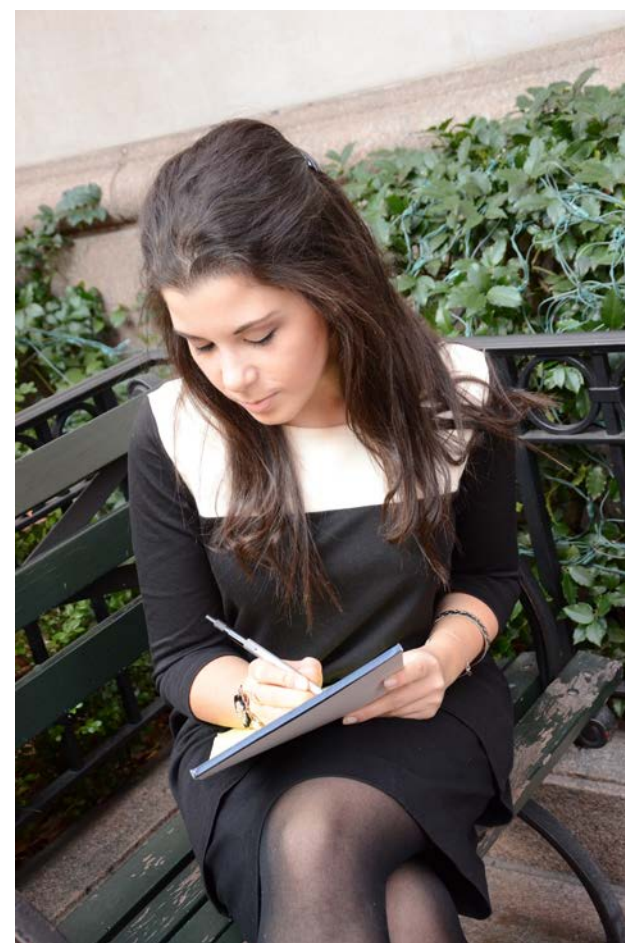
The Highland Park, New Jersey native comes from a tight-knit Russian family. “My parents are Russian,” she explains. “I spoke Russian before I spoke English.” She fondly shares her weekend plans with me as well: “I’m going home to see my three younger sisters, we’re very close.” Family, as it appears, is very important to Chizhik and is a constant motivating factor in the pursuit of her dreams. “I come from a strong Zionist and Russian home, I guess that’s how I would describe it.”

Perhaps it is a mixture of her Russian upbringing and staunchly Zionist beliefs that have influenced her favorite authors and, effectively, her writing. “My favorite book which have impacted me a lot,” ponders Chizhik, “[Yehuda] Amichai’s poetry, Chekhov’s short stories, Tolstoy’s “Anna Karenina,” and Sholom Alechem’s “The Song of Songs” — an obscure novella that the world is really deprived of.” These Russian and Israeli authors all touch upon themes of truth, loss, politics, and create good, quality, and inspiring works — themes and aspects that have effectively crept into Chi-



Avital Chizhik

Chizhik lights the final candle of the Dinner’s hannukiyah.



Adina Minkowitz

Avital Chizhik, SCW junior profiled as a Point of Light at the 2011 YU Hannukah Dinner.

zhik’s own writing.

These authors have, inadvertently, influenced Chizhik’s writing and career goals. “Above all, I’m a writer,” she says firmly. “Whether that pans out in journalism, the world of academia, or government, I’m not sure — career goals are the scariest thing to ask someone graduating college — for the record!” jokes Chizhik. But in all honesty, “I actually want to do all three [teach, write, and diplomacy],” says Chizhik, “but no one takes me seriously when I say that. On the other hand,” she says, eyes trailing off with yearnings for the future, “the job market is about being interdisciplinary, so maybe it will work out.”

Any last words, Avital? “I guess I have a weird talent — I’m good at reading while walking in the street, it’s not so safe, but I guess that’s weird.” Yes, very odd.... “You know what,” she laughs, “It’s been a weird, weird 24 hours.” Weird as it may have been, Avital Chizhik still has the time and energy to sit down and talk all about her life, honors, goals, likes, and dislikes in good spirits.

If one thing about Chizhik is clear, its that the world can expect great things from her — we’re just not sure in what language it will be written!

Interview: Sitting Down with Ron Jones

JONES from page 5

a lot of ways. I hope I am a really good parent....When I worked with the mentally disabled...instead of playing basketball against other specially disabled Olympic teams I invited the police department team, the Cockettes (which was the gay traveling group), the Chinese embassy — so all of a sudden these communities where blending together to play basketball and experiencing a lot of freedom to make up the game as we go along, to change the rules. That’s activism, probably, but it’s done in a very odd way. It’s not out in the street. It’s decisions you make every day. You make them every

day. The choices you make. Do you stand up do you sit back? Do you pray? Do you act?... How do you treat people around you? How do you treat each other? How do you challenge things that you think might be inappropriate or wrong?

Do you continue to consider yourself an activist?

Well...I’ve always been an artist. I’ve always written books. I’ve always assembled materials. I’ve always done plays and drama. I’m a performing artist and now I’m a poet. I travel with musicians. I go to Europe. So I find that is my voice. When I travel and do poetry, that is my activism. And I am very happy

because this just explains one soul in this world. And I just love exploring *that* prospect. So I go on stage; I do solo shows. I work with musicians...I’m in a writing group... Grandfather...Coach of CYO.

Are you involved in any political movements now?

That is my politics. It’s interesting. I have trouble joining groups. And I think that’s one of the consequences of *The Wave*. And some of the students have said the same thing.

Before you felt like you could?

Before I probably would have been president of them. I just no longer want to be that leader. Or

even get into that position.

You seemed to have tried to push your students to be assertive and stand up for what they believed in. Do you think we’re educating our young people today to be assertive?

I would like to see assertiveness if we provide democratic experiences in the school. And I just don’t think we do, to be honest. When we talk about democracy, when does it take place in our schooling process? When do the students and the faculty really sit down and say, “You know this is where we should be going. This is how we could do this.” Maybe it

could be done as an “IF,” something set aside; it doesn’t have to change the whole curriculum. But when is your voice valued? I mean the only reason I’m here is because a student called me. I answer student inquiries *religiously*. ‘Cause you’re the future. So I want you to be assertive. And I want you to love democracy and freedom and justice. These are wonderful things.

This article was previously printed in The YU Commentator. Sophie Felder, Yedidya Gorsetman and Ezra Seligsohn transcribed and edited this report.

FEATURES

“What do you see?” A Closer Look At Chabad in YU

By Lauren Faleck

Many students say they do not relate to the Chabad club because they are not *Chabadniks*. This is a shame, since the Chabad club at both Yeshiva College and Stern is open to everyone, not just *chabadniks*, and everyone walks out a different and better person.

The YU Chabad club provides a service for people who are *interested* in learning about *Hassidut*. Josh Krisch, president of the YC Chabad club, discusses the disparity between Chabad in the rest of the world and Chabad here at home. “[Whereas] Chabad Worldwide offers Jewish infrastructure where there is none,” Kirsch says, “Chabad at YU knows that we already have Jewish infrastructure on campus, so we provide the part that is still missing...namely a curriculum in *Hassidut* and a *Hassidic* values.” The Chabad club aims to offer a service that is not currently available, to facilitate a well-rounded Jewish education by offering students a chance to learn *Hassidut*. YU Chabad club ensures that a student who wishes to learn *Hassidut* or *Tanya* will have an opportunity to study with YU students who have learned these subjects.

At both campuses, the message delivered is that Chabad club is for anyone who wishes to grow in the Torah learning and wishes to be embraced with utter love. According to the Stern Chabad co-presi-

dent Rochel Spangenthal, “Chabad *Hassidut* has at its foundation the encompassing mitzvah ‘to love one’s fellow as one loves oneself’ and to permeate that love with acts of kindness and mitzvot. We tirelessly deliver a universal message: each person is invaluable and has a direct and powerful ability to bring wholeness and peace to the world.”

“Many people view Chabad as being for the non-religious,” Spangenthal continues. “But, really, Chabad and *Hassidut* are for all Jews, notwithstanding their affiliation. It is about making the next day a bit more wonderful than the last.” Both of the YC and Stern Chabad presidents emphasize that the Chabad club is for anyone who would like to grow and strengthen their Torah knowledge and values. “We seek to engage students at their own pace and comfort level through innovative educational and cultural programs,” says Spangenthal.

So far, Stern’s Chabad club has had remarkable feedback. The club organizes the SCW branch of the Rosh Chodesh Society, an international Jewish sisterhood that meets monthly. On November 30, the club hosted Mrs. Shaindy Jacobson, director of the Rosh Chodesh Society, who delivered the first of a seven-part series on the essence of being a Jewish woman. Jacobson herself developed the series,

titled “Portrait of a Woman: Seven Dimensions of the Feminine Mystique.”

“The purpose of this course is to identify the unique strengths that account for this success,” Jacobson explains. “Our goal is for each woman to walk away with a strong sense of self-awareness, empowered to be *all* the woman she can be.”

I asked the students to describe their reaction to the *Rosh Chodesh* society in one word and the responses include: “fulfilling” and “enlightening.”

It was a thought-provoking lecture. One quote touched me in particular. The *Keter Shem Tov, Hosafot*, 227 says, “When you behold a part of the essence, you behold it all.” One way we can understand ourselves is by our essence — a part of G-d. We do not need to understand our entire essence, rather, if we can connect to a piece of our essence than we connect to all of our essence.

I am a Modern Orthodox Jew, currently a junior at Stern. While in high school I began to learn about *Hassidut* and participated in Stern’s Chabad events since my arrival at Stern. By learning more about *Hassidut*, I find that I gain a deeper level of happiness in my *Avodah* that I would not have gained otherwise.

Every event that I have attended by the Chabad club, whether it is



Mati Engel

Bringing a little *Hassidut* to SCW; here, Mrs. Shaindy Jacobson delivers the first *Rosh Chodesh* Society class of the year.

visiting a *tzaddik*’s grave, the grave of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, *Farbrengens*, or the *Rosh Chodesh* Society, has left me a little more in touch with who I am. Stern Chabad club has had speakers such as Simcha Weinstein, “the comic book Rabbi”, and weekly *Tanya* classes and *chavrutot*.

Chabad is a word that describes one of the purposes of the organization of Chabad worldwide and especially at YC and SCW. *Chabad* is an acronym for wisdom (*chachmah*), understanding (*binah*), and intellect (*daas*). Rabbi Dr.

Alter Ben-Zion Metzger, professor of Jewish Studies at Stern, writes in *Yiddishe Heim*, page 9, “The attachment of the human spirit is effected by the union of *Chaba*’d [of man] with *Chaba*’d [of the Holy one blessed be He], by means of intellectual and oral Torah study.” Chabad tries to help one develop a deeper level of Torah study.

I believe there is a saying that one only sees what he wishes to see: I ask, do you wish to focus on similarities or differences?

Tweet, Tweet #RJC2012

RJC from page 1

enough comic relief to sustain me until primary day.

The forum lasted from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and as each candidate gave his *shpiel* [speech], my political affiliation finally made sense to me. Democrats aren’t half as funny. My heart goes out to those of you who were not in attendance because you have been deprived of the most Republican entertainment since Sarah Palin’s Russia sighting.

The RJC Presidential Forum was less of a debate and more of a contest. Each candidate gave a ten-minute speech in which they attempted to prove that they were more Jewish than Moses himself, and then took questions from the audience.

First to take the stage was Rick Santorum, a former senator from Pennsylvania and an Israel-loving Mormon who won the crowd over with his rhetoric about Islam and his roasting of Joe Biden. He advised the college students in the audience to “take exactly what Joe Biden says and say exactly the opposite and you’ll be right one-

hundred percent of the time, not ninety-nine percent.” As the day progressed, the Obama administration had become the Slytherin of America, while the Republican party was Gryffindor prevailing against the evils of “he whose middle name is Hussein.”

As the day progressed, the candidates surpassed comedic heights I never knew existed. The next candidate to take the stage was John Huntsman, former Governor of Utah, who has been dubbed the Obama of the G.O.P candidates. His stances are more liberal than his competitors (he supports gay marriage), which cost him large points in the polls. More registered Republicans are likely to vote for Jimmy Carter than John Huntsman. His theatric speech advocated for congressional term limits, and attacked the current leadership that has created a “deficit of trust” in the American people.

Mitt Romney, a leading candidate, took the stage next and gave a strong speech that had one audience member note that he would “buy a used car from him.” His

speech was poignant, powerful and persuasive as he took multiple shots at Obama, Iran, and the Palestinian Authority.

In reference to the president, Romney noted, “When Obama comes to defend freedom, he’s either late to the game or fails to show up at all.” I guess he’s not betting \$10,000 on Obama’s sports capabilities. But the Obama jokes just kept coming. “For the last three years we have had a lot of change but haven’t had much hope.” The audience ate that line up, responding with a standing ovation. Way to go, Mormon Man!

Newt Gingrich spoke next, but was more mammal than reptile, ripping the Obama administration into tiny shreds. He challenged Obama to a series of Lincoln-Douglas debates, and his joke that “the president can even use a teleprompter” had the audience reaching for their inhalers. The Jewish audience found this funnier than any mother-in-law crack. In all honesty, Gingrich was a magnetic speaker who connected with the audience in a way that

other candidates can only dream about. As the Iowa caucuses have shown, Gingrich has surprised us all and has become a force to be reckoned with.

The RJC made the right decision in having Michelle Bachman end the day, as it left all of us in high spirits. I can only pray that Bachman and Trump decide to join forces because together they can combat world depression. Bachman discussed her close relationship to the Jewish people and Israel, noting that she spent time on a kibbutz after graduating high school. John Stewart highlights her commitment perfectly. “Michelle Bachman loves Israel so much, she was willing to join a socialist collective.” It is truly heartwarming to see the sacrifices people make on behalf of the Jewish people.

The RJC Presidential Forum was a phenomenal day that taught me a life long lesson. As long as you have a birth certificate (and even if you don’t), anyone can make it in America. I’m thinking “Jerry Seinfeld for President.” Who’s with me?

Homeless By Choice

HOMELESS from page 7

be there, they are completely normal people who one day, they’re living in a house with a job and the next say they are homeless. I don’t think there will continue to be this stigma because more people will be doing it. It might not be the worst option for many people because if you do it meticulously and safely, it can be done and it’s not the worst thing, so maybe the stigma will go away.

But I’m proud of it. The reason I don’t tell everybody is because I’m at this point in my life where I still have to go through the job application process. I think I have my job figured out but I don’t want to screw myself over with that so I don’t want too many people to find out and question my judgment, people might judge it without knowing the full details. But if I had that job already, I’d be screaming it from the rooftops, I’m not embarrassed, I’m proud to share it.

OPINIONS

Arayot – What is in the Name?

ARAYOT from page 1

tation, if I was in agreement.

Knee-jerk response: no. That seems to make sound, logical sense. A clean, input/output operation, one dispassionate equation: homosexuality equals *arayot*. While *arayot* is used within *Tanakh* to refer to any sexual relationship, within a halakhic context it connotes forbidden relationships. The Bible clearly states (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13) that acting upon homosexual urges qualifies as *arayot*—a forbidden relationship. I hope this is news to no one.

Why, then, I was overcome by a pang of searing guilt at this individual's raging indignation begs further reflection. I inquired what about the term she found ostensibly offensive. She pounced.

The term, *arayot*, she conjectured, is egregiously, unequivocally negative. Why, she explained, would anyone who considers himself/herself queer want to attend a *shiur*, ever *think* of attending a *shiur*, that has degradingly labeled them as sinners before they have even entered the door? As abominations. As embarrassments to the Jewish community, to be patronizingly hushed and dealt with behind closed doors and clipboards. How could this university be so blindly *unfeeling*, ruthlessly insensitive, to label a discussion about homosexuality a post-committed cardinal sin? How could the university give it a title that ostracizes, judges, and estranges before anything has even been said?

For the first time, I peered into the disconsolate reality of deeply-rooted personal pain surrounding the issue of homosexuality in the Orthodox Jewish world. Her bewildered expression met by my frank, shoulder-shrugging, *sorry*, made me, for the first time, squirm.

I was tempted to apologize for my position. I did not. I was tempted to revoke my statement. I did not.

I did qualify, diplomatically. It depends what the *shiur* is about, I explained. If it is about the halakhic texts and sources regarding homosexuality, the title is accurate and rightly deserved. If, however, the *shiur* is about a constructive social approach to homosexuality in the Jewish community,

perhaps the speech was mislabeled. I can see how the title would be offensive, and, ultimately, counter-productive if the goal is to encourage discussion and understanding.

Upon emailing Rabbi Wieder for clarification, I learned that the *shiur* would be a combination of the two: both a presentation of the halakhic sources *and* a discussion about an appropriate, constructive social response. I offered up my research as a conciliatory gesture.

Her concerns were not assuaged.

I continued to qualify. Perhaps the title of the presentation is mislabeled because of its premature assumption of guilt. Homosexuality is *only* considered a sin if consummated by action. A homosexual orientation, not acted upon, is no sin. Furthermore, creating an open forum for discussion is in no way a sin, and should be encouraged. Reflection upon this point sparked my own indignation. How can the topic be maturely and effectively discussed if an inaccurate assumption of guilt lies at the foundation of the discussion?

On the grounds of the *shiur's* aim to discuss the halakhic sources *within* a broader social context, and on the grounds of the possible premature assumption of wrongdoing that can be read into the word *arayot*, I *do* think the *shiur* concerning homosexuality had been mislabeled. If the *shiur* was meant to discuss homosexuality, it should have been called that, and nothing more.

Shying away from a precise title, a title lucidly informing what the *shiur* would be about, does not reflect a position of religious strength. It reflects upon a tinge a shame and fear — perhaps a hint of apologetics. Providing a forum in which to discuss a topic that deserves to be discussed was taking a critical first step. The hesitancy, however, reflected in the *shiur's* ambiguous title detracts from its impact.

To clarify: is the term *arayot* innately offensive in anyway? No. Any connotation we append to Biblical

terminology reflects only our own personal biases and experiences. The term itself is the plural of *arveh* — the Biblical terminology for *nakedness*. Again, within context, *arayot* is used to refer to forbidden sexual relationships.

The word *arayot* is not a negative term, it is merely a descriptive term. It describes something we, in accordance with the Biblical mandate, are instructed not to do. If we choose to interpret forbidding an action as negative, it may be because our society has encouraged us to think the action in question should be acceptable. It is important to address and deal with discomfort created by conflicting messages, an inevitable part of living as a religious Jew in a secular world. But it is fallacious to ascribe innate negativity to a term describing an objective state of being — *forbidden*.

The reason I was driven to write this article was to present an important and fundamental distinction which, I believe, lies at the core of confronting homosexuality in an effective, sensitive manner within the Jewish community. That distinction is between empathizing with an individual and enabling

an action.

After speaking with the individual discussed in this piece, I gained a new appreciation for the sensitivity with which this subject matter must be breeched. Understanding, empathy, and validation of emotion are all critical. No individual should be turned away or made to feel estranged or marginalized because of his/her sexual leanings. There is always room to open one's heart to the experiences of another.

But it's still forbidden. According to Biblical law. Empathy does not sway law — not within the American legal system, and not within the Judaic legal system. The day we allow empathy to sway law, we've lost Judaism. Structure. Boundaries. Guidelines. *Halakha*. Maintaining, preserving, and abiding by the laws passed down through the generations is our claim to continuity. The condition around which our posterity pivots. The day it becomes just *too* painful and we bend law to accommodate emotion is the day the code on which we've built our nationhood for millennia collapses. Discussion should be encouraged. Apologetics staunchly avoided. But consistency between doctrine and action must be maintained.

The Battle Against Apathy on Behalf of Israel

APATHY from page 1

tesman of her experience meeting with Legislative Assistants, "I found it difficult to stick to the prescribed AIPAC line that I don't necessarily agree with. For example, when the legislative aides were asking me earnest questions about my opinions of the efficacy of sanctions against Iran, I stuck to the AIPAC talking points that sanctions work, though I don't think sanctions work. It was disheartening to respond to such candid questions with this pretense."

The long day of lobbying closed with an address from Virginia Rep. Eric Cantor who declared that the US should "stand by those with shared values" and asserted that Israel is the country in the Middle East with those values. Rep. Cantor also commented that Israel's right to exist must be acknowledged by her neighbors if any progress is to be made in the peace process.

In addition to promoting the Israel lobby on Capitol Hill, YUPAC embarked with the additional goal of promoting political activism on the YU campuses. Jonathan Kessler, Director of AIPAC's Campus Outreach Program communicated the importance of political participation, stating, "lobbying once is an oxymoron" and challenged students to make political activism on behalf of Israel a priority. Muskin commented to "The Observer," "The goal of the mission was to teach the YU student body first-hand about the US political system operates, why the student voice is crucial to safeguarding Israel and why NOW is when they must commit to getting involved...this mission was designed to effect change on our campus, to turn YU around from being an apathetic campus to an active one."

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OPINIONS

Celebrities: They Are Just Like You—and Me

By Laura Barnett

Some Stern women probably shudder at the thought of reading “People Magazine.” *That shtus* [nonsense]? The Hollywood starlets are the epitome of *gashmius* [materialism], while the men of Hollywood...okay, who are we kidding? The men should just keep doing what they’re doing.

While some Stern women might scoff at the stars, so many of us are enamored with the lifestyles of the rich and the famous. I myself had always loved the idea of Show Biz fabulousness. Johnny Depp had always been my knight in shining armor. I guess I had always had this fascination with the Hollywood world. But, Why? I was asking myself this deep, philosophical question while waiting in line at Duane Reade. I had just picked up copies of the new “Us,” “People,” and “Star” and examined those beautiful people we love to hate (or hate to love?) and I realized that maybe one reason for our preoccupation with Hollywood is that we can relate to it; after all, our Yeshiva University community is not that different from the world of the superstar.

Here’s why:

Reason Number 1: Both Groups are Under a Microscope

As Jews, we are always being looked at and criticized by the “outside” world. Of course as the future of the Jewish people, us YU students are perhaps especially under that microscope. We always need to defend ourselves from outsiders who don’t quite understand us. I think that this must be the way celebrities feel when they go to the weekly tabloids and see themselves pregnant, on drugs, or in a blossoming relationship with someone they don’t even really know.

Obviously I am making a slight stretch; there is no such thing as “Antihollywoodism,” and Jews get it a lot harder than the average celebrity. But think about it: Jews and the Israeli government are criticized for every little move they make. Celebrities also feel scrutinized for the little things they do as well, like using a public bathroom or getting a bad haircut, and most of the time there is proof via the paparazzi.



Photo Credit: Ben Stansall/AFP/Getty Images (Gaga)

Lady Gaga vs. Lady Kallah?

Reason Number 2: Both Groups are Role Models

Okay, wait a second. How can any of the Lindsay Lohans or the Miley Cyruses of the celebrity world be role models? Well, they shouldn’t be, but aren’t they? In our American society, steeped in the media’s idea of how we should dress, behave, and live our lives, aren’t the Hollywood starlets people who our youth look up to? It is obvious they are. For anyone who has seen the 8-year-old Sophia Grace rap Nicki Minaj’s “Super Bass,” it should seem pretty clear that celebrities (and not always the most kosher ones) are whom we look up to in our society.

Jews are an “*Ohr Le’Goyim*” or a “light unto the nations.” In other words, Jews should try to be the best human beings possible. I think it is pretty accurate to say that YU students and alumni try to go out and give YU and the Jewish nation a good name whenever in the public eye. Now don’t get me wrong, there are celebrities who have their act together and are a “light unto America,” so to speak. There are many celebrities who start organizations for the poor and sick. Many are activists who use their power for good. Those are the people who our youth should admire and respect. I would say the take home from this would definitely be, don’t let your eight year old listen to Nicki Minaj — have her watch Oprah instead.

Reason Number 3: You Thought I Wouldn’t Mention Marriage? Psh-hhhh

You think Stern girls and YU boys live in a bubble? Have you seen Hollywood? Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston (AND Angeline Jolie). Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher (RIP) and lets not forget Justin Bieber and Selena Gomez! It seems that these celebs try to only date inside their circles. Now, you can’t tell me that is not similar to the YU community. On the rare occasion that some celeb is dating a no-name (you know, one of us mere mortals), I guess you would call that intermarriage.

As a final note to tie it all together, Jews basically invented Hollywood. You can Google it if you don’t believe me. (Try: three major entrepreneurs of American production companies: Sam Goldwyn, Jack and Harry Warner, Louis B. Mayer) Allow me to add that this history of Jews in film is actually a rather interesting topic, which I would recommend to anyone interested in film (History of Film class anyone?). According to Hollywood’s ancestry, I am inclined to say that its community is merely a branch of our own.

So, remember, if you ever happen to run into a celebrity on one of your New York City outings just give him or her a heartfelt “Shalom.” Chances are they know what that means because of their Kabbalah classes.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Gila [Yarmush]:

We have never met, and I was not at the meeting of which you write in “The Observer,” but your letter of apology haunted me most of the night.

How is it that an apparently dedicated student of history feels such worries and anxieties about her future at an institution that boasts some of the finest historians in the world? I speak not only of our excellent, though admittedly too small, history department.

YU boasts one of the premiere faculties of historians who focus on the Jewish past — social, intellectual, religious, cultural and even art. From biblical history (e.g. Astor, Eichler, Holtz) to Second Temple/Rabbinic (e.g. Angel, Bernstein, Elman, Feldman, Fine, Hidary, Koller, Mermelstein, Schiffman), to medieval/Early Modern (e.g. Berger, Dauber, Kanarfogel, Kaplan, Levine, Pereles) to modern (e.g. Gurock, Karlip, Olson, Tsadik), YU under President Joel has brought together an incredible community of historians who focus on Jewish History — interpreting it within the broadest historical contexts.

A YU degree that integrates “History” and “Jewish History” is as strong a BA in History as one can get, as is demonstrated by the fact that students from both campuses are regularly accepted to the finest doctoral programs. In the last few years, we have sent budding historians to Harvard, Yale, NYU, Stanford, Berkeley, Bard Graduate Center, Hebrew University, the CUNY Graduate Center and beyond.

The problem is that while YU’s riches are broadly and regularly available even on the undergraduate level to YC students, many of our scholars only meet Stern students who participate in our BA/MA program in Revel.

This problem, which reflects a long history as well as tremendous growth in recent years, is precisely why the current project to unify our undergraduate colleges — led by Professor Schiffman — is so important. I am pained, for example, that men have so little access to the fine Stern faculty in, for example, *Parshanut*, storytelling and Art History. Similarly, undergraduate Stern students cannot easily study the Bible within its Ancient Near Eastern contexts or Eastern European Jewish History with our Wilf-based faculty.

The day is coming soon — we have been promised — when the breadth and depth of YU’s history/academic Judaica faculty will be available equitably on both campuses. For now, you and others like you might consider taking advantage of our Jewish History offerings under the aegis of Revel.

I look forward to meeting you in person and hearing about your plans in History.

With blessings for a happy hag ha- Hodaya,

Steven Fine

Professor of Jewish History,

Yeshiva University

Director, YU Center for Israel Studies

Dear Mademoiselles,

I am sending this letter to you because I have no other means of communicating with anyone else connected in any way with the college.

It is not for me to pass judgment on the controversial article (which I learned about in The New York Times online) in the YU Beacon or on the writer of the article but I cannot refrain from expressing the following.

Although I am not an Orthodox Jew — as were generations of ancestors of mine in Europe who were Orthodox rabbis, starting with RASHI and including Meir ben Isaac Katzenellenbogen of Padua [1482- 1565] — when it comes to the Theology of Judaism, I adamantly believe that Judaism without G-d is dead, contrary to the “beliefs” of so many contemporary Jews.

In addition, I believe strongly in the Ethics of Judaism. Among other beliefs, I strongly object to premarital sex, and therefore congratulate one and all on your campus who deplore the glorification of that practice. The world is falling apart at a rapid pace. Although I was born in 1926, I am a product of the 19th century and the Ethics taught and practiced by my grandparents Marshall and Lowenstein and by my parents Billikopf and Marshall. Consequently I am painfully aware of a breakdown in the entire Western World during the past sixty years with regard to the topic of sexual relations. I would need to write a lengthy essay to detail my position.

I just wanted you to know that though I live 6,000 miles south of New York City (where my mother and uncles were born), you have all my support!

I wish you well — all of you Stern College students!

David Marshall Billikopf,

Santiago, Chile

A.B. Harvard University, magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, 1948 (Class of 1947)

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OPINIONS

For All Those Non-Believers

By Aliza Kaye

We all have our pet peeves.

You may hate it when your friends crack their knuckles. Stern girls obsessing over marriage may grind your gears. Maybe your blood boils when teachers go over their allotted class time.

The thing that always bothers me, though, is when people tell me that they don't enjoy reading. I have never understood how one of my favorite pastimes could be so hated by others. How can someone not want to get lost in a world of fiction, a world where anything happens, a world where reality is not required?

Disclaimer: a bold statement is about to be made.

You, yes you, the one reading this who "hates reading" (ironic, I know), have been traumatized by the schooling system. The reason you hate books is because of those long summer reading lists that made your stomach clench. Whenever you were assigned a novel in English class, you automatically assumed it would be boring, stupid, complicated. And you may have been right. Certain books (read: "Heart of Darkness") should NEVER be on a school's curriculum. These are the books that make Sparknotes thrive. These are the books that make you want to burn every written word in the world. I shamelessly point my finger at some of the novels that sneak their way into high school English courses.

I now challenge you non-believers to pick up a different book. Ask a friend, a parent, a sibling, to suggest a novel to you that is far from boring. I believe (and yes, you may quote me on this) that you will have a completely different experience reading a novel that doesn't have a due date. No more counting pages, no more combing through Google for a summary, no more analyzing through the eyes of a professor with a Ph.D in literature.

You're still not convinced, are you? You don't have the time or patience to sit through an entire book. You think you have too much A.D.D. to focus on the words. Let me tell you, though, that reading can be one of the most exciting activities you can do. If you're truly reading a good book, you won't notice the time passing by. You won't feel as though you've been reading all day. As someone who does, in fact, have self-diagnosed A.D.D., let me describe to you my personal reading experience.

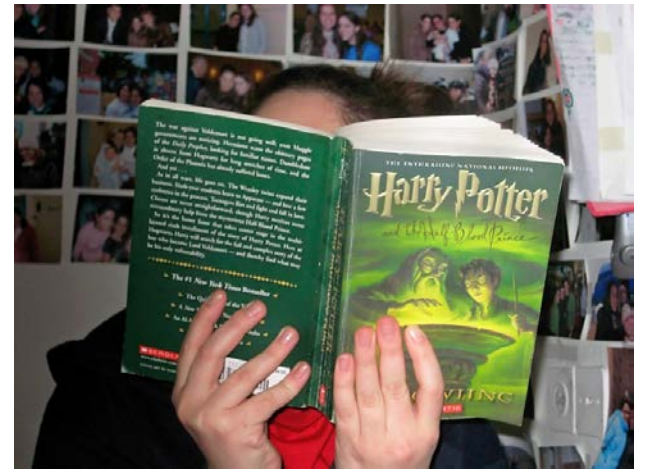
A good novel to me isn't just about plot. It isn't just about characters. It isn't just about diction and syntax. It is about all of these literary devices, plus many more, intertwining with one another. When I read a novel, I forget about time and people and my own reality. I'm in the characters' world. I feel their pain, experience their joy, and sense their unhappiness. The words of a good writer pull me into the story, surrounding me with deeper meanings until the letters themselves seem to be a part of my very being. I let them wash over me and clean out all the stress that reality brings. Many times I reread especially beautiful sentences just to feel the words swell up inside of me a second time. There are times

when the characters are so close to me that I find it hard to believe they aren't standing right by my side. I don't move a muscle when I read, but I somehow manage to dance, sing, run, and travel with the people on the pages.

A good novel makes me completely oblivious to the outside world. Try asking me a question when I'm absorbed in a book. I warn you, you will not receive an answer. I'm too busy consuming the sentences that are developing along with the characters. I'm having a wizard's duel with Harry, or I'm fighting for Tom's freedom in "To Kill a Mockingbird." Maybe I'm swinging into Terabithia, or perhaps I've escaped through the wardrobe into Narnia once again. Sometimes you'll find me hiding in the basement with Max in "The Book Thief," and other times I'm being put on trial because Abigail accused me of being a witch.

I hope you take these words to heart, non-reader. Go to a library and find a title that interests you. Open the book and get lost in its pages. You'll realize that you don't hate reading, but rather you hate reading for class assignments. Maybe you'll even see me there, absorbed in my own novel.

Feel free to say hello, but don't be offended if I don't respond. After all, it's hard to hear you from another world.



Renee Kestenbaum

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OPINIONS

When the Brands Come Marching In: What Are We Really Celebrating this Holiday Season?

By Hannah Dreyfus

There's nothing quite like watching a 40- or -so-year-old woman in suede wedge boots and a fur-lined coat shriek wildly as a large balloon of Pikachu floats languidly across the New York skyline. For all those who do not recognize the reference, allow me to take you back to second grade: Pikachu, a pointy-eared yellow monster (for lack of a more accurate description), was one of the star characters of the flash fad, Pokémon. The anime trend, which involved trading cards, stuffed animals, several movies, a few books (I cringe) and, naturally, a TV series, swept the nation with impressive vigor. The franchise became so popular it was well known to rival Digimon (yes, that meant nothing to me either). The point: had she not been standing among thousands of enamored on-lookers, all passively-aggressively shouldering each other to try and get a better look, I am sure Pokémon would have meant very little to this unsuspecting stranger. But, clamoring to watch the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade 2011, something about Pikachu became quite enthralling to her and thousands of other unabashed adults.

Pikachu was no fluke: every parade float and balloon unfailingly represented a billions-grossing consumer franchise, market capitalism's poster child. "Here comes Ronald McDonald!" "Pose for a photo op with the Pillsbury Dough Boy." "Drinking the Kool-aid? Hope so, because here comes Kool-aid man." They all, indiscriminately, celebrated the triumph of advertising virtuosity, marketing ingenuity, and consumer impressionability. Just some good, clean family fun; the most insidious advertising campaign of the year.

Of course, many balloons are beloved movie and TV charac-



Emily Wolmark

When advertising spills over from Times Square into the largest American holidays, what are we really celebrating?

ters (Buzz Lightyear, SpongeBob Squarepants, and Spiderman to name a few). However, my point remains intact — Pixar, Nickelodeon, and Sony Pictures were undoubtedly basking in the media coverage as they floated down 5th Avenue. The more well-loved the character, the better. Whether they are popular TV icons or shameful remnants of the past, make no mistake: the parade is a march of brands, a two-hour long advertising campaign, aggressively vying for the loyalty and patronage of the thousands of onlookers below. A campaign acutely aware of a thousand religiously imprinting childhood memories.

I had the privilege of watching this extravaganza while standing next to a foreigner, her outside eyes all the keener for their lack of prior exposure. I broke into conversation with this woman from Tel-Aviv who was touring the States for the first time. "What

does this parade celebrate?" she asked in her heavy Israeli accent.

"It celebrates the holiday of Thanksgiving," I replied. Gosh, foreigners. So naive.

"What does the Energizer Bunny have to do with giving thanks?" she said, incredulous. I scramble for the save. I miss. I am left running empty-handed towards the end zone, no reply in sight.

What does the Energizer Bunny have to do with giving thanks? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. In a parade meant to embody the spirit of this beloved American tradition, we are graced with one continuous commercial, no program in between to break up the grating monotony. What would a float actually *having* to do with gratitude or altruism, or any of those lofty ideals trotting comfortably alongside the benign title, Thanksgiving, look like? I don't know. But it would *not* look like Ronald McDonald, champion of childhood obesity. That's

for sure

Here in America, we turn out to celebrate our own gullibility, our own willingness to buy into a system actively targeting our conscious and subconscious mind around the clock. Who am I to say that Thanksgiving is not a religious holiday? On the contrary: it is a *devoutly* religious holiday. All religious conventions are fastidiously observed. It is, in fact, a two-day long ceremony (Black Friday being the highly anticipated second day). The religion to which we owe our gratitude: consumerism.

In America today, the lines between religious practice and *market*-formulated ritual have become irreversibly blurred. If Santa Claus ever had to do with the alleged St. Nicholas, the combined efforts of advertising campaigns the US over have done their best to obliterate any record of it. The large, merry, ho-ho-hoing character we all know and love conveniently *demand*s that parents haul their weary bodies over to the nearest Toys-R-Us and buy their children something good for the holiday season.

Halloween is another case-in-point. Does the holiday have religious roots? Yes — pagan roots, to be sure. Is what Americans celebrate today remotely religious in any way? No, in the conventional sense. Yes, in the sense that one is obliged to go out and purchase *Snickers* in huge value packs at the risk of having your house egged by the neighborhood children.

Examples such as Thanksgiving, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Presidents' Day are all lucid ploys to get your credit card information, yet are to some degree less disturbing models. These *creations* (and don't talk to me about the Pilgrims' and Indians' pleasant little rendezvous), never truly had

a claim to *religious* roots. The examples that are slightly more concerning are the holidays that have traceable, religious foundations and yet have been so easily molded and re-configured to fit the demands of Hallmark's advertising agenda. Attributing value to a holiday that never stood for much in the first place is one thing — undermining *existing* value to replace it with new, remodeled, market-serving meaning is another.

On Macy's impressive stone storefront, visible as you walk down 34th Street, one word hangs, twinkling serenely on the wall: *believe*. The natural follow-up question: "in what?" The statement, warmly beckoning passers-by into the behemoth department store below, is left conveniently unqualified. Believe that you can afford it? Believe that you want it? Believe that you need it?

Or, believe in something bigger than what Macy's, or any department store for that matter, has to offer you.

As our own holiday season fast winds down, it is worthwhile to remind ourselves of the *intrinsic* value and meaning behind the thousand-year old practices we are soon to observe. One need only attend the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade or walk down 5th Avenue to see how easily society can debunk and replace meaning to fit its own ends. We Jews are not lighting the *menorah* because Hallmark or Adam Sandler thought it was cute. We light the *menorah* to commemorate a miracle central to our people, existence, continuity, and faith.

Believe *that*.

Please Mum, May We Have Some More (Fruits and Veggies)?

By Danielle Reisman

One of the biggest problems many Americans face today is obesity: according to CBS Evening News, over two-thirds of Americans (more than 190 million people) are significantly overweight in our country. We all know that the best way to go about eating healthy is by filling our plates with several daily servings of fruits and vegetables. However, what many of us do not realize is how obscenely overpriced the fruits and vegetables are in our school cafeteria.

For example, one banana costs \$0.65, while at a fruit vender I could buy a banana for \$0.25, less than half the cost! The average adult on a 2,000 daily calorie diet could satisfy the fruit and

vegetable consumption recommendations of the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans at an average cost of \$2 to \$2.50 per day. But for students on a budget, that is way out of our spending limit. Why should we spend more than \$10 a week for our nutrition in the caf, when by buying our fruits at a vendor we could be spending less than \$5 a week? Shouldn't Stern help us overcome this price discrepancy, rather than adding to our difficulties in obtaining affordable, healthy foods?

This is not only the case with fruit prices in the caf: a Chobani Greek yogurt in the cafeteria costs \$2.60, while at the supermarket the cost is only \$1.75. Yogurt

can be a healthy and filling daily breakfast food, but "shopping" in the caf as opposed to the supermarket results in spending \$4.25 more each week on yogurt alone. The price difference from the cafeteria to the supermarket is therefore tremendous.

In fact, virtually all of the healthier choices in the cafeteria tend to be priced higher than the less healthy choices. A salad weighing 15.5 ounces costs \$7, while a tub of 15.5 ounces of Ben and Jerry's ice cream costs \$6. Many of us strive to opt towards the healthier meal choices, but when the balance on our cafeteria card is rapidly diminishing, many are forced to choose the cheaper — less healthy

— option rather than the more expensive — healthier — option. We must also take into account those who do not have a meal plan and pay as they go. Many of these students tend to be more conscious of their spending habits and therefore look for the less expensive food choices, even though those may not be the healthiest ones.

Obviously many of us would prefer to spend our caf card money than the physical cash we have in our pockets, but that is no excuse for the cafeteria to overcharge us for choosing to be healthy. We have the power to demand lower food prices. The Student Life Committee constantly relays our cafeteria comments to Dining Services,

and we have seen responses in the form of an improved salad bar and main dishes most often cooked in a healthful way. By raising our voices we can change our bodies, our health, and our lives.

SPORTS

People of the Ball:

Alan Veingrad

By Meira Lerner

Born in Brooklyn on July 24, 1963, Alan Veingrad and his family moved to Miami in 1972. That year proved to be a record-breaking year for the Miami Dolphins, who ended an undefeated season with a climactic Superbowl victory. The Dolphins's phenomenal season became a milestone for 9-year-old Alan, who subsequently fell in love with football.

When Alan turned 14, he followed his older brother's example and immersed himself in high school sports. Determined to succeed on the field, Veingrad asked his school's strength coach to instruct him in the weight room. Alan worked tirelessly at improving his strength and overall fitness.

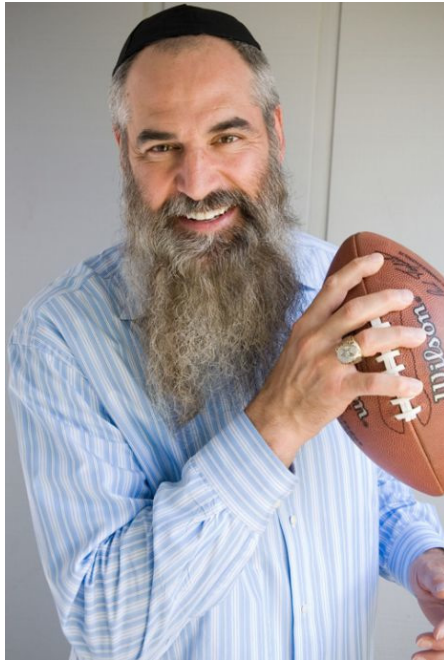
Beginning as just an average football player, Veingrad's weight room training did wonders for his game. Since colleges still did not recognize Veingrad's skill, however, Veingrad's mother was forced to send her son's sports resume to various colleges. Finally, East Texas State University took notice of the new prospect and recruited her son to their football team.

Veingrad was the only Jew at East Texas State University. Nevertheless, this did not concern him, as his only connection to Judaism had been reluctantly attending Hebrew school in his youth.

Through many vigorous workouts, Veingrad's muscle mass and football skill increased significantly to the point that his proficiency became noticeably better. While Veingrad focused on winning college awards and championships, his coach suggested he set his goals at becoming an NFL player.

Veingrad, however, was not recruited to the NFL from college but was later signed to the Green Bay Packers as a free agent. Veingrad continued to play for the Packers for five years and then for the Dallas Cowboys for another two. In 1992, Veingrad, as a Dallas Cowboy, won the Superbowl.

Although most Superbowl-winning NFL players would consider the highlight of their football careers — if not their lives — receiving a Superbowl ring, Veingrad has a



very different moment.

When Veingrad began playing for the Packers, a Jewish shoe store owner invited him over for Rosh Hashanah. Veingrad, having no deep connecting to Judaism, did not expect much of the invitation. Yet, as soon as Veingrad heard his host speak Hebrew, the letters pulled at his soul; they gave Veingrad's life a new direction.

After winning the Superbowl, Veingrad decided to leave the NFL while still in good health, and devote the rest of his life to Judaism and motivational speaking.

In today's Modern Orthodoxy, it is very important to have role models like Veingrad — a person who willingly sacrificed his dream for the following two reasons: first, playing professional football entailed an inability to keep the laws of Judaism and, second, that when looking at his life, even an NFL Superbowl ring could not add meaning to his life, could not satisfy the need to dedicate his life to a larger purpose.

Taking the High Road

By Meira Lerner

With the name "Yeshiva" stitched to the back of their jerseys, athletes at Yeshiva University know that how they present themselves is a reflection of the Jewish religion. They are expected to take the high road, to be the most sportsmanlike athletes on the field, regardless of how rough or unfair a game may be. They represent not only our school or our hometowns, but also our religion. To this extent they are very successful at meeting expectations.

This year, our teams have already taken home two sportsmanship awards. The men's soccer team was awarded the Skyline Conference Team Sportsmanship Award after receiving just five yellow cards all season, while all other teams in the conference received at least double that.

In addition, the women's soccer team received the National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association (NISOA) New York

Metro Area Sportsmanship Award. Though the Lady Macs played every minute of their eleven games with great fortitude, they were not penalized with even a single red or yellow card.

Receiving these awards is a reflection of the character of Yeshiva University's athletes and coaching staff. Our athletes play with aggression moderated by integrity and an unwavering persistence.

They play not for themselves but for their teams, not for their reputations but for that of our religion. They play their hearts out the entire game, regardless of the score. They hustle off the field as a team, with smiles plastered to their faces. They conduct themselves maturely, regardless of how the other teams act.

That is what it means to be a Maccabee; that is what it means to wear "Yeshiva" on the back of their jerseys.

Congratulations to...

Congratulations to basketball's Rebecca Yoshor for being named Hudson Valley Women's Athletic Conference Rookie of the Week two weeks in a row.

Sports Quotes:

"People want to be on a team. They want to be part of something bigger than themselves. They want to be in a situation where they feel that they are doing something for the greater good." - Mike Krzyzewski

"A winner is someone who recognizes his G-d-given talents, works his tail off to develop them into skills, and uses these skills to accomplish his goals." - Larry Bird

"I have missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I have lost almost 300 games. On 26 occasions I have been entrusted to take the game-winning shot ... and missed. And I have failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why ... I succeed." - Michael Jordan

"Being a good teammate is when you try to sprint down a ball that everyone thinks is going out of bounds. But you go after it anyways and you get it." - Mia Hamm

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SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Nutrition Nook

Calling All Carnivores! A Campaign for our Health and the Environment

By Rachel Daniels

An estimated 20% of this country has jumped on the bandwagon, but it seems that the message has not yet reached Stern students. So, I am here to tell the YU community about a movement that is spreading across university campuses and essentially all over the world: Meatless Mondays.

Meatless Mondays is a movement that promotes cutting out meat one day a week, specifically, Mondays. I have been a strict adherent to this pledge since the summertime. No matter where I am or how inconvenient it is, I insist on vegetarian Mondays (ask my roommates for proof)—and I am not alone. Health nuts are not the only ones who have caught on. Campaigns have spread across numerous college campuses, elementary schools, hospitals, and even restaurants.

Meatless Monday actually has a rich past in American history. The movement began during World War I. Herbert Hoover, who headed the U.S. Food Administration at the time, suggested one meatless as well as one wheatless day a week, and thus “Meatless Monday” and “Wheatless Wednesday” began. In this way, Americans nationwide helped the war effort by reducing the consumption and these staples. The Food Administration gave recipe handouts, menus, and magazines to demonstrate to people that they still had many options for meals that did not in-



volve meat or wheat. Because of the movement's success, Hoover did not need to implement a ration system, and was able to conserve food to send to the troops. After the war, Meatless Mondays died down, but were brought back again during World War II when President Roosevelt and Vice President Truman brought back the campaign to help feed those in Europe deeply affected by the war.

Meatless Monday as it is known today began when Health advocate Sid Lerner revived it in 2003. It began as a public health movement backed by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Center for a Livable Future, with 20 schools of public health from all over the country signing on. Lerner recognized the impact that the movement had

during crucial times in the 20th Century. During World War I, 10 million families, 7,000 hotels, and 425,000 food dealers pledged to Meatless Mondays. In 1917, New York hotels alone saved 116 tons of meat, demonstrating that a movement can have a significant impact on a country. While during WWI they were trying to conserve food for the war effort, the success shows that one day a week without meat notably reduces meat consumption and if the movement catches on it can make a marked difference.

Why Meatless Monday? What does this movement actually stand for today and what does it hope to achieve? Foremost, the movement is spreading awareness. This country's health is declining rapidly — with 33.8% of American adults

and 17% (12.5 million) American children obese, something needs to be done. Meat consumption has been linked to numerous health problems, including cardiovascular disease, colon cancer, diabetes, and liver problems, while a plant-based diet, low in the fats found in processed in red meats, has been shown to help lengthen lifespans. Meatless Mondays may not be the perfect solution, but it is a step in the right direction by getting people to approach their health and think about food. The movement therefore also promotes food diversity. Meatless Monday is not vegan Monday, so pledgers can still eat dairy and egg products. Eating vegetarian one day a week will hopefully lead participants to think and cook nutritiously and outside of the box (instead of using Mondays as an excuse to go out for pizza).

The movement also has incredible environmental benefits because the meat industry takes a very large toll on the environment. In the United States, 80% of freshwater, 50% of American land, and 17% of our fossil energy is dedicated to the meat industry. A disproportionate percentage of the greenhouse gasses that contribute to global warming are emitted by the meat industry. By reducing our meat consumption in the United States, meat production will decrease, as would these staggering figures and percentages. One day

a week without meat can make a huge difference, as we saw during World War I.

I find that much of the media and literature about health is overwhelming. We are always being told to change our habits and flooded with examples of people who have lost hundreds of pounds, that it is easy to ignore these messages. Meatless Monday is easy and feasible and can eventually make a lasting impact. By speaking out about the movement, you can help spread a campaign that will hopefully one day generate large-scale change. As college students we have the ability to make a real difference and to set the pace for the next generation. Students from Columbia University, Tel Aviv University, and the Universities of California are only a few of the institutions that have joined the cause. Practically, it is even easy enough here at Stern. There are numerous vegetarian options in the campus cafeterias, and one of our dining establishments does not even serve meat. Grab your friend and have a salad with tofu instead of chicken. The nutrition club will be starting to send out e-mails with meatless recipes and health tips, so stay on the lookout for some great dishes. Start your week on a healthy note — do something good for yourself and the environment...take the pledge.

What Do Fish Have to Say?

By Naamah Plotzker

Lions “roar” royally in the African grasslands, insects “buzz” busily among the flowers, and cows “moo” moodily in green fields, but can you answer what sound a fish makes? While many of the terrestrial members of the animal kingdom are notorious for their sounds, life underwater is perceived as less clamorous than life on the ground. Like many myths, this belief may stem from ignorance and lack of exposure rather than fact. Actually, many fish are friends and love auditory communication.

In 1973, a marine biologist at the University of Rhode Island with a very apt last name, Professor Marie Poland Fish, wrote a guide to the sounds of 150 fish, called *Sounds of Western North Atlantic Fishes: A Reference File of Underwater Biologic Sounds*. This book opens up the communication channels between humans and fish, allowing us a rare glimpse into how these chatty creatures communicate and

the sounds they make when they do.

Though not all fish make sounds, there is a wide variation in the sounds that different species of fish can produce. The sounds are divided into two main categories based on how they are produced.

The first category relates to a unique anatomical structure of fish: the swim bladder. A swim bladder is a structure homologous to the lungs. It is usually two joined sacs which fill with air and enable fish to remain buoyant by expanding or contracting in accordance with the water's pressure. The muscles that control the swim bladder are called sonic muscles and are actually the fastest-reacting muscles known in vertebrates. When the sonic muscles expand and contract, they often produce sound. In different species, the sounds are very different. Hoots, deep thumps or drums, croaks, and barks are just a few of the sounds different species produce with their swim blad-

ders. The usually peaceful town of Cape Coral, Florida on the Mexican Gulf coast was literally rocked by the thumping mating calls of their aquatic neighbor, the Black Drum, back in 2005.

Another category of sounds is called stridulatory sounds, produced when fish rub or grate skeletal structures such as sharp bones or teeth against one another, which creates ticking noises. Herring and clownfish are among the species that make stridulatory sounds, and some species make stridulatory sounds and use their swim bladders as an amplifier.

Why do fish make sounds? Attracting mates, frightening predators or competitors, fright, and just by accident when they go about their daily routine are some of the reasons that fish, like any animals, make noise.

So try attempt a *schmooze* with your pet fish today and see what happens. You may be surprised!



Sarit Bassal

Did you know? The color and intensity of a flame depends on what is burning. For example, potassium chloride burns purple and copper chloride burns green. This is how they make different colors for fireworks. Tubes are packed with various compounds that produce color when burned.

Spermaceti was once a prized candle-making substance, as it does not release a bad odor when burned, like beeswax. Spermaceti is wax obtained from the head of a sperm whale, which were hunted to obtain the wax, as it fetched a high price on the market. It also does not soften when the temperature rises.

SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Mozart: Baby Brain Booster?

By Daphna Shalom

We have all thought about how we are going to raise our future children. Yes, even you, Yeshiva boy. We have thought about which Jewish schools we will send them to, the different types of sports and instruments that we will “encourage” them to pick up and eventually master, and the brands of designer clothing that we will spoil them with, despite the fact that they will inevitably outgrow them within weeks. Most important, however, are our concerns that we end up raising future Jewish doctors, lawyers, and if we are really lucky, presidents.

Admittedly tempting are products such as “Baby Einstein,” “Brainy Baby,” and the like, videos that allow us to sit back while ensuring us that prodigies are on their way by stimulating our babies’ brains with lessons on life’s everyday wonders and occurrences, incorporated with vivid shapes, colors, and classical music. According to Dr. Dimitri Christakis of the University of Washington, these videos claim to “make your children smarter or more musical or more mathematical.” Sounds incredible! But we ought to be wary of such extravagant claims; have we not always heard that watching television only sets back development?

The question of whether or not “Baby Einstein” falls into a unique category of “good television,” raises an even larger question: Is it even true that television is bad?

There is the minority opinion of the Canadian Pediatric Society

that television actually is good for children. The Society hypothesizes that television promotes the development of children’s reading skills through the practice resulting from the reading of texts and subtitles displayed in television programs. Nevertheless, common wisdom seems to rule this case. The American Academy of Pediatrics weighs in with a “better-than-sorry” stance on television for young children, advising parents that it is more likely that television is harmful than helpful, and many studies have indicated various types of brain damage caused by television viewing.

An organization known as *Commercial Free Children* discusses a U.S. research project that studied 1,000 families in total, concluding that the “passive activity” of watching television can cause language delays and be extremely harmful to children’s attention spans and cognitive development. Another consequence that has been studied is impairment of frontal lobe development. The frontal lobe region of the brain is responsible for impulse control and ability to concentrate. Thus, damage to the frontal lobe can result in difficulty concentrating at school, as well socially inappropriate behavior. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that during television viewing, brain activity switches from the left side of the brain to the right, where there is limited critical analysis of incoming information. A lack of critical analysis tends to lead to an

inaccurate view of reality. Lastly, a significant, but underemphasized fact about television is its ability to cause physical addiction. When watching television, the body releases endorphins, a natural sedative with similar properties to heroin. The body may begin to crave the feeling of the endorphins and it is very probable for one to become addicted to watching television.

Now let us return to our original question: Are “brain stimulating” videos different? Christakis, also an avid researcher and pediatrician at the Children’s Hospital in Seattle, responds to the claims made by the producers of these videos, stating that “there’s absolutely no scientific evidence in support of those claims, nor is there any scientific basis theoretically to believe them.” The effects he and his research team have found have been similar to those caused by watching regular television. Babies who watch these videos demonstrate slower neurological development; for example, their vocabularies are much more limited compared to those who never watch them. According to Time Magazine’s Alice Park, all that these baby videos are doing is producing “a generation of over-stimulated kids.” While we may assume that excessive stimulation for our babies would be beneficial to them, actually, the more television they watch, the shorter their attention spans become. According to Christakis, “their minds come to expect a high level of stimulation, and view that

as normal, and by comparison, reality is boring.”

The one beneficial aspect to these videos that should be embraced by all parents is that of the music, specifically classical. A phenomenon known as the “Mozart Effect” suggests that early childhood exposure to classical music has a beneficial effect on mental development. The term was first coined by French researcher Dr. Alfred A. Tomatis, and popularized by American author and music researcher Don Campbell. According to Campbell, “Tomatis’s innovative research is based on the ear’s ability to discriminate between sounds it selects to hear and the ability to tune out sounds that are unwanted.” The ear’s ability to listen, select sounds spatially, and regulate auditory information that is perceived by the brain, helps individuals with speech and communication disorders, attention deficit disorders, head injuries, and autism. For years, neuroscientists and researchers like Tomatis and Campbell have been investigating music’s role in babies’ developing brains. And according to many like them, the correlation between music and brain development is also results in a quicker understanding of language, better motor movements, and enhanced spatial understanding.

So what’s the science behind the magic? First we must answer the question of why classical music specifically. The structure of classical music is more complex than that of other genres. The classical

music pathways in the brain are like those that are used for spatial reasoning, which is the brain’s ability to visualize and mentally manipulate spatial patterns, like the skills used when putting together the pieces of a puzzle. When our babies listen to classical music, the spatial pathways in their brains are “turned on” and ready to be used. More generally, playing music for your baby promotes the development of neural synapses, which in essence, is building up brain cell connections. The more developed our babies’ brain cell connections are, the better developed their brains, both intellectually and physically, and the faster they become Jewish leaders.

So, to the parents who have already raised children and are now helping to raise grandchildren, to the newlyweds who are in the process of building a childproof home for their future *kinderlach*, and to those of you Yeshiva boys and Yeshiva girls who are in the hunt for a *shidduch*, take it from the experts. Do not sit your child in front of a television screen no matter what marketing ploy you allow yourself to believe. Rather, while your child sits in his or her car seat as you run your daily errands, while you are playing with them in the yard, or even while they are playing by themselves in their bedroom, play a composition of Mozart, Beethoven, or Bach. You may just end up with a baby genius!

They Live...In You

By Shulamit Brunswick

Last month, we read Jackie Benayoun’s article reporting on the flu virus. This month we are going to revisit viruses and explore a topic of debate in the scientific community: Are viruses alive? This seems like a simple question on the surface. One might think, “Of course viruses are alive! They replicate and survive in our bodies.” However, on closer inspection, this question has much room for debate, as viruses exhibit characteristics of both living and non-living organisms.

In 1839 Theodor Schwann, Matthias Jakob Schleiden, and Rudolf Virchow suggested the “Cell Theory” to define living species. This theory has undergone some modifications, but as it is understood today, the theory includes:

The cell is the fundamental unit of structure and function in all living organisms, and all living things are made up of one or more cells

Cells contain DNA, which is passed from cell to cell during

replication. All cells of a particular organism share the same DNA

Viruses are acellular particles; therefore under the Cell Theory definition of life, they are not alive.

A broader interpretation of “living” defines living organisms as those that obtain and use energy, grow and develop, are responsive to their environment, adapt to environmental changes, maintain homeostasis, and reproduce, with a key factor being that they are able to do all of this independently. When we use this definition, we find that viruses land somewhere in the middle of this spectrum.

While viruses are obligate parasites, meaning that they can only grow and reproduce inside a living host, they do not die if they are not inside a host. They may just lie dormant, with no vital functions taking place. Once they are introduced into a host, they can begin reproducing. An example of this is a virus that spreads through

the fecal-oral route (passing from the feces of one organism into the digestive tract of another); the virus lies dormant in the feces of an affected host and will “wake up” when it enters a new host.

When viruses “wake up” inside their hosts, they begin to perform vital functions, such as reproduction. Viruses can direct their reproduction with their genetic material, but they cannot carry out the process of reproduction as they do not have their own metabolic machinery. Viruses are able to steal the host cell’s metabolic pathway and redirect the cellular activity away from cell maintenance to viral reproduction.

The flu virus is a good example of a virus that does this. Strands of cellular RNA have something called a seven methyl cap on one end, which is necessary for translation, a step of DNA replication. However, the RNA of the flu virus does not have one. So it steals the cap from the host cell messenger

RNA so that it can reproduce!

Viruses are also able to trick cells into reproducing the viral genome instead of the cellular genome, for example, by incorporating their nucleic acids in the cell’s genome until some stress factor activates their genes and they begin to reproduce separately from the cell.

Some scientists argue that since the virus relies so heavily on the host, it is not considered “living”. Others say that its very ability to utilize a cell’s machinery for its own ends indicates that viruses are “living.” Like “living” organisms, viruses are able to respond to environmental changes by mutating rapidly. Mutations have enabled it to resist certain drugs that were previously effective. Viral mutations are analogous to “superbugs,” bacterial strains that have mutated in response to their environment and are now resistant to some antibiotics. However, unlike viruses, bacteria are firmly classified as “living”.

Not inanimate enough to be classified as “non-living,” and not self-sufficient enough to be classified as “living,” viruses straddle the line and defy attempts to pigeonhole them. Perhaps this question will never be fully answered. Virologists Marc H. V. van Regenmortel of the University of Strasbourg in France and Brian W. J. Mahy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia have poetically described a virus’s existence as “a kind of borrowed life.” Nonetheless, one cannot help but be amazed at these acellular organisms who are able, without the replication machinery of their own, to spread, survive and cause major health problems.

Have you had your flu shot yet?

This article was written with the help and guidance of Dr. Zuckerman and Dr. Schuck.

ARTS AND CULTURE

A Cheerful Performance

By Lindsay Wess

Selling tickets, promoting, and mass e-mailing a month prior to the show, the *Bye Bye Birdie* cast has been gleefully awaiting their three-day tour in the Schottenstein amphitheatre. Strolling in with their refreshments, bouquets, and playbooks, the audience found their seats, anxiously waiting to see their family and friends per-



Julia Siegel

Kim MacAfee (played by Leah Meadvin) reassures her love for Hugo (Simi Lampert), and that Conrad Birdie will not get in their way.

form.

Developed in 1960, *Bye Bye Birdie* is a satire musical focusing on American life during the 1950's. The play centers on legendary rock star Conrad Birdie (who represents Elvis Presley), just before he leaves to serve in the American army. Conrad's agent, Albert Paterson,

and secretary, Rose Alvarez, create a publicity stunt so Conrad will not be forgotten. They decide to host a contest, and the winner will give Conrad a farewell kiss. Innocent Kim MacAfee, from Ohio, wins the honor but deals with the repercussions of her unhappy father, and jealous boyfriend. Conrad visits her small town, which causes mixed emotions in the community. The musical received a Tony award for best musical, and was developed into a film later on.

As the lights dimmed, the room turned silent, and the spotlight struck the stage. The musical began with an upbeat number and cheerful applause. Although somewhat corny at times,

the characters' catchy one-liners kept the audience in endless laughter.

Costume designer and performer Leah Meadvin wonderfully coordinated the outfits. The fashion choices kept with the theme of the 1950's time period. From the retro

dresses to the "men's" trousers, it was great to see how much effort was put into wardrobe. "I think any performance is always more fun when everything is in color," Meadvin says. The stage comes alive and it brings a "more exciting atmosphere," she adds.

Melodic singing took over the room as Rosie, played by Chaya Kessler, sang with soul and grace. Committed to her character, Kessler gave an enchanting performance, giving reason for the audience's lively applause after singing "Spanish Rose." Kessler reflects on her experience with Rosie's exotic character. "I'm used to being type-casted as the sweet, innocent princess. It was a challenge, and I loved it!"

The play ran smoothly from beginning to end, thanks to student director Aliza Slepian. Everyone was on cue and made the audience feel as if it were a Broadway show. Watching a background prop fall on the floor did not faze anyone. The actors remained professional as they carried on with the show. Slepian adds, "There were moments when I was just amazed." After months and months of preparing, the show flawlessly came together. As for the highlight of the musical, Slepian says, "When I finally got to sit down in the audience and watch the actors."

Comparing the dress rehearsal

to the actual play, was watching two completely different performances. During the dress rehearsal, actors seemed unsure of their lines, yet none of that hesitance was shown in the actual play. Confident that the musical would come together, Kessler explains, "I was a little nervous, but I knew when it came down to the show, we would take it more seriously," says Kessler.

The chemistry between the performers appeared organic and effortless. "Everyone built connections with each other," Slepian says, though when beginning to assemble the play, she made sure that the concept of the play was always a focus.

As for Conrad Birdie's number one fan, Ursula, played by Zeeva Levine, shares her joy for the arts. "I just love musicals and I was excited to be in whatever they were putting on," says Levine. Choosing her favorite scene, Levine admits, "I loved all of the ones where I got

to scream, because that was so much fun." Overall, the best part of her experience was "seeing everybody develop their characters."



Julia Siegel

Mr. MacAfee (played by Hannah Dreyfus) is angered by Kim's choice to kiss Conrad Birdie. Pictured here with Mrs. MacAfee (Leah Gottfried).

After a standing ovation, the audience gathered around the cast for pictures, showering them with flowers and hugs. "The musical was entertaining," says sophomore Ariella Kossin. "Everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves. It was a lot of fun." Leaving in smiles, the cast was delighted with their performance as well as the audience's enthusiastic reactions. After three successful shows, Slepian says, "It was amazing."

Smokey Jane's Café: Party Like It's 1999

By Rachel Tzippi King

What were you doing the night of Wednesday, November 30? For many students and alumni, it was a trip back to the 1990's with a "night of music and mocktails" in Stern College Dramatics Society's Smokey Jane's Café.

As promised, Koch auditorium was transformed: the lights were dimmed, and round tables were clustered around a small stage with spotlights on either side. The darkness almost disguised the fact that the promised "mocktails" were really bottles of non-alcoholic beverages such as juice and ginger ale, which were accompanied by teeny squares of Entenmanns cakes and small plates of packaged cookies. The attention to the delicious desserts took a backseat however, as the audience crowded in and buzzed with excitement for the upcoming performances.

This year's Smokey Jane's Café producer Leah Gutstein and last year's producer, Stern graduate, and current Ferkauf student Elizabeth Penn obliged in telling the history of the festival. Penn recalled that Smokey Jane's was begun by Elysia Silver in 2008, and

has been an annual SCDS event ever since. "For the first two years there was a lot more funding," explained Penn. "So there was a band backing us, and there were fancy cakes that were ordered, and there were waitresses who served 'drinks', like mocktails. And there were more decorations." Gutstein added that SCDS used to charge \$5 admission, with all proceeds going to needy brides in Gush Katif.

Now, however, the event organizers are lucky to have enough money for plastic wineglasses, although they've done away with the cover charge. Their fun costumes are mostly from home, although co-director Shlomit Friedman admitted that, "I own most of it, because I still wear '90s clothes!"

The program list was full of '90s favorites, ranging from pop hits to country music, alternative rock, and even grunge. "I think it speaks to the student body," performer Leah Powers commented on the theme, adding, "It's a good idea." The audience readily agreed, waving their hands and contributed their singing to all the backup vocals. Unsurprisingly, there were

some technical difficulties, first with the lights and then with the microphones, but the enthusiasm and perseverance of the performers made these mishaps easy to ignore.

The singers were superb. Debra Strashun got the crowd warmed up with some Schlub7, followed by Rivka Lubin, who had the audience swaying along with "What a Girl Wants" by Christina Aguilera. Lea Bekhar added a fun personal touch to another Aguilera favorite, "Come on Over", by singing it in Spanish! Gutstein, scientist by day and diva by night, paraded her attitude with Ace of Base and Shania Twain songs. Friedman pulled off a hilarious parody of Britney Spears with "Hit Me Baby One More Time," and showed off her guitar skills by accompanying more than one performer. Aliyah Guttman gave a strong performance, both singing and rapping, of "Waterfalls" by TLC, while Dana Silver nailed the high notes of "If It Makes You Happy" by Sheryl Crow.

The '90s weren't just about its memorable music. Hannah Tessler displayed some fancy footwork

with an exciting dance routine to a medley of '90s songs. Dina Wecker, who also presided as DJ, surprised the crowd with an entertaining impromptu performance of the opening rap to "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air."

Besides the energetic pop tunes, the singers enchanted with slower, more emotional tunes, such as Rachel Pearlstein's sweet "Kiss Me" by Sixpence None the Richer, Power's melancholy "Killing Me Softly" by the Fugees, and SCDS president Sonia Shafner's expressive "I Don't Want to Wait" by Paula Cole. Tessler lent her soulful and melodious voice to "Ironic" by Alanis Morissette, as well as "Wonderwall" by Oasis.

Chaya Kessler, also a co-director, captivated the audience with the entertaining "Spanish Rose," a preview from the SCDS musical, *Bye Bye Birdie*. She then slipped off her high heels and into a leather jacket for a powerful rendition of Nirvana's "Heart-Shaped Box." Another compelling show came from Penn, who sang "Where Have All the Cowboys Gone" by Paula Cole and "Criminal" by Fiona Ap-

ple with a poignancy and charm that wowed the crowd. Another top performer of the evening was Nurita Abramowitz, with her intense rendition of "You Oughta Know" by Alanis Morissette, and the show-stealing "I Will Always Love You" by Whitney Houston. She was cheered back on stage for an encore, for which she chose "Call Me When You're Sober" by Evanescence, which, though not a '90s song, perfectly showcased her vocal range and awesome musical talent.

Altogether, the singers and performers gave an impressive show, not only because of their beautiful voices, but also because of the great confidence displayed on the stage. One audience member, Rachel, SCW '14, commented after the show that, "I thought it was going to be like a high school kind of talent show, but everyone was really, really good." Like all the other fun and fabulous SCDS productions, it was truly an event not to be missed!

ARTS AND CULTURE

How to Pack for a Week's Vacation in a Small Carry-on Bag

By Erica Hasten

As winter break approaches and finals come to an end, many students anticipate flying to new places across the world for our 13-day vacation. Many will travel to the warm beaches of Florida or the Bahamas, some will plan skiing trips in the mountains of Colorado or Vermont, others will fly to Israel to visit family and friends, and we out-of-towners will go back home. Regardless of where our destinations will be, one fact remains true for all: we will all need to pack our bags before we leave. With many of the airlines charging to check baggage, I thought that it would be useful if I taught the masses how to pack for a seven-day vacation in one small carry-on.

While this may seem like a lofty goal and impossible to those who have a strange obsession with shoes (I'm guilty of this phenomenon), as a frequent flier and out-of-towner, I have experience with traveling light. My carry-on is 22 inches long, 14 inches wide, and 8.5 inches deep. (The average measurement allowance for airlines is 22" x 14" x 9".) It rolls on wheels for easy transport, and it fits perfectly in the overhead bin of a plane. I personally am a fan of this bag because it also has many pockets and compartments within. I have been using this bag on airplanes for years and highly recommend getting a carry-on that is similar.

Now that you have your bag, it is time to know what exactly to bring. In order to avoid over-packing, I suggest making a list beforehand. It is also helpful to lay out everything you are planning on bringing before packing. It is also helpful to look up the weather conditions of your final destination. Even if you are traveling to a warm location, it is possible that there will be rain or cold weather; therefore, try to prepare beforehand for non-beach themed days as well.

THINGS YOU NEED:

Underwear, Socks and Undershirts. It is true that I also sometimes suffer from over-packing tendencies. However, there are some items that you can never have too many of. Underwear, socks, and undershirts should be packed in plenty, meaning you can bring some extra. I would bring about 8-10 pairs of each of these vital items. These are articles of clothing that should not be re-

worn. It also helps to store these items in a large Ziploc or mesh bag. I tend to put these items inside one of the other compartments of my carry-on.

Travel-Size Toiletries. It is also important to pack a small toiletry bag for makeup, deodorant, toothbrush, face wash, and compact hairbrush, and any medications. Buy the travel size versions, because if you bring larger containers of liquid, they will be taken away by airport security. Walgreens, CVS, Duane Reade, and many other pharmacies have a travel-size toiletry section where you can buy many of these products for under \$2.00. I personally stock up on these items for any time I travel.

Bathing Suit. Even if you are going to a cold location, it is likely that the hotel or place you are staying has an indoor pool or hot tub on the premise. If you are going to a cold location it is best to bring just one; but if you will be lounging on the beach, it is best to bring two or three.

Sneakers and Sports Bra. These items are a must, if you plan on working out at all during your vacation. Sneakers can be worn on the plane to save packing room. You also only really need one sports bra. Let's be honest here. You probably will not work out more than once in this week of vacation. And for the over-achievers and generally fit people, you can re-wear the sports bra up to three times without it being really, truly disgusting. (I have proven this theory true with soccer practice and pre-season. Sports bras can be worn more than once). This also includes bringing clothes to work out in.

THINGS TO LEAVE AT HOME:

School books. Finals have ended. Leave all text books, notebooks, and any general school-related work at home. It is time to relax. No more thinking about school.

Shoes. This is an item I generally tend to bring too many of. There is no reason to bring more than three pairs of shoes for a week-long vacation. Due to my "shoe-aholic" tendencies, I struggle with leaving my shoes behind. But I normally regret the decision to bring six pairs for seven days. It just adds unnecessary weight and takes up way too much space in my carry-on. Packing shoes depends on your location. Generally speaking, you can get away with three

basic shoe types. This includes shoes for Shabbat (like nice flats—can also be worn for night activities), shoes for daytime activities (like sneakers or closed-toe shoes), shoes for weather (flip-flops or boots). That is all you need. No more.

Blow drier. Blow driers normally take up a lot of space (unless it is travel-sized—yes, those exist now!), and they are normally not needed. Many hotels offer blow driers, and if you are staying with family or friends they are bound to have one that you can borrow. Your hair will not suffer.

Chunky Sweaters/Sweatshirts. It is also important to remember that you can wear any winter apparel on the plane instead of putting it all in your carry-on. This tactic will save you a lot of packing room, and will enable you to fit more into your small bag.

Just be practical. While packing efficiently may be difficult for some, it is important to take into account your personal needs when you travel. Every person has different vacation spots and therefore different needs. If you are going to Florida, you may not need winter boots; likewise in Colorado, you may have no need to pack flip-flops. When packing light, just ask yourself *Do I need exactly 10 t-shirts, or can I wear the same shirt twice?* If the answer is yes, then eliminate a few shirts. I have included my personal packing lists to guide you to narrow down your choices. But if you don't mind paying the extra \$25.00 to check a large bag, feel free to do so.

When testing my theories, this is what I packed for my seven-day virtual vacation. I had plenty of room for all of the items included on these lists. I was also able to successfully close my carry-on and lift it.

HOW TO PHYSICALLY PACK YOUR BAG

In general, I use the approach that larger items should go in your carry-on before smaller items. Pack your larger sweats or cardigans before shorts and T-shirts. While this seems simple enough, it is a huge help in fitting everything effectively. I personally always slide in shoes last in between

WARM WEATHER

- 10 pairs of underwear
- 5 pairs of socks
- 8 undershirts
- 2 bras (1 sports bra optional, or just 1 extra regular)
- 2 jean skirts (or one jean skirt and one pair of jeans) wear one on plane
- 1 black skirt (or nicer pants)
- 5 t-shirts (wear 1 on plane)
- 3 long sleeve shirts/cardigans
- 2 pairs of pj shorts and 2 Hanes t-shirts
- 2 bathing suits
- 1 nice shirt for Shabbat
- 1 Shabbat outfit/dress
- 1 pair of flip flops
- 1 pair of flats/nice sandals
- 1 sneakers/closed-toe shoes (wear on plane)
- 1 sweatshirt (wear on plane)

COLD WEATHER

- 10 pairs of underwear
- 10 pairs of socks or tights
- 8 undershirts
- 2 bras (1 sports bra optional, or just 1 extra regular)
- 2 jean skirts (or one jean skirt and one pair of jeans) wear one on plane
- 1 black skirt (or nicer pants)
- 5-6 long sleeve shirts/cardigans
- 1 pair of pj shorts and 2 Hanes t-shirts
- 1 pair of sweatpants
- 1 bathing suit
- 1 nice shirt for Shabbat
- 1 Shabbat outfit/dress
- 1 pair of boots (wear on plane)
- 1 pair of flats
- 1 sneakers/closed-toe shoes
- 2 sweatshirts (wear 1 on plane)

my other stuff. It is also important to neatly fold everything that goes into your carry-on. If you try to just throw everything into your bag, I guarantee that you will not be able to fit a quarter of what you need in that small of space. Another tip is to use the outer pockets of your carry-on in addition to the main space. This way you can squeeze in even more articles of clothing. I generally reserve this space for underwear and socks.

I hope that these tips and lists are helpful for you. Happy travels and good luck!

Puzzle Corner: Seminary Reunion

By Davida Kollmar

It's December, which means that it's the time of year when many seminary Rabbis come in from Israel and have reunions with their students. The seminary that I attended is no different. On December 9-10, my school had its reunion, which was a great time to catch up with friends who I haven't seen in a while and who are now attending various colleges. In addition to attending different schools, my friends all have different majors and are involved in different extra-curricular activities. Can you match the friend to her school, major, and activity?

The five students are the one who goes to Stern, the one in the Israel Club (who does not attend NYU), the one majoring in Economics, Sarah, and Tehillah.

The student who is on her school's Hillel board is majoring in Anthropology.

The student who attends Queens College is really nice about going to other schools to see performances by Sarah's acapella group and by another friend's Drama Society.

When we laughed that Orli is majoring in Biology even though she is not a Stern student, she replied, "At least I don't major in psychology like the one who goes to Barnard!"

Chevy, an English major, was interested in hearing about Yael's work in her school's Social Justice Society; neither girl goes to NYU or Penn.

The first correct response emailed to art@yuobserver.com will win a \$15 iTunes gift card!

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ARTS AND CULTURE

2011 Hanukkah Music Video Roundup

By Atara Arbesfeld

Well it's that time of year again. As Jews of all affiliations around the world scrounge around for last-minute Hanukkah presents, candles, and latke and sufganiyot recipes, a torrent of Internet viral videos of Hanukkah jingles emerged these past few weeks, including some from familiar Orthodox music groups. Let's have a look at the top five:

"Miracle" by the Maccabeats. With last year's Hanukkah hit "Candlelight" many were anticipating a huge comeback, and indeed, the Maccabeats did not fail to disappoint with another fantastic performance. This time however, they decided to cover a Matisyahu song without altering the lyrics, as their meaning speaks for itself, capturing the essence of the holiday. Just like last year, the each group member appears in a different color background, and like their other videos since "Candlelight," the focus turns away from the group to make room for special appearances. In addition to the shots of adorable kids gathered around with their families to light the menorah, actress from the CBS show "The Big Bang Theory" Mayim Bialik made a celebrity appearance as well, with her own children. Another surprise celebrity appearance is President Barack Obama, who at the end thanks the group for their "outstanding performance." Some inside jokes like the video director Uri Westrich with his familiar purple beret trying out his latke-flipping skills with a few members of the group, Noah Jacobson wearing his NASA space suit, and the Greeks making yet another appropriate came performance by sprinting in the park with their Toga garb and torches at hand in the opening scenes. There is also a *mitzvah* element to their production with their promotion of

the Gift of Life's Miracle Match campaign. Go Maccabeats!!

Chorus: "Do you believe in miracles?/Am I hearing you, am I seeing you?/Eight nights, eight lights and these rites keep me right/Bless me to the highest heights with your miracle"

"Hanukkah Rights" by Six13. Really witty and humorous parody of the recent Occupy Wall Street Protests with lots of name dropping of celebrities from Mel Gibson to Nick Lachey. The song combines a "We Are the World" style pop with a rap interlude. The video opens with an advertisement for vodka with Christmas quality for a Hanukkah price and from there the group goes on to complain about the second-rate treatment Hanukkah receives from having no days off from work, no plays by Charles Dickens, no songs by Justin Bieber, and the lack of diet-friendly food options thanks to oil-drenched latkes and sufganiyot. Kermit the Frog makes a celebrity appearance together with some other celebrity impersonations of Elvis and pop singer Drake.

Chorus: "So we'll fight for Hanukkah rights/As we light our Hanukkah lights/And we'll feel the winds of change begin to blow/... 'cause we've come so far and yet far to go."

"Holiday Party" by Pella Singers has most catchy tune of this season's round of Hanukkah videos with a lot of "la's" and a lot of "whoa's". A parody of Hot Chelle Rae's "Tonight Tonight," "Holiday Party" features Hanukkah together with other Jewish holidays. The video features shots of the group at a rooftop party drinking wine and having a good time with some interludes of the group dressing up in costumes for Purim,

reading from a haggadah and holding a bowl of matzah ball soup on Passover, and making sure to chow down in as much food as possible before the Yom Kippur fast.

Chorus: "We're celebratin' tonight tonight/There's a holiday party gonna have a good time/Tonight tonight gonna eat lots of food and drink up some wine/No matter where you're from now you'll celebrate it somehow/ Ya that's right that's right tonight tonight"

"Those Were The Nights" by Yeshiva Boys Choir.

How could anyone not let out an "awwww!" when seeing these adorable boys play guitar and dress up as Bubby and Zaidie? The nostalgic lyrics about a memory of a family Hanukkah party were brought out through collaboration with Jewish music impresario Eli Gerstner and Yossi Toiv with music by Yossis Orchestra. Similar to a Peanuts cartoon, the boys are the stars of the show with no adults — including choir director Yossi Newman — to be seen. One cannot help but crack a smile at the mischief and fun the boys clearly display on the video.

Chorus: "Those were the nights of Hanukkah I remember long ago/When our family got together little eyes aglow/Multi-colored candles burning as the joyous songs were sung/How I miss the menorah lights when we were all so young"

"Hanukkah Jewish Rock of Ages" by Aish HaTorah is a video for families of all



We've come a long way, baby.

ages. Those who appreciate classics from the 1950s-2000s will definitely love their renditions of telling the Hanukkah story through their parodies of the songs of Jerry Lee Lewis, the Beatles, Steppenwolf, the Bee Gees, JourneyMC Hammer, Sacha Baron Cohen, and Maroon Five. The choreography of the Israeli men's dance team Lions of Zion (who previously performed in "Rosh Hashanah Rock Anthem" for Aish) is phenomenal, and the costumes for each song segment looked appropriately authentic, especially the neon-colored fitted shirts and Afro wigs in the "Seeing the Light" disco segment. The shot of the two of the members with leather jackets on a motorcycle in the Steppenwolf song is also priceless.

Chorus for parody of MC Hammer's "U Can't Touch This": "Bum budda bum, buda bum/Gotta eat this!"

Ma'aleh Film School Comes to YU

By Lindsay Wess

For many Orthodox Jews, choosing a career isn't that simple. Will I be able to observe Shabbat? Will I be able to take off for all of the *chagim* [holidays]? Choosing a career based on desire isn't necessarily practical for many observant Jews.

One of the most difficult careers to break into is the film industry. It is one of the most competitive, if not *the* most competitive, industries in which to work. Whether in Los Angeles, Paris, or Tel Aviv, the film industry has no time to take a vacation every week from Friday at sunset till Saturday at sundown. Production is a 24/7 job with no sick days. Unfortunately, this is a roadblock for many religious Jews.

On November 15, Yeshiva University hosted the Ma'aleh Film School and showcased three of its short films at the Wilf Campus: "Shabbos Mother," "House 103," and "The Orthodox Way." The only Orthodox film school in the world, located in Jerusalem, Ma'aleh allows students the opportunity to write, produce, direct, and edit films while still maintaining a religious lifestyle.

Approached by Ma'aleh, YU accepted its offer to screen the films in a night sponsored by SOY, YCSA, YSU, TAC, SCWSC, SYMSSC, MTV, and the Israel Club. President of YCSA Yoni Weg had been in direct contact with Ma'aleh and was the main event coordinator. Leora Niderberg, TAC president, said, "We thought it was a great idea to showcase all of the Jewish talent out there and the expression of Jewish issues through film." As to the main question of whether the night was a success, Niderberg went on to say, "I think more people could have benefited from the event, but the experience was undoubtedly a success for the 100 or so people there."

"I thought it was a great mixture of comedy and drama and historical events mixed into one great movie night," said sophomore Deena Gilboa.

The night started off with the film "Shabbos Mother," which deals with the daily struggles of finances, marriage, and *shalom bayit* [domestic harmony]. With all of the Jewish humor tastefully placed in this drama, laughter filled the room. By the end of film, the cred-

its rolled and everyone broke out into applause.

Keeping up with the high energy, the second film, "House 103," immediately began. With a less humorous take on Israeli crises, this heart-wrenching documentary shows the devastation of the Gush Katif community being exiled from its homes. Only silence and sighs of sadness swept the room as the film successfully showed a family's nightmare coming to reality.

To lighten the mood, the third film chosen was "The Orthodox Way," a romantic comedy about two people who accidentally end up on a blind date with each other. Like every romantic comedy, the film has a cheerful ending that left the audience in applause and laughter.

The room then turned into an open forum for questions about the three films and film school. Many hands went up and Ma'aleh Director Neta Ariel smiled, excited to answer everyone. Although questions ranged from the summer program Ma'aleh is offering for American students to technical questions about the films showed, Ariel answered all and stayed later

to answer students personally. She also discussed the obstacles observant Jews in Israel face in the film industry. Not only can schedules be a conflict but inappropriate context is a large component of many shows and films in today's market. While Ariel explains, "It's not correct to think we only film Orthodox issues," she makes a point of saying that the language used in Ma'aleh films is still different from the language in other films.

While Ariel feels that many religious Jews aspire to a career in the media, she speculated, "They aren't brave enough." She explained that for most Orthodox people, filmmaking doesn't seem like a serious job compared to being a lawyer or doctor. On the other hand, she went on to say "many people need to express themselves and you can influence people through your story. It's for the talented and brave people."

The event met all of Ariel's expectations. The audience's joyful demeanor was received loud and clear. She believed a large part of what made the event so successful had to do with the directors of the

films, who are around the same age of YU students. "I think this is a very nice connection," Ariel said.

Ariel closed the evening discussing the summer program Ma'aleh is offering. The program will begin in July and end the first week of August. She emphasized that anyone in college without a filmmaking background can enroll in the program. "We will teach you everything you have to know," said Ariel. Courses will range from background information about cinema to in-depth practical courses on cinematography, editing, and interviewing to a workshop about creating a short film, which will be the closing project.

Filmmaking is a career most YU students could not envision themselves doing as observant Jews. Ma'aleh makes this possible with an academic calendar based around the Jewish holidays and by allowing students the opportunity to develop films while not feeling pressured to use an inappropriate plot and coarse language.



Sarit Bassal



Sarit Bassal



Lindsay Wess



A Festival at Stern



Lindsay Wess



Chaia Wiznitzer



Chaia Wiznitzer

