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A Tribute to Dr. Charles Raffel



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Shalva Ginsparg The YU community was shocked and saddened by the untimely passing of Dr. Charles Raffel (1950-2014), beloved teacher and assistant professor of Jewish Philosophy at Stern College. News of his death sparked an outpouring of emotion from students and faculty; the void created by his passing and the absence of his trademark blend of humor, scholarship, and warmth have been sorely felt by the Stern community.

Dr. Raffel was born in Boston and grew up in Dorchester. After he attended Wesleyan University for his undergraduate studies, he spent a year and a half at YU in the RIETS beit midrash, where he sat in on the shiurim of Rav Schachter. During this time, he also developed a close relationship with the Rav. In 1973, he began his graduate studies at Brandeis in the department of Judaic and Near Eastern studies. There he met Dr. Jay Berkovitz, current professor of Judaic and Near Eastern studies and director of the Center for Jewish studies at Amherst. Though the two students were enrolled in different tracks, (Dr. Raffel was going for Jewish philosophy and Dr. Berkovitz for Jewish history), they were both from Boston and both observant (at a time when this was somewhat rare), and so became instant friends. They also shared a deep admiration for the Rav, whose teachings became an ongoing top-

ic of conversation throughout their forty years of friendship.

Looking back on their time in graduate school together, Dr. Berkovitz describes Dr. Raffel, whom he called Chuck, "as a brilliant student—he had a keen intellect and had excellent text skills. Perhaps above all, he had the extraordinary ability to understand complex issues and to frame them in a way that illuminated them with unusual clarity. There were many instances in graduate school and long after when we would share with each other things we wrote or were thinking about. Chuck always succeeded in identifying the core issues, however clouded they were."

It was at Brandeis that Dr. Raffel met the late Dr. Marvin Fox, a scholar of Maimonidean philosophy and one of most formative influences on Dr. Raffel's scholarship. When Dr. Fox came to Brandeis in 1974, students in the Department of Judaic and Near Eastern studies instantly gravitated to him. However, the closest bond developed between Dr. Fox and Dr. Raffel. Recalls Dr. Berkovitz, "In Professor Fox, Chuck had found a rebbe who combined the lomdus (learning) of the beit midrash with the critical scholarship of the university. In Chuck, Professor Fox found a student who was capable of profoundly appreciating the subtleties of Jewish and general philosophy
Continued on page 7

The Future of GPATS: Program Makes Changes to Ensure Sustainability

Hannah Dreyfus-Reinstein

YU's strained financial situation has prompted the scrupulous review, and in some cases dissolution, of many university programs. GPATS, Yeshiva University's M.A. program in Biblical and Talmudic interpretation for women, was similarly appraised in recent months. The program, with its own faculty, no income from tuition dollars, and relatively few participants (this year's class has eighteen students total, eight of whom are graduating), is an expensive one. There was discussion about cutting the program.

However, due in large part to the efforts of Rabbi Kenneth Brander, vice president of Yeshiva University and dean of the Center for the Jewish Future (CJF), the program will be continuing. "We are committed to ensuring the sustainability and longevity of this invaluable program," said Rabbi Brander. The pro-

gram will incur several significant changes in order to ensure its sustainability.

The program will remain a credited, free M.A. program, but the curriculum will have a new focus on pedagogy. Rabbi Brander is working closely with Rabbi J.J. Schacter, senior scholar at the CJF and Stern professor, to create a curriculum that will "prepare students for careers outside the Beit Midrash." Currently, over fifty of the program's alumni are Jewish educators, synagogue scholars or otherwise active contributors to Jewish communal life "There are several areas of interest I'd like to layer into the program," said Rabbi Schacter, who has hitherto been involved with GPATS only on an ad hoc basis. "I want students to have exposure to public speaking in a more formal way, more rigorous time learning how to prepare shiurim and
Continued on page 4

Several New Course Offerings for Fall 2014 Despite Budgetary Concerns

Rina Haller The course offering list for fall 2014 boasts several new course titles and professors, but also reflects the efforts of the departments to accommodate budgetary concerns and limited resources.

"As a department we have been thinking about how to continue to meet the needs of our majors and of all of our students with less faculty and fewer resources," said Dr. Nora Nachumi, English department head. Dr. Nachumi discussed several possible changes for the future, such as reducing the number of electives offered per semester and changing the types of assignments required.

In a similar vein, the head of the Jewish Studies department, Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel, noted that all department heads have been working to replace "any departing full-time faculty using adjuncts." Mrs. Yael Leibowitz, who will be making Aliyah with her family, will be replaced by Mrs. Moriah Weiss as an adjunct instructor of two Tanakh classes. Mrs. Weiss, an honors graduate of SCW, is a doctoral candidate at the Bernard Revel Graduate School and has been a TA in Tanakh for several years.

Dr. Joseph E. Luders, head of the political science department, commented that "the university's financial situation

has required that we find ways to economize in deciding on our course offerings. We hope to make use of generous contributions and other available resources to continue offering a full range of provocative courses.

Remarkably, the Political Science department has actually increased the number of course offerings for fall 2014. Next semester, ten courses will be offered instead of the usual eight, and it is likely that the same number will be offered in the spring. Enrollment in these courses has been very strong, and Dr. Luders hopes that interested students will continue to take courses in the department to learn more about political science, to develop their analytical skills, and to be more effective democratic citizens.

Professor Julie Browne has moved to a full-time position in political science and will be co-teaching a course on social revolution with Art History professor Marnin Young in Paris this summer. Professor Cynthia Bernstein (a 2006 Stern College alumnus) joins the faculty from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs program and the White House. Professor Matt Holbreich will return to teach Great Political Thinkers (an introductory course
Continued on page 3

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Criticism, Community and Courage: A Last Message From Your Editor-in-Chief

Hannah Dreyfus-Reinstein

Of all the editorials I've written, writing this one has by far been the most daunting. That is, naturally, because it is my last—my last time penning my thoughts on paper as a college student; sentimentality might be hard to avoid. Endings seem to demand some sort of closure. But closure is perpetually evasive—the harder you seek, the dimmer the tempting prospect grows. Perhaps that is why it is well into the wee hours of the morning (deadline fast approaching) and I'm still struggling to spin my rambling thoughts into one cohesive article.

I'll begin with the most important: I'm proud of this paper. I began this year with a request of the student body to please write. And, to my great satisfaction, so many of you have. Bravely, you have put yourselves down on paper and contributed to making this one of the most historic years in *Observer* history. Our readership has skyrocketed—an issue can attract up to 10,000 readers on our website, numbers that far surpass anything we've seen before. We have reached far beyond the Stern community. Our readers have come to expect quality and diversity in our articles. Our print issues have steadily increased in page count, with more and more articles to include each month. I have no doubt that the *Observer* will continue to progress and accomplish.

I have personally learned a tremendous amount from serving as editor in chief. For three years, I've never missed an issue of the *Observer*. I did not keep any sort of journal during my undergraduate years, but the articles I've written have traced my development with equal accuracy. I can watch my thought processes change and adjust not just from one year to the next, but from one arti-

cle to the next. This recognition replaced fear of being judged for my opinions with acceptance that these opinions might very well change. One who is not afraid to re-evaluate his/her opinions need never be hesitant to voice them.

I've learned not to be afraid to make mistakes. Those who view writing as a destination are bound to fear wrong turns. Those who view writing as a journey allow missteps to chart the road. It is liberating to realize that you're allowed to later disagree with an opinion you've previously voiced. While the written word is more permanent than most mementos,

It's not always easy to put yourself down on paper for the world to judge and criticize. But take it from a girl who has never missed an issue: when you look back, it's always worth it.

it does not preclude reassessment.

The ability to reexamine goes hand-in-hand with the ability to gracefully respond to criticism. Over the course of these three years, I've been criticized, called a threat (that was an exciting moment, I must admit), compared to the former Soviet Union and countered personally many times. While I think ad hominem attacks unfortunately base, I do not resent criticism. I have been challenged to clarify, defend and sometimes alter my position. With those who disagree respectfully, I have had fruitful and rewarding conversations. With those who disagree bullheadedly, a conversation was never their agenda in the first place.

A powerful aphorism that has greatly impacted my journalistic ethic is this: only care about gaining the respect of those you respect. Many will disagree. Some will scoff. Others will taunt. Most will misread or misunderstand. But if what you intended to say is

clear to you and to those whose opinion you respect, there is no need to falter. Even if later you reevaluate, if you stand behind the words you write when you write them, you won't regret printing them.

Perhaps, on the precipice of that thing thus far referred to as "real life," I am naïve and idealistic. But, truth be told, I would not want to leave my undergraduate experience any other way. I do have the rest of life to become cynical and wry. I am sure I will look back on what I've written over these three years, this editorial included, and laugh. But each piece is a testament to who I was and I am a different person for having writing it.

While I am pontificating (and I guess it is only my right as this is my last editorial), I've like to share one more realization that has little to do with writing, and everything to do with the undergraduate experience. My undergraduate years have shown me that college is more about community than education. College is the place to create friendships and make connections; the forum to spin a network of peers as sinewy as a spider's web. Yeshiva University, and especially Stern College, has provided me with a web of exceptional security. If just for the community alone, I'm glad I attended this university.

To conclude (and with sadly little closure): thank you, Stern community, for letting me serve as your editor in chief. Thank you teaching for me to be courageous and vulnerable on paper. Thank you for reading what I've written, and responding. But, most importantly, thank you guys for writing. It's not always easy to put yourself down on paper for the world to judge and criticize. But take it from a girl who has never missed an issue: when you look back, it's always worth it.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Syms Student Publishes Book on NBA 3

New Curriculum at Sy Syms 4

Stomp Out The Stigma 4

Open Hearts Open Doors 5

Lag B'Omer Celebrations 5

The Rav and Rebbe 5

Tribute to Dr. Raffel 6

Health Corner 7

Ann Peters Book Reading 9

The Lost Act of Gentleness 9

Andy Warhol: Icon from Digital to Pop 10

Culture in the City Summer Edition 10

Bring Back Our Girls 11

Does Money Empower or Victimize? 11

Interview with Malka Simkovich 12

Prodigious Creativity 13

Fed Up With Junk Food 14

The Power of Smiling 14

Are Pools Dangerous? 15

Controlling Parasites 15



Lizzie Rozentsvayge and Rachel Miriam Rosenfeld

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Syms Student Publishes Book on NBA

NEWS

ADENA KLEINER
SHALVA GINSPARG

Shalva Ginsparg Business strategies learned in the classroom have quickly gone from the hypothetical to the practical for Efraim Wakschlag, a graduating YU senior from Silver Spring, Maryland and long-time sports enthusiast. As an accounting major and marketing minor at Sy Syms, Wakschlag combined his business education with his love of sports to develop, market, and publish his recently-released novel on the NBA, entitled *10 Squared*. Wakschlag also serves as the general manager of Hazan Sports Management, a sports agency founded by fellow Sy Syms student Daniel Hazan ('14) that recently made the news when one of the players it represents declared for the 2014 NBA Draft.

The idea for *10 Squared* first took root in

2012, when, as part of a CJF summer mission, Wakschlag interned for an accounting firm in South Bend, Indiana. With his evenings free, Wakschlag had time to brainstorm an outline for his book. *10 Squared*, as the name implies, is comprised of 10 different top-ten lists about different aspects of the NBA. Some of the items on the list may strike NBA fans as controversial, such as Wakschlag's claim that Wilt Chamberlain, over Michael Jordan, is the greatest player in NBA history. According to its Amazon page, *10 squared* "will leave you laughing, pondering, and reconsidering everything you thought was true about the NBA."

Wakschlag was also inspired to write *10 Squared* after reading Bill Simmons's *Book of Basketball*. Though Simmons is a well-respected voice in the sports world, Wakschlag took issue with many of Simmons's claims and wanted a set the record straight.

When school resumed in the fall, Wakschlag continued to write, sometimes skipping class when the writing bug hit particularly hard. (The book is dedicated to all the friends who took notes for him when he missed class to work on his book.) After he finished a draft, he decided to self-publish it. He had his sisters Naomi ('15) and Adina ('16) review the book, hired a professional editor, and enlisted the help of a family friend, Avigayil Niman, to format the book so it would fit the standards

of the self-publisher. "I couldn't have published my book if not for the wonderful people that helped me," Wakschlag said.

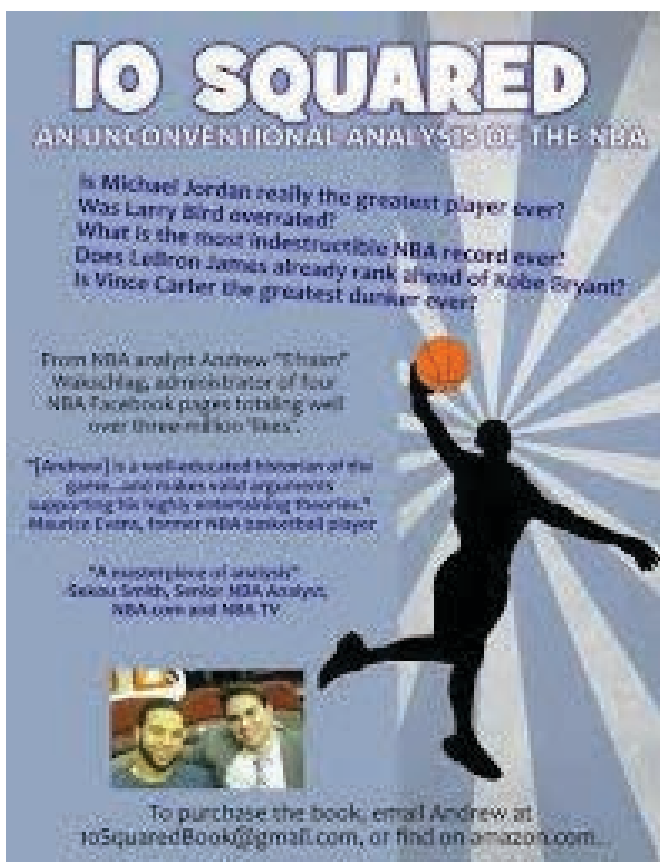


Wakschlag's business education at Sy Syms proved especially useful when it came time to market the book. He compiled blurbs for his back cover by sending advanced copies of the book to athletes and NBA analysts that he connected to on LinkedIn. In order to generate buzz, he posted comments about the book on the four NBA Facebook pages he administers, which have a combined 3 million likes. He also created a Facebook page called "*10 Squared*", on which he regularly posted updates about the publishing process.

Wakschlag describes the YU community as "very supportive" of his book, and jokes that "many people know me as the guy that sits and writes during my free time" or as "the guy that goes crazy during basketball

games in the Morg lounge." He plans to promote the book within the YU community by posting flyers around the Wilf Campus and arranging for the books to be available for sale at Nagels Bagels, a mini-mart in the lobby of the Gottesman library.

The feedback thus far has been very positive. Wakschlag has already sold a number of copies of *10 Squared* on Amazon and was featured in an online Jewish newspaper. Wakschlag is not sure if the success of *10 Squared* will change the direction of his plans to become an accountant. What he does know is that he will continue to be involved with Hazan Sports Management and to use the business know-how that he gained in the classroom to spark fresh and passionate debate about the game of basketball.



Several New Course Offerings for Fall 2014 Despite Budgetary Concerns

Continued from page 1 in political philosophy), which wrestles with the great questions of political life concerning justice, authority, obedience, and individual rights. This fall, Professor Adina Levine (a Stern College and Harvard Law graduate) will be returning to teach her comparative US and Talmudic law class. Also, Professor Joel Strauss will be teaching a nuts-and-bolts course about the workings of the legal system, particularly valuable for students interested in pursuing a career in law.

Students may have been surprised to find a new department in the course list:

Women's Studies. According to Dr. Nachumi, who will be teaching the single Women's Studies course being offered next semester, interest in Women's Studies has been present for quite a while, and a significant number of alumni have minored in Women's Studies. In addition, the Women's Studies club organized a number of successful talks and events over the past few years. While Stern does not offer a major in Women's Studies, interested students, especially those pursuing careers that benefit from a background in Women's Studies, such as women's health, have created shaped majors which incor-

porate Women's Studies.

As courses alternate, so will the professors. Dr. Naomi Grunhaus will be on sabbatical during 2014-2015. Her plans for the year, she said, start with her "three substantial papers that need some polishing before they can be sent for publication—one on how R. Jonah Ibn Janah uses chazal in his *Shorashim*, another on how Radak uses chazal in his *sefer* by the same name, and a third on the difference between Radak's *Shorashim* and his commentaries. All of the papers comment on the intersection between linguistics and biblical interpretation." She does not an-

ticipate that any new courses will emerge out of the research she does over the sabbatical, as these are areas she has researched previously, but she hopes to gain a deeper knowledge of the subject matter through her research and "to pass this deeper understanding along to students."

Finally, a much-anticipated addition to the fall course offerings is "Judaism and Democracy," a philosophy/Jewish philosophy Honors course which will be co-taught by former Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks and Rabbi Meir Soloveichik, director of the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought.



The Future of GPATS: Program Makes Changes to Ensure Sustainability

Continued from page 1

lectures, exposure to dealing with boards, pastoral counseling, fund-raising, pedagogy, community organization, and interpersonal relationships.” These “pastoral” skills will leave graduates “better prepared to enter the professional sphere.”

Rabbi Brander stressed that, despite these additions, the program is on “sound academic footing.” “The program will remain a rigorous academic program with supplemental training for the roles that the graduates seem to be engaging,” said Brander. Brander is also intent on providing GPATS women with mentors who are practicing educators or scholars in the field. Additionally, he hopes to increase GPATS engagement with the undergraduate community at Stern.

When asked about the program’s shift in focus, Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel, the current academic director of GPATS, said Rabbi Brander should be contacted with questions, as this new model of GPATS will be developed and administered by the CJF. “We trust that this new model will provide a positive and substantive learning opportunity for our graduates,” he said.

Aside from the curriculum, the other major changes are budgetary. The program will no longer be funded by Stern College, as it has been for several years. In the future, the program will be supported by private donations as well as funding from the Vice President’s office and the CJF, explained Rabbi Brander. These changes will take effect the year after next.

“The current masters program will continue next year with existing funding,” said Dean Bacon. “Subsequently the revised program, with a new emphasis, will be under the CJF umbrella with funding coming from the

CJF. Of course the faculty and administration of Stern College will always be available to consult and help to the extent possible, which is true of our relationship with all YU programs.”

President Joel, after stressing the university’s commitment to the program, added, “Funding for the program has been, and will continue to be, a university matter. GPATS has been primarily funded through the benefaction of Ambassador Alfred Moses and we hope it will continue that way.”

Additionally, while participants used to receive a budget of \$15,000 a year, the yearly stipend will be reduced. The new stipend is still being negotiated. Those currently in the program will not have their stipends reduced. These changes will only go into effect for future students.

Explaining this significant reduction, Dean Bacon said, “Students never paid any tuition for the original GPATS program, nor for the current masters program. Thus there was no income from student tuition. This means that the University needed to set aside a budget to cover all the expenses: salaries, stipends and other costs. . . . As you can see, sustainability of any program that does not directly generate tuition dollars is never certain. The University is committed to this program among others that we believe are important. We need to be both optimistic and realistic as we move forward.”

After these changes go into effect, Rabbi Brander predicts it will be three years until the program can stand on “solid financial footing and solid community footing.”

Adina Poupko, the program manager at the office of student life, will also be taking a more active administrative role in the program. “These changes will by and large be very

positive,” said Poupko, who has been helping the program throughout her time at YU. “A heavier focus on educating women for the opportunities available to them, as well as more focused attention to the internships and pedagogic training will only create women that are even more equipped to be communal leaders.”

Current GPATS students have expressed a wide range of opinions about the changes.

“I think it’s good that someone is taking responsibility for the program and giving it direction,” said Goldie Guy, Barnard ’12 and soon to be GPATS graduate. “Up until now, the program has been rather amorphous. Because no one really knew what the goal of the program was, it was hard to market to others.” Guy, who is interning this year with the staff chaplain at North Shore University Hospital, also feels the new increased focus on pastoral training is important. “I believe Jewish women involved in advanced Torah learning need to be trained pastorally,” said Guy.

Galit Wernick, University of Michigan ’12 and graduating GPATS this year, expressed concerns about the program changes. “I see the goal of GPATS as creating a group of elite female learners,” said Wernick. “I’m concerned that making the program into more of a vocational school will detract from the exclusive focus on learning, and learning for its own sake.” Wernick did, however, qualify that she is “deeply respectful and supportive” of Rabbi Brander’s vision for the program.

Poupko, Rabbi Brander, and Rabbi Schacter all stressed that the level of learning will remain the same despite the curriculum changes. “GPATS, in its core, is remaining the same,” said Poupko. “There will continue to be a phenomenal group of outstanding women who are dedicating two years to learning Torah in a real and significant way.”

Stomp Out The Stigma: YU Students Combat Mental Illness

Shayna Darling According to recent statistics, one in four adults is diagnosed with a form of mental illness. At Yeshiva University, as on other college campuses, many students struggle with depression, anxiety, OCD, or other forms of mental illness. On Tuesday, April 29th, four students—two from YC and two from Stern—bravely came forward to speak publicly about their battles with mental illness at “Stomp Out The Stigma”, an annual event hosted by the Active Minds Club and the Counseling Center.

The night began with some words from Active Minds President Sarah Robinson, who, along with Vice President Devorah Yarmush and Co-President Ely Mendelev, organized the event. Robinson described her experience planning the event as “very rewarding” and revealed that she hopes to expand the club next year. After the four students spoke, representatives from the YU Counseling Center reminded the audience of the services it provides to students.

Of the four students who spoke, two discussed their experiences with clinical depression; another student spoke about her experience with memory loss; and another, about living with borderline personality disorder, a condition that is commonly characterized by emotional instability, anger, unstable interpersonal relationships, and suicidal thoughts or behavior.

For many in the audience, the event was an eye-opener to the challenges fellow classmates face every single day. Tamar Buzaglo (’15) commented that she was “so inspired by the speakers and amazed at their courage to stand up and tell their stories.” The speakers made clear that mental illness is an illness like any other—it is one that can impair daily life, it is not completely curable, and if not treated, it can even be fatal.

However, instead of resigning themselves to their medical conditions, the four students who spoke told stories of perseverance and personal growth. “Stomp Out The Stigma” made it abundantly clear that while mental illness is not 100% curable, it can be treated—and one can still have a successful and happy life with a mental illness.

As long as mental illness remains a taboo topic, people who are suffering will often feel too embarrassed to ask for help. Events such as “Stomp out the Stigma” aim to turn the shame and misunderstanding often associated with mental illness into sympathy and acceptance. As one of the speakers, Marc Fein, stated, “I hope that students left with a greater understanding of mental illness, an awareness of the resources available to receive support, and an appreciation for the ability of individuals with mental illness to live full and happy lives.”

Active Minds is currently in the process of forming a new board for next year. Students who are interested are encouraged to contact Sarah Robinson sometime between now and the beginning of next semester.



New Curriculum at Sy Syms School of Business Culls Praise and Concerns

Sara Olson In an email letter sent to students on April 7th, Dean Moses Pava of the Sy Syms School of Business announced the development of a new curriculum for the business school, set to take effect in the coming academic year. According to the letter, the curriculum was redesigned in order to provide business school students with an updated and comprehensive course of study with more choice and flexibility, while continuing to provide a high-quality education that will give students the skills to compete in the business world.

“My goal since becoming Dean has been to offer students state of the art business courses and majors, and to empower students to take control of their own education,” said Dean Pava. “Each one of us, in a sense, is the entrepreneur of our own career, and this starts in college. The new curriculum brings us closer to this vision.” He also encouraged students to take advantage of the increased elective options and take courses that are “non-traditional” for business students, such as the liberal arts.

The great excitement for many students is the variety that electives provide. With operations management and macroeconomics no longer required, time is now open for electives to step in. For accounting student Rachel Veres (SSB ’15), the change is great. “Accounting is a really precise major, so it’s nice that I can take electives in non-business subjects that I’m really interested in,” she said.

Sima Biederman (SSB ’15), a Management major, concurs with Veres. “I’m actually glad that Operations Management and Macroeconomics aren’t required anymore, even though I might take them anyway, because I’d much rather take a history class or something else enjoyable.”

However, some worry that the withdrawal of certain requirements to make room for electives in other areas of study could harm rather than help. One student expressed concern regarding the reduction of math-related requirements like Macroeconomics in a business school curriculum, since the analytical thinking skills acquired in such courses are crucial in the business world. The absence of math-related courses on a transcript, she said, could have a negative image in the eyes of graduate schools or potential employers.

In addition to select requirements being eliminated, one major has been removed entirely – Human Resources (HR). Current HR major Tova Kay (SSB ’14) strongly disagrees with this decision.

“HR is a growing field, with job options that offer competitive salaries,” said Kay. “It’s a great field for someone who likes business, but also has interests in other areas like psychology, for example.” Kay also noted that potential employers at informational interviews have been impressed that she is focusing on HR.

Yet, while one major may be on the outs, new opportunities are also being ushered in,

in the form of a Business Intelligence and Marketing Analytics concentration. The major was added to give students relevant skills for entering the current business world’s data-driven environment.

“The internet and social media have generated vast amounts of data with hidden information embedded in various websites across the web,” explained Dean Pava. “The new Sy Syms major will teach students how to extract and analyze this information in meaningful ways in order to help businesses, government, and individuals make better decisions. This is a burgeoning industry, still in its infancy, with huge potential impact to help us understand our own world better. This new major will give you specific and highly marketable skills in the high tech economy.”

Despite a few objections, the reception of the new curriculum has been overwhelmingly positive.

“The new curriculum is so much improved,” said accounting major Tova Ross (SSB ’15). “It gives us more flexibility, while still making sure we know a tremendous amount before graduating. It allows us to focus more on the fields that [are related to] our majors, or to take more classes related to what we plan on seeking jobs in. A huge part of why I joined Sy Syms was because I saw from day one that the people in charge are organized and hyper-efficient; I haven’t been let down yet.”

Open Hearts, Open Doors: Social Media Project at Stern Goes Viral

Yaelle Lason Sara Bezaley charmed Liran Weizman.

The now 11-year-old girl had been in a New York City hospital from November of 2009 until April of 2010. In 2013, she contracted pneumonia a second time and had a leg amputation and heart transplant later that spring.

Weizman, a Stern College student, had no clue what to expect when she volunteered to go play games with Sara in her hospital room, but soon had enjoyed their time together watching *Cake Boss* so much, she began staying overnight to give Sara's parents a reprieve.

What seemed like a wonderful friendship between Sara and Liran would soon turn into a whole lot more.

After learning the theories of social media and effective digital marketing, the Media Studies course entitled "Social Media Driving Business Results" at Stern College was given a final project to crowd-fund a campaign of their choice. Crowd-funding is "the practice of funding a project or venture

by raising many small amounts of money from a large number of people, typically via the Internet." The group chose to use Indiegogo, a crowd-funding platform that allows for flexible funding, meaning all money raised will go towards the cause, even if the fixed goal hasn't been reached. Additionally, Indiegogo allows fundraisers to provide small "perks" for supporters to thank them for their donation. The class was split into two groups and many suggestions turned out to be viable options. One group finally chose a project, but soon learned that trying to fundraise and keep up with emails and contacts was hard to do. With a deadline approaching, the group sat down and discussed what type of cause would most need their help and also, elicit a response from the public.

That was when Weizman suggested contacting Bezaley's and finding out what they would need to remodel their home for Sara's needs. She was still in touch with the family and, "wanted to give back to them, because they had given so much to me. And what a better way for people to help her out than to

make her home more open and accessible!"

The group spoke with the Bezaleys and decided that they would raise funds to widen the bathroom doorways so Sara's wheelchair could fit through the door.

The group put together a video set to the Philip Phillips' 'Home', came up with an efficient media strategy, decided on the "perks" for donors, and had pre-written Facebook updates and tweets to send out for the two week long campaign. They set the fundraising goal at \$4,000.

Late Tuesday April 28th, the group launched their campaign "Open Hearts: Open Doors."

They were not prepared for the response.

As soon as the Indiegogo page went live, the group began updating each other through an email chain. Only a few hours after the

campaign, the group had reached 10% of their goal, over \$400. By late that night, they were well over \$1,000.

The next morning, at 10:39 A.M., Weizman wrote, "We made over \$2,000!" By 10:58 A.M., it was at \$3,000. The number was changing quickly, and the group was amazed. In a span of half an hour, the group raised another \$2,000. "What is going on!?" one group member wrote. "Who are these people and where are they coming from? This is amazing!" Another group member spent the day tweeting updates to the YUNews Twitter handle and to Professor Longert, until finally she finally had to tweet only one word, "REACHED."

"I was just shocked and speechless that day," said Yali Cohen, a junior majoring in *Continued on page 16*

FEATURES

YAELE LASSON
MAKENA OWENS

Lag B'Omer Celebrations: Where to Go?

Rina Haller Lag B'Omer is a day of abundant celebration across the Jewish world, and each community from near and far has its own unique festivities. So where are the best La B'Omer celebrations this year? While of course many are in New York, check out a few other merriments around the country. Maybe if you're in the area, you can even go to one yourself!

Meron, Tzfat, Israel. The burial site of Rav Shimon Bar Yochai, whose yartzheit is Lag B'Omer. Nearly 500,000 Jews from diverse and varied backgrounds gather at this kever. For twenty-four hours, dancing, singing, and bonfires line the streets of the small town. Hundreds and possibly thousands of little boys turning three have their hair cut for the first time. Considered a particularly special time to pray, people say Tehilim and learn from the Zohar.

Brooklyn

The Great Parade. A tradition beginning in the 1940s and held whenever Lag B'Omer falls on a Sunday, the parade is organized by Mesibos Shabbos. The parade and fair is geared toward all ages. Last year's parade was attended by over 35,000 children along with their families. Included in the parade is US military marchers, bands representing local yeshivot, floats, and school banners from more than 100 schools. Slated performers are Mordechai ben David, Uncle Moishy, and Benny Friedman.

Yachad's Creative Arts Fair. With artwork displaying the talent of special needs individuals,

live music, and sports tournaments, the event is scheduled for the afternoon.

Cedarhurst: Family Fun Day. Under the auspices of the Chabad of the Five Towns, members of the Five Towns/Far Rockaway community will come out to Andrew J. Parise Park for the nineteenth annual affair. Relay races, a petting zoo, music, food, and dancing will be accompanied by the amazing bike show performers—and of course the customary bonfire.

Leawood, Kansas: Communitywide Lag B'Omer Celebration. Held in Gezer Park, the event will feature musician Sam Glaser. There will be stories around the fire pit and activities for kids, including s'mores.

Hollywood, Florida: Young Israel of Hollywood-Fort Lauderdale. Not just the usual bonfire—Hollywood takes Lag B'Omer to the next level with a kumitz and raffle drawing on Motezi Shabbos. The event turns a bit more upscale with wine, sushi, and desserts.

Phoenix, Arizona: Ahavas Torah events. The "Bonfire of Torah" starts off the evening, followed by a melava malka and a special young adults' party. The next morning starts off with a basketball tournament and family carnival. The local Chabad event includes a rally and magic show.

Regardless of where you are this Lag B'Omer, take the opportunity to celebrate!



The Legacy of the Rav and the Rebbe

Miriam Herst A steady buzz filled Yeshiva University's Lamport Auditorium as over 700 people arrived for the highly anticipated evening titled "Living the Legacy of the Rebbe and the Rav". The discussion focused on the special relationship between the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Reb Menachem Mendel Schneerson, and Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik, featuring prominent speakers from both the YU and Lubavitch communities. YU's Chabad Club, partnering with Chabad of Washington Heights and the Rohr Chabad House at Columbia University, hosted the event. A conversation years in the making, the evening gave some insight into the relationship between two of the greatest leaders of this generation and the commonalities they found despite their differences.

As Rabbi Moshe Weinberger of Yeshiva University noted in his introduction, "Each one was so loved, revered and misunderstood." The controversies surrounding the relationship were not ignored throughout the night; Rabbi Dr. Jacob J. Schacter mentioned the Rav's family and their outrage when his father, the late Rabbi Herschel Schachter, brought the Rav to the Rebbe's farbrengen in 1980 on the tenth of Shvat, the anniversary of the day that the Rebbe accepted his position as the seventh Rebbe of Lubavitch.

The audience's attention was then directed to a video of Rav Soloveitchik attending the farbrengen, and the speakers that followed noted the remarkable encounter. The Rebbe standing both when the Rav arrived and left, the moments that felt like ages as they said their goodbyes and grasped hands, and as Rabbi Yosef Y. Jacobson noted later, "Two giants, two great minds, two gigantic souls. The relationship, the respect, the love is extremely deep, more than will be expressed this evening. When they met at the end of Rav Soloveitchik's stay at the farbrengen, you

saw that they really liked each other. You could see it in their faces. The eyes, the eyes tell a story. And if I'm not mistaken, their eyes told some of the story."

Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, personal secretary to the Lubavitcher Rebbe for over forty years, told of his personal experiences with both the Rav and the Rebbe. Rav Soloveitchik came to Boston in 1933 and in December of that year, Rabbi Krinsky was born. The Rav personally attended his bris. Rabbi Krinsky was one of the first children registered in Maimonides, which was founded by the Rav. Each time he went to Boston, the Rebbe made sure to send him to the Rav. For continued this visits for the next twenty-five years.

When asked about running Chabad programming within a setting like Yeshiva University, the President of the YU Chabad Club, Danny Fordham said, "The relationship between the Lubavitcher Rebbe and Rav Soloveitchik was very fast. Many people don't know the commonalities of hashkafa [outlook] between Chabad and Modern Orthodoxy; the concept of... making a dwelling place in this world, to be involved in this world, active in this world and not to be shaken by it."

The co-presidents of Stern's Chabad club, Chaya Schreiber and Eliana Henderler also offered comment. "This event showcased the relationship of two great luminaries. Each had their own different ray of light they had brought to this world, and yet they shared a unique and congenial friendship. They had such a beautiful, yet often unexplored, relationship and 'The Rebbe and the Rav' gave insight into it. The evening was a perfect blend of the two leaders and their people. It is therefore only fitting that the huge success of this event was clearly displayed by the presence of so many Jews of all different outlooks gathering together in body and spirit of the evening."

A TRIBUTE TO DR. CHARLES RAFFEL; A TEACHER, A MENTOR, A FRIEND, AN INSPIRATION

Continued from page 1

together with rabbinic thought. Those were exciting times, as Jewish studies in the academy was beginning to develop into what it is today, and Professor Fox was a leading figure in that burgeoning field. He was also a role model to us all, but most of all to Chuck."

Under the mentorship of Dr. Fox and the late Professor Alexander Altmann, Dr. Raffel began his doctorate on "Maimonides Theory of Providence," which he completed in 1983.

After graduation from Brandeis, Dr. Raffel worked for the American Jewish Committee, and then joined the faculty of Stern College, where he spent his entire academic career. At Stern, he developed a close relationship with Dr. Ephraim Kanarfogel, current chair of the Rebecca Ivry Department of Jewish Studies at Stern. Rabbi Kanarfogel described Dr. Raffel as the "anchor" of the Jewish philosophy department. Throughout the years, the two shared many meaningful conversations about Jewish scholarship, the memories of which Rabbi Kanarfogel still cherishes:

"Dr. Raffel and I always enjoyed talking about our great teachers, what we learned from them, in terms of both

method and content, and what kinds of exemplary human beings they were: in learning, Rav Soloveitchik and Rav Schachter, and in scholarship, his late Professors Alexander Altmann and Marvin Fox at Brandeis, and my late mentors, Professors Jacob Katz and Yisra'el Ta-Shma of the Hebrew University, among others. We seemed to do some of this all the time—including the last time that we spoke at SCW during the week before Erev Pesach. What always struck me about these conversations was how passionate Dr. Raffel was about truly excellent learning and scholarship, how easily humorous Dr. Raffel was—he used to pick up on 'favorite expressions' and such of his teachers which was indeed a very high form of flattery—and how compassionate and caring he was. His teachers (and mine) not only taught their students how to think and learn, but also how to be *mentschen*. Dr. Raffel assimilated all of these lessons very well and as such, it was always a joy to speak with him. I will miss him and these conversations very much."

Dr. Raffel also worked closely with Dr. David Shatz, professor of philosophy and co-chair of the philosophy department at Stern. Dr. Shatz and Dr. Raffel

were colleagues for over 35 years and their offices in Stern were next door to each other. In a tribute to Dr. Raffel which he delivered at the SCW awards ceremony on May 1st, Dr. Shatz described his long-time colleague as a person who was "full of insight—about everything: ideas, people, situations."

About Dr. Raffel's skills as a teacher, Dr. Shatz remarked: "His classes were vintage him: an astonishingly seamless blend of informality and rigor, hilarity and intellectual excitement. Chuck cared deeply about his students: he cared about their intellectual and personal growth, he cared about their careers and their futures."

In the poignant conclusion to his tribute, Dr. Shatz addressed Dr. Raffel, "Chuck, you have left a legacy—a lega-



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cy of probably thousands of students for whom you opened up the world of Jewish thought and whom you inspired, and who can—thanks to you—inspire their children. You have left a legacy of colleagues and friends whose lives you touched and for whom you were precious. You will never be forgotten; and remembering you will continue to bring us light."

Hannah Rozenblat There are so many things that Dr. Charles Raffel was for his students every year. Beyond simply his personal and professional accomplishments, Dr. Raffel had a profound effect on the students who took his classes – whether they were only in one of his classes or took them repeatedly through their years in Stern or were fortunate enough to work with Dr. Raffel as a mentor. Both students who barely knew him and students who developed close relationships with him admired Dr. Raffel for his kindness, understanding, sensitivity to others, and sincerity.

The news of his passing was shocking and saddening, leaving a gaping hole in Stern's Judaic department. Dr. Raffel had been an essential and beloved part of the Jewish Philosophy department for more than three decades, inspiring Stern students across generations. The sincere passion that Dr. Raffel had for the subjects he taught was apparent to anyone who has taken a class of his and been transformed by the experience.

There are so many wonderful things to remember about him. A smile. A lesson. A warm presence in the room. A joke. A Donald Duck impersonation. Genuine concern for each student's welfare. Lessons that stay long after the class is over.

The lessons and skills that he taught touched the hearts and lives of many. His deep emotional connection to the material he taught enabled students to take his class's lessons to heart and inspired a love for the subject in them. Hannah Dreyfus (SCW '14) attests that when she took a class with Dr. Raffel about Rav Soloveitchik, "he taught it with unbelievable passion and emotion. The Rav's words were real and fresh to him every time, and he

transferred that same excitement to his students."

Dr. Raffel combined his wisdom as a scholar with his emotional connection to his subject, making him a successful educator whose lessons extended well beyond the classroom. "Dr. Raffel was the first teacher whose lessons I remembered without having to look through my notes. This is because what he said would be on my mind for days after the class," commented Odeya Durani (SCW '17).

Some students, such as Penina Cohen (SCW '14) would continue discussing the material with Dr. Raffel outside class, eager to learn more. Cohen remarked, "Dr. Raffel challenged me to think about what I was saying, consider all options, but also let me challenge him. He would accept a criticism of mine, while still holding true to his beliefs," an approach that encouraged students' interest and made Dr. Raffel's lessons continuously meaningful.

This sentiment is echoed by many of his students, who personally engaged with the material he taught and appreciated the thought-provoking assignments that he gave, which served to deepen their knowledge and their personal connection to the material rather than being just another piece of homework. Michelle Sabbagh (SCW '17) describes the life-changing effect Dr. Raffel's lessons had on her and how it has impacted the way she approaches Judaism. "I'm sure this may sound cliché," she says, "but I genuinely mean it when I say that Dr. Raffel changed my outlook on Judaism. In high school, I received an extensive Jewish education, but I lacked an emotional and intellectual connection to my religion. I had all this knowledge and the tools to delve further into Judaic studies, but they seemed juvenile

to me. I did not see the depths of Judaism until I stepped into Dr. Raffel's class, where I became obsessed with learning. Dr. Raffel helped me realize that there is an intellectual component to Judaism. He may not be here with us any more, but his impact on my Jewish education and all of his other students' Jewish education is eternal."

Beyond his skill in transmitting the material, Dr. Raffel's acceptance and encouragement allowed students to voice their opinions and think independently. This safe environment gave students the confidence to engage with the material on a personal level. Irene Goldman (SCW '16) recalls, "He welcomed all ideas and never rejected any of them. When he didn't understand an idea a student volunteered, or if he wanted the student to think the idea through a bit more, he would ask the perfect questions to gently coax a fuller explanation out of us." A common impression among his students is that Dr. Raffel went above and beyond the call of duty in making everyone feel comfortable in his classroom.

His sincere desire for his students to succeed directed the way Dr. Raffel managed his classes, and students clearly recognized and appreciated his genuine concern for them. "Dr. Raffel was one of the only teachers I have had the honor of having who made it so clear to us that he put the interest and well being of his students before anything," Goldman observed. This is a sentiment that is echoed by countless students, who acknowledge the numerous small things Dr. Raffel did for them to enable them to succeed in his classes. His students remember with fondness his various acts of kindness – from rescheduling exams to more convenient times to offering extra credit assignments

for students who were otherwise not doing well. "He had such an ability to cater the class to every student's need," Penina Cohen (SCW '14) commented.

Another notable quality that Dr. Raffel was admired for was his unforgettable sense of humor, which made students look forward to his classes. Not a single class went by without Dr. Raffel cracking a few jokes to make his students smile. His recitation of a Robert Frost poem using his famous Donald Duck impersonation had the class in stitches and brings a smile to our faces even now.

But aside from his effect on students in his classes, Dr. Raffel was also a good friend to many – offering personal advice, a listening ear, and an unparalleled degree of sensitivity towards everyone. He put in the effort to get to know each of his students, asking them about their lives and their families. Tammie Senders (SCW '13) remarked, "Not a class went by where Dr. Raffel didn't ask me about my day, about my family members whom he had previously taught, about my grandfather that he had only distantly heard about." This level of concern for each student made the classroom a place of warmth where students felt cared for and comfortable. Students knew that they could turn to Dr. Raffel with anything, and he would respond in a caring, sensitive, and thoughtful manner.

Dr. Raffel will be greatly missed by all of us who had the honor of learning from his wisdom and the privilege to spend time with him. His unique combination of scholarship and kindness has touched the lives of hundreds of students, and he leaves behind a significant legacy as one of the most wonderful Judaic professors in Stern College.

May his lessons live on and continue through his students, and may his memory be blessed.

HEALTH CORNER

The Truth About Juicing

Rebecca Yoshor Juicing was a popular dieting method in the 90's, but it seems to be making a resurgence. With stores like Juice Generation popping up all across Manhattan, jumping on the "juicing" bandwagon has never been more convenient. Juicing definitely has its pros and cons, and we will review both in order to give a balanced picture.

One of the major pros of juicing is that it is a fast and convenient way to obtain the recommended amounts of servings of fruits and vegetables. According to the American Center of Disease Control, the average person should consume three-five servings of vegetables and two-four servings of fruit every day. Finding time to ingest all these servings can be overwhelming, but juicing is a great way to ensure that you get all these servings in for the day. Another positive aspect of juicing is that it removes a lot of skin

and pulp from fruits and vegetables, which allows your body to digest these foods more quickly. This allows you to immediately reap the benefits, including increased energy. Therefore, juicing can be a great way to wean yourself off of the unhealthy energy drinks that have been getting you through afternoon sluggishness.

Although juices lack of skin and pulp is good for digestion, it also has a down side. Fruits and vegetables contain a hefty amount of fiber, but you lose out on the fiber when you consume them in juice form. Therefore, it is important to alternate between

getting your fruit and vegetable servings from whole fruits and juice. Another con to juicing is that many juices contain added sugar. Moreover, juicing also has a con that affects the weight of your wallet: it is quite expensive. Juice products cost an average of \$10 per bottle. Bottom line: juicing is a good idea, but should be done in moderation to keep your wallet and your weight at a healthy limit.



In order to help you kick-start your juicing plans, here is a summary of a few great juices, that are low on calories, that you can pick up at grocery stores all around New

York City. The first juice brand I want to recommend is Odwalla. Odwalla carries a great carrot juice that is only 100 calories per twelve-ounce bottle, and an organic alternative version contains only seventy calories per twelve-ounce bottle. The brand Naked also carries a huge variety of fruit juices, with flavors ranging from 100 to 220 calories per serving.

The last juice brand I want to talk about is my personal favorite: Evolution. Evolution is my top pick because their juices offer a unique hybrid of greens and fruit. Some awesome flavors that they offer include: Sweet Greens with Lemon Juice and Cucumber Pineapple Lemon Juice. Evolution juices are also mostly below 200 calories per serving. Equipped with this new knowledge about juicing, you are now prepared to head into the summer ready to drink your way to a healthier body.

The Benefits of Exercise in Winter Versus Summer



Tamar Berger Between the frigid temperatures and the mountains of snow, going outside in New York has been a challenge since December, making exercise a challenge as well. Runners who usually run outside found their routines disrupted for months. In addition, being trapped indoors causes laziness and lack of motivation to exercise in general. This funk is only amplified with the dark coming in so early in the day.

Despite the limitations winter can im-

pose on exercise, it does have one big positive in terms of weight loss. During the winter your metabolism runs at a faster pace because your body is working extra hard to keep warm and fight the cold outside. Therefore, if you can motivate yourself and push yourself to work out and eat healthy when you are feeling so dreary than you may be able to lose more weight during the winter than you would be able to in the summer.

In the summer our metabolisms slow

down because our bodies are not fighting to keep warm. Additionally, as the Huffington Post notes, it is easier to get dehydrated in the summer because of sweating. Sweating can cause one to lose around ten cups a day in water. Keeping this in mind, one must be sure to continuously drink throughout the summer because hydration is important to weight loss. Despite these drawbacks, the warm summer weather does have its benefits. Unlike the winter, in the spring and summer one feels rejuvenated and more motivated to work out and push oneself physically. Additionally, the days are longer and you can work out until the mid-hours of the night.

There are benefits to working out and being healthy all year-round. Each season offers its challenges and benefits for being healthy. It is important to bear these aspects in mind in order to maximize your exercise routine and good health year-round.



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YACHAD



A Book Reading of Dr. Ann Peters' "House Hold"

Michal Kaplan-Nadel In her "Literature of Home" class that I took last spring, I remember how Dr. Ann Peter's eyes would light up when reading Joan Didion or Willa Cather's descriptions of American cities and fields. It is this brand of excitement over the ideas of home, place, and landscape that inspired Dr. Peter's to write her novel entitled "House Hold: A Memoir of Place", published in February 2014.

On Tuesday morning May 8th, a group of 35 students and alumnae, gathered in Schottenstein back lounge to hear a reading of Dr. Peter's novel and to discuss questions about her creative writing process and her journey that influenced the creation of the novel. The event was chaired by the Creative Writing/Publishing Club and the Communications club and was sponsored by SCWSC. After pizza and socializing, the reading began with an introduction by Yael Farzan, SCW '14. Farzan read Dr. Peter's biography, citing

the many awards she has received for her writing. Most notably, Dr. Peter's dissertation, "Travelers in Residence: Women Writing New York at Mid-Century," won the Adrienne Auslander Munich Prize for the Best Dissertation on Women's Writing as well as the Harold M. Proshansky Fellowship for the Best Dissertation on the Study of Urban Change.

In "House Hold: A Memoir of Place", Peters explores her journey through the places she has lived in, from the house her architect father built in Wisconsin, to her many apartments in New York City, and how each one has shaped her. In House Hold, Peters also uses the musings of other literary greats, such as Henry James, to reflect on how literature shapes our understanding of place and property. As Alice Kaplan from Yale University has said about the novel, "House Hold has the makings of an American classic: a perceptive and deeply affecting book about belonging to a place and yet never

quite belonging."

Peters began by reading a passage that she said felt appropriate to share with us as young women in our twenties, as she had written it during her first night in New York. Peters had come to New York City post-college from a small rural town, and knowing only one person and bringing with her only one suitcase, she had set off to start a new exciting life. Peters read a passage detailing how her first night was a far cry from the glamorous experience she had expected, walking the streets of New York, the city that she saw in her head as a 1930's black and white film.

The audience asked Peters various questions about this experience, and she explained how her picture of New York as a place where people sat in cafes and discussed literature was more representative of a city like Paris. Farzan asked Peters if she had been inspired by Joan Didion, as Didion is known for her beautiful descriptions of life in NYC, and Peters answered that she had certainly be inspired by

her. Dr. Peters also detailed how she had moved around very often in NYC, and discussions then followed on the difficulty of forming community in New York, yet the importance of finding one's niche and a group of friends. Following the discussion, Dr. Peters signed books for students. The musings that Peters shared were particularly relevant to those in the room, myself included, who are graduating seniors, as we try to navigate New York City away from the comforts of Stern life, the dorms, and the YU community. It will be a different city when we leave college, Dr. Peters explained, and each one of us must carve out what that means for ourselves. Her words were comforting to me and I left with a sense that I was embarking on a path that had been tread by Didion, Peters, and so many others before me.

ARTS & CULTURE

HANNAH ROZENBLAT
MICHAL KAPLAN-NADEL



Irit Greenboim



Irit Greenboim

The Lost Art of Gentleness

Emily Chase Sitting down in Central Park and reading *Little Women*, I was drawn into the world of the March sisters. Pretty and responsible Meg, loud and boisterous Jo, and fancy little Amy drew me into their midst, but the sister who touched me the most was sweet and gentle Beth. She was peaceful and patient, helpful and hardworking, and always willing to perform kind acts in an unassuming type of way. Her father named her "Little Miss Tranquility... for she seemed to feel in a happy world of her own."

At one point in the book, Beth is stricken with an illness and Jo becomes her nursemaid. As Jo tends to Beth, she begins to "learn to see the beauty and the sweetness of Beth's nature, to feel how deep and tender a place she filled in all

hearts, and to acknowledge the worth of Beth's unselfish ambition to live for others." Jo cries over Beth's pure heart, which was filled only with one simple desire: to help out the people around her.

As I become more involved with the story, I decided to get up and move to a quieter area of the park. With a half-read copy of *Little Women* in my hands, I scouted out Central Park for the perfect place to sit. Passing some picnic tables, a large lawn, and a baseball field, I finally arrived at a perfect spot. There was a pink flowering tree just across from a bench hidden in the shrubbery. As I went to sit down, I spied the silver plaque nailed to the back of the bench. It read, "In memory of Dorothy Thompson, the very gentlest of human beings, her favorite place."

"The very gentlest of human beings." Those words rang in my head, and I thought about Beth and how special her sweetness is. The words made me think about how important, yet overlooked, her character traits are in our current American society.

I thought about the recent release of *Divergent*, a movie that glorifies the heroine's choice of a dramatic and bold life of dauntlessness, risk-taking, and violence over the quiet life of self-abnegation, of charity, and of gentleness, and about how well it reflected the new ideal of American culture. A world where people care more about looks than about substance will continually hold to esteem people who are loud, charismatic, and outgoing, and undervalue the quieter

Beth-like character of serenity and sweetness. By trying to embrace ambition, we have sacrificed gentleness.

How special is a character who lives only to serve others and does so quietly and lovingly. How wonderful is a person who, though they don't speak very often, when they do speak, they speak with kindness and respect. How important is such a person, who continues to be a beacon of light into the world, even though they are often neither honored nor noticed. These are the type characters the media should promote and these are the types of people we should aspire to be. People who bring light and happiness to those around them, who don't harm, but heal, who touch this world gently, but powerfully.

Andy Warhol: Icon From Digital Art to Pop Art

Michal Kaplan-Nadel Walking onto the fourth floor of the Museum of Modern Art, you will come upon one of the most iconic works of contemporary art. Andy Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Cans* will stare up at you, the repeating series of red and white cans of various flavors more recognizable than almost any other piece in the gallery. Following those will be *Gold Marilyn Monroe* and *Orange Car Crash Fifteen Times*, famous painting as well, albeit less so than the soup cans. Warhol is the name most associated with pop art, but in recent weeks has posthumously become associated with a new medium, digital art, as well.

The works displayed in the MoMA were created in Warhol's signature pop art aesthetic. The pop art movement became

prevalent in America the 1960's in the disciplines of painting, sculpting, and print-making. The movement is often characterized by images from popular culture and ambiguous claims about mass media and culture that are intended to be interpreted differently by every viewer. It uses elements of mass production and modern technology as well, and is known for mixing high art and low art mediums. Andy Warhol is specifically famous for his work with graphic prints and for silk-screening these images onto canvas.

Just a few short weeks ago, it was announced by the Andy Warhol Museum that original digital artwork done by Andy Warhol was recovered from 1980's floppy disks from old computer software called Amiga.

After seeing a YouTube clip of Warhol digitally creating a portrait of Debbie Harry, a Brooklyn Artist named Cory Arcangel launched a mission to uncover the images that were previously thought to be unable to be retrieved from such old software. A team of artists, museum professionals, and the Carnegie Mellon Computer Club eventually recovered 28 images Warhol had made. According to the official press release distributed by the Warhol Museum, the works vary in detail, from doodles to portraits, and include digitized version of Warhol's classics such as his soup cans and Marilyn Monroe pictures.

This news puts Warhol on the artistic map now not just as a pioneer of pop art, but as the first artist working in the digital



sphere. As Matt Wribcan, the chief archivist at the Warhol Museum told CNN News, "In the images, we see a mature artist who had spent about 50 years developing a specific hand-to-eye coordination now suddenly grappling with the bizarre new sensation of a mouse in his palm held several inches from the screen." Warhol was always praised for his creativity and willingness to try new methods, and the new images are clear evidence of these traits in the famous artist.

This discovery reflects the progression that took place from canvas and paintbrush to photography, photoshop, and other design programs. Warhol is now seen as a pioneer of the digital artistic movement, one that gains popularity every day as new programs and software are created, and more and more artists move to create digital works. Even though his Campbell's Soup Cans that is hanging in the MoMA will most likely remain his most iconic work, the digital version of the soup cans painting can shed light on what a forward thinking and creative artist Warhol truly was.



<http://www.moma.org>

Culture in the City: Summer Edition

Hannah Rozenblat With the summer fast approaching and school ending, there are more opportunities to take advantage of the cultural scene in New York City. From Broadway to museums to outdoor recreation, the city is full of things to do now that everyone is done studying for exams. Here are some of the highlights for the next few months:

Central Park SummerStage.

Every summer, Central Park brings a series of free concerts spanning a variety of genres to Rumsey Playfield. This year,



the outdoor venue's programming for its festival of the arts will include the John Butler Trio, Counting Crows, Beck, Neon Trees, and more music, dance, and theater performances.

Shakespeare in the Park.

This beloved and well-known summer tradition is coming back to Central Park once more. This summer's productions are *Much Ado About Nothing* (June 3rd-July 6th), starring Hamish Linklater and Lily Rabe, and *King Lear* (July 22nd-August 17th), starring John Lithgow as the tragic king. Free tickets are available either by waiting in line at Central Park's Delacorte Theater or by entering a lottery online.

Metropolitan Museum of Art.

One can spend days at the Met without managing to see all of the treasures it offers. But in addition to its permanent galleries, a new exhibition is coming to the Met featuring paintings

from the Pre-Raphaelite movement of the nineteenth century, including works by artists such as Edward Burne-Jones, William Morris, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. This exhibit opens on May 20th and will remain open until October 26th.

American Ballet Theatre at the Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center.

ABT returns to the Met Opera from May 12th to July 5th with some classic ballets, including *Don Quixote*, *Cinderella*, *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, and more. Rush tickets are available for all of these breathtaking performances, so that even students on a budget can enjoy the beauty of ABT's ballets.

Of Mice and Men, Broadway.

Based on John Steinbeck's famous novel of 1937 about two migrant ranch workers who are constantly on the move as they search for new job opportunities during the Great Depression, this show stars James Franco, Chris O'Dowd, Leighton Meester and Jim Norton and is in Longacre Theater until July 27th. Rush tickets are available on the day of the show at the box office.

Morgan Library & Museum, special exhibitions.

The Morgan, a convenient five minute walk from Stern, has constantly rotating exhibits. Some of the highlights this summer will include an exhibit of Romantic Landscape paintings of British and German artists, and a collection of first editions, manuscripts and letters from some of America's greatest writers, including Henry James, William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Allen Ginsberg, Ernest Hemingway, J. D. Salinger, Gertrude Stein, John Steinbeck, and Tennessee Williams.

Broadway in Bryant Park.

Every summer, the casts of New York City's hottest Broadway and off-Broadway musicals come to Bryant Park with free performances that are open to everyone so you can hear this season's most popular casts without having to spend a penny. Visit Bryant Park every Thursday from July 10th to August 14th, 12:30-1:30 pm, to get your Broadway fix. Details about who is performing each week will be announced in early June on Bryant Park's website.

With finals coming to an end soon, take advantage of these and more cultural opportunities, of which there are plenty in New York City. Have fun!

#BringingBackOurGirls: More Than Just a Hashtag

OPINIONS

RACHEL RENZ
SHOSHANA BACHRACH

Elana Kook A little over a week ago, meandering from one class to another, I found myself absentmindedly scrolling through Facebook. I sifted through the plethora of selfies and vines and came across a post that particularly stood out: hundreds of girls had been abducted from their high school in Nigeria two weeks prior to me reading about it on my newsfeed.

On April 14th, an estimated two hundred seventy six girls, ages fifteen to eighteen, were awoken in the middle of the night by shouts and gunfire. The security guards of their high school had been overpowered by the jihadist terrorist group, Boko Haram, which means, “western education is sinful.” The girls were herded by the terrorists onto the backs of trucks and taken to an undetermined location. During the initial hours of the abduction, fifty girls managed to escape; however, over two hundred have yet to be located. Their families

mourn, and for the past month, the world has remained silent.

Approximately two weeks after the attack, on April 30th, the grinning leader of Boko Haram sent out a propagandist video. He gloated that his terrorist organization was behind the kidnappings. Moreover, he announced that each young woman was to be sold onto the black market for twelve dollars. He smirked while announcing, “Girls you should get married...western education should fold up.” A school building once filled with almost three hundred young girls, now stands desolate. Nearly all three hundred must face a fate of either being sold as child brides or slaves.

On May 6th, eight more girls, ages twelve to fifteen, were abducted from their schools, once again by Boko Haram.

As these girls are at the disposal of terrorists, my web browser is filled with stories surrounding the engagement of George

Clooney, Monica Lewinsky’s new tell-all essay in *Vanity Fair*, and most importantly, the resignation of Donald Sterling.

How could it possibly be that twenty-six countries searched for a missing plane of more than two hundred passengers, but the world has remained silent regarding the bleak fate of over two hundred missing Nigerian young women?

Interest has only begun to generate. The social media campaign of #BringingBackOurGirls has slowly begun to spread, as more people are becoming aware of the already not-so-recent events. It has taken over a month and a social media campaign

to ignite the appropriate outrage, yet until this past week, no word regarding plans for action had been solidified. There is an intrinsic connection between the events in Nigeria in light of the recently sparked conversation regarding privilege, spurred by the article by Princeton freshman, Tal Fortgang. In the article titled, “Checking My Privilege: Character as the Basis of Privilege”, Fortgang discusses the offensive phrase “check your privilege” and the problematic assumption that all white people have the same privileged narratives that entail certain advantages. Amidst his discussion that privilege is an issue that is beyond skin-deep, Fortgang writes, “I am privileged that values like faith and education were passed along to me.” There is no doubt that judgments regarding someone’s upbringing and social status are presumptuous and often offensive. However, race aside, there are privileges that our upbringing has provided that often are unacknowledged. The education we are afforded is an unequivocal privilege.

There is a certain irony that comes along with writing this article while sitting in a classroom in Stern. The opportunity to be enrolled in a women’s college is an undeniable privilege. While we sit in class, girls are being sold into human trafficking due to their pursuit of an education. We sit in class, unaware of the benefits our privilege has afforded us, and how it can make us blind to see those less fortunate.

As our school days draw to a close, we must be aware that there are those who could only dream of having a glimpse of graduation, or another year in college. We owe it to ourselves, and to others, to look beyond the Donald Sterlings of our web browsers, and be aware of those less fortunate who are worthy of our attention.



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Does Money Empower or Victimize?

Rachel Renz Perhaps one of the most opinionated writers of the twentieth century has been the beloved, hated, and all-around controversial Ayn Rand, author of *The Fountainhead*, *Atlas Shrugged*, and many others. Her strong libertarian views have assisted in establishing an image and reputation which continues to outlast her: one of a financially-conscious individual who understood and emphasized the centrality of money, arguably to a fault.

Why is Rand relevant? Rand has a quote which gets to the heart, not only of her personal take on money, but on what appears to me to be an ethos which deserves to be emulated: “Money is only a tool. It will take you wherever you wish, but it will not replace you as the driver.”

I think there are a number of different ways to read Rand’s statement. One might understand Rand’s words to speak of an innate desire to let money make itself, an attraction to laziness which threatens a person’s work ethic, the source of monetary gain. Yet I think the diametrically opposed interpretation of this quote might be even more relevant to the present-day

reader. Often, I hear people speak of themselves as victims of money: “If only I had more money, I could go to Aruba.” “Because I don’t have money, I won’t be able to pay off my loans.” These are sentiments we all express, quite understandably when we are faced with financial obligations, tight budgets, and unexpected costs. Yet what if we challenged ourselves to change perspectives? To see money as a tool which we all have access to? Surprisingly, we are largely in control of our savings and our spendings. To a greater extent than we think, we are in control of our incomes; if you are dissatisfied with your salary, freelancing your skills is often a flexible and easy way to earn extra cash. If you are investing your time in a profession which isn’t paying the bills, remember that you, like all people, are home to a wealth of skills, only a few of which are being utilized at your primary job. By challenging ourselves to feel empowered by the constant money-making opportunities which regularly come our way but are easy to miss, not only can we become more financially secure, but better-empowered to achieve our goals and

serve as role models to others.

Sometimes, people romanticize the idea of poverty, the victimhood one has to money, especially when compared to a wealthier person. Start changing this perspective. Money is an opportunity, not

a disincentive. Money is a tool, as Rand says, a tool which you, like all others, have access to if you only think creatively and with a disciplined mind. Dare yourself to appreciate money and the tool it can be. You might be very happy that you did.



An Alumna Looks Back: In Conversation with Scholar of Jewish Studies Malka Simkovich, Stern '04

Rachel Renz, '14

What year did you graduate YU, and what did you major in during your time here?

I graduated Stern in 2004 with a double major - one in Jewish Studies, concentrating in Bible, and a shaped major in Music Theory.

What have you done since graduating from YU? What are you currently doing, and what are your plans for the near future?

I went straight from Stern into a Masters program in Hebrew Bible at Harvard University's Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC), which I completed in 2006. I taught Tanakh part-time at Maimonides Upper School in Brookline, MA, while I was a student at NELC, and then taught full time three more years at Maimonides, and for some of that time served as the 11th grade Dean. In Fall 2009 I started a doctoral program in Jewish studies at Brandeis, with a focus on Second Temple, Early Rabbinics, and Early Christianity. Along the way I have gotten married and had three beautiful, spunky kids that keep me pretty busy.

I'm now writing my dissertation on Jewish universalist literature that was written in the Second Temple period. We tend to think of the Second Temple period as defined by divisive sectarianism, which was resolved when the rabbinic community "inherited" Pharisaic traditions and other sects did not survive the Romans' destruction of the Temple, but in fact most Jews were probably not affiliated with any sect. And of these Jews, a good number regarded all of humankind as having equal access to a covenantal relationship with God. These Jews were proudly and openly Jewish, but do not refer to distinguishing aspects of Judaism such as circumcision, Sabbath, and dietary law in their writings. I'm very fortunate to have outstanding advisors at Brandeis like Professors Bernadette Broten, Reuven Kimelman, and Marc Brettler who are helping me along the dissertation

writing process.

My family and I have recently moved from Boston to Chicago, and I have just been hired to teach Jewish Studies at Catholic Theological Union, a graduate school in Hyde Park. I am particularly excited about this position because it is not only an opportunity to teach at a high academic level, but will also enable me to be involved in meaningful interfaith dialogue. In fact, CTU is sending me to Istanbul, Turkey in June to represent Judaism at an interfaith panel. Although I don't know quite what the future will bring, I'm really excited about this job.

I also work as an editorial assistant for the Harvard Theological Review, which I love. I get to read manuscripts submitted to the journal that relate to my field, and recommend whether or not they be submitted to a second, more senior, reader. The best part of this job is that I feel that I have direct access to the newest scholarship in my field. What's newer than an article that hasn't even been published yet? It gives me a rush every time I am sent another article to read.

Finally, I am an occasional writer for TheTorah.Com - I've written a number of articles for this site, which all regard the intersections of late Second Temple Judaism, Rabbinic Judaism, and early Christianity.

Why did you choose to come to YU? Do you think the YU you chose to attend was the same YU you attended? Meaning, was it as you expected it to be?

I knew very little about YU before I attended it. I did romanticize it as some sort of "haven of Modern Orthodoxy" where I would find many like-minded people and opportunities to be involved in an active M.O. community. What I found was that Stern was much more diverse than I expected - and that's a good thing. Although "diverse" in this sense is still far more narrow than what it would mean when discussing a large, public university.

In what ways did YU (both intentionally and unintentionally) shape your goals and interests?

I don't know what I can accurately say about YU as an institution, but Professors Michelle Levine, David Glaser, and Saul Berman shaped my goals and interests more than any of the other professors I had at Stern. Dr. Levine taught me that it's not enough to cite other scholars; I need to respond to them, to engage with them, and if necessary, to critique them. Dr. Levine gave me the permission to do this and encour-

aged me to have the confidence to do this. Until I took her classes, I never knew that I had a "right" to invite myself into the academic conversation. Besides that, she is an outstanding teacher and I learned a lot from her, especially about Rashbam!

Dr. Glaser taught me music (in 8 or 9 separate courses, I think), but he taught me a lot more too. I learned from him that you don't have to be a complete jerk to be a good academic. Dr. Glaser's great sense of humor, accessibility, and passion for his field made him one of the most influential role models for me at Stern - and in my life in general. When I teach Bible or Second Temple Judaism now, I think a lot about how he taught music.

The other person who I was influenced by was Rabbi Saul Berman, who taught me the importance of engaging with rabbinic texts as modern readers and considering the ways in which the halakhic system might be used to advance ourselves and our religious communities ethically and socially. Everyone who knows Rabbi Berman knows that he puts this into practice on a daily basis.

I should mention that Stern shaped me in another way, years after I graduated: they rejected me from their PhD program after I finished Harvard. I fully expected that after graduating from Harvard I would go back to Revel for a PhD, and one day possibly teach at Stern. Being rejected from Revel caught me off guard and made me think about who I think I am, versus how I am perceived. When I asked for feedback about why I was rejected, despite good grades and good recommendation letters, I was told point-blank that there was concern that I would not finish the program. I still wonder how many great women at Stern did not pursue their goals of being in academia because they were told that they were not worth the investment. I try not to dwell on this rejection because I don't want it to affect my very positive memories of my time at Stern.

You've since been a student at at least two leading institutions since your time here at Stern (Harvard and Brandeis). How does Stern rank: what aspects of your education are you now grateful for, as you become more aware of what other places lack and possess? And what aspects of your Stern education seem problematic, or even simply lacking, by comparison to other institutions?

I prefer not to make evaluations of an institution, since there are too many exceptions and complications to any generalization. In every university there are outstanding individuals who might affect a student's experience more than the institution itself. The first thing that I noticed when I went to Harvard was its library. Harvard actually has dozens of libraries, but Widener and Andover Theological are libraries that enable a student of Bible to research literally anything he or she could imagine. It's a student's dream to have that kind of access. Unfortunately, Stern's library, at least when I was there, is small, and many students have to go uptown to get the books they need (and even then, they might need to use ILL to get all their books). What message does it send to Stern students that, in order

to grow as a young scholar and researcher, they need to go to the men's campus regularly to get the best books on their subject?

The truth is, though, I was not even aware of how lacking Stern's library was until I got to Harvard. There are many things about Stern that I loved. Like other colleges, Stern is what you make of it, and I was able to be engaged in campus life in a way that made my time there very meaningful. As a member of the Honors program, I was privileged to have many opportunities to attend interesting events and lectures, and meet students whom I otherwise would not have come across. And my favorite and funniest memories from Stern take place in the Writing Center, where I was a tutor. A couple of the other Writing Center tutors became some of my closest friends at Stern.

Though not yet awarded your doctorate, you've taught or lectured at a number of schools (Ida Crown, Maimonides, Brandeis, Loyola, etc). What kinds of things do you try to impart to your students? Do you think you emphasize the cultivation of skill over that of knowledge, vice versa, or both? Is that an unfair binary?

A lot of students these days are enamored with theory and hermeneutics. They want to study Foucault, Derrida, Barthes, and Lacan. I've heard students at SBL (the Society for Biblical Literature annual meeting) tout themselves as "scholars of postmodernism." More than the eye-roll - inducing arrogance of statements like these, such declarations are problematic because students are not sufficiently trained in how to use theory selectively and sensitively. Learning to use theory - whether it's Genre Theory, Postmodernism, Post-Colonial Theory, or another theoretical lens - is considered essential now to become a good scholar of ancient literature. Some of the scholarship that uses this theory does it well. But a lot of scholarship that uses these methods does so poorly, in a way in which the theory is dragging and reshaping the text, rather than enlightening the text.

Before my students are seduced by hermeneutics, I try to instill in them the importance of relating to a text as a text, with nothing standing between them and the text. I encourage them to look at a passage and ask literary and historical questions. At a later stage of scholarship, introducing method is perfectly fine, if it is useful. I am not sure that Freshmen college students should be required to use theory, as they are at Brandeis' Writing Seminars.

As for skill, it is imperative that a student of ancient history or religion can work with texts in their original languages. Learning Hebrew and Aramaic is a good start for a Bible student, but for my period, Greek is a must as well, and Latin and Syriac are extremely useful. For someone studying older material, learning Semitic languages such as Akkadian is crucial if they want to do any serious comparative work. That doesn't even scratch the surface, since you need modern German and French to read contemporary scholarship. Without languages, (and of course the skills to be an analytical, close reader of the text), a student's academic progress will be limited.

Continued on page 13



Continued from page 12



Because you are involved in the academic study of Bible (as am I!), I must ask: Do you think Stern College does perform the academic study of the Bible? What might they do better than they do? What do they already do which impresses you?

I had some great teachers at Stern. As I mentioned, Drs. Michelle Levine and Saul Berman, as well as Dr. Mordechai Cohen, were formative for me. But do I think Stern “does” academic study of the Bible? To be honest, no. Not in the same way that other major institutions do. As far as I know, Stern doesn’t offer classes on Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Sumerian, let alone courses on the ancient near east. In that sense, Stern is not offering a Bible program that is competitive with departments of other universities. When I got to Harvard and took classes with Peter Machinist and Jon Levenson, among others, I entered a new realm of academic study of the Bible.

I understand that you are asking about Biblical Criticism. I think that some professors touch on Biblical Criticism but don’t engage with it in a sustained way. I don’t want to get into the question of whether this is or isn’t appropriate for Stern. Whatever the motivations are that stand behind the decision to skirt around Biblical Criticism, I think the bigger issue is whether Stern is going to offer its students more opportunities to study Hebrew Bible in a very academically rigorous way that would prepare students to pursue doctoral degrees in this subject.

I think YU has put itself on the map because of the great Bible scholars it has, and there are a number of young scholars at YU who have decades of good work ahead of them. Unfortunately, Stern does not, as far as I know, have the same number of high level Bible scholars who can do serious comparative and interdisciplinary work. I hope this disparity changes soon.

In what way would you like your work, method, attitude, ideas, commitment, (or anything else) to influence others? What impact do you hope you and your career to have?

Right now I’m happy to be firmly planted in both the world of academia and Jewish education. I also like to cross imaginary cultural lines, and have no intention of resolving the tension that this might create. Life is all about tensions and contradictions, especially for Modern Orthodox Jews trying to fully actualize all parts of themselves – personally, professionally, and religiously. The way I dress (skirts, sheitel, etc) would imply that I’m a right of center Orthodox Jew, but I am an employee of a Catholic University with major interests in interfaith dialogue. I give lectures regularly in my community on Tanakh and Second Temple Judaism, but currently have about twenty books taken out of the library on the Church Fathers, which helps me to study rabbinic literature in a culturally broad sense. There shouldn’t be anything weird about this, and to me, it’s perfectly normal.

Prodigious Creativity and the Desire for Young Productivity

Rachel Renz Oscar Wilde writes, “Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth.” Byron says, “Those who will not reason, are bigots, those who cannot, are fools, and those who dare not, are slaves.” I say, “The intimidation of following in the footsteps of giants is more pronounced upon finding them to have truly been dwarves.”

I find the fear of failing to produce, to express myself, to try and educate or enlighten others, to be an affliction, a spiritual pox upon the soul. With the scholar’s ever present fear of creating a persona laden with condescension and pretension, coupled with the reluctance to conceive of oneself with the self-confidence necessary to espouse knowledge, intellectual ambition can be crippling. To be caught within the chasm of a fear of failure as well as fear of success is the curse of the young intellectual.

The plight of the young adult, our erstwhile would-be creator, is worsened by the understanding that many of history’s most influential individuals who harnessed and employed their intellects to produce masterpieces did so at a shockingly young age. Mozart was composing symphonies at the age most children begin learning to count. Alexander the Great had conquered and created an empire before the age of forty. Oscar Wilde and Lord Byron both died before the age of fifty, yet both have made invaluable contributions to the Western literary canon. All of a sudden, the fruits of undergraduate labor, in particular, and perhaps life’s labors, more generally, are eclipsed by predecessors of cosmic

talent, planetary proportions.

Why does a person want to produce and share wisdom? To have one’s name go down with the greats; to be canonized in the annals of history and literature as a prodigy; to help reshape modernity: all of these are motivations. Yet it appears to me the deepest catalyst for pursuing wisdom is the desire to know oneself, one’s own spiritual limits. All bodies serve to contain physical selves; though lofty, the physical self, in essence, provides a constant definition of who one is and how far one may reach. Yet to find the spiritual, internal limit of a human soul: this is ill-defined, uncircumscribed. So we test our freedoms, our lack of definition and explicit parameters of creativity. We charge ahead with the belief in every range of possibility. However, we experience the weight of gravity when the realization wields itself that others have seemingly reached the echelons of intellectual nobility. It must then be stipulated that all men are capable of greatness, if not by reaching the highest stratum of measurable achievement, then by embracing the awareness of human limitation, something arguably more daring.

It is in lieu of this that another pithy line might be hazarded: “Writing a book is ambitious. Composing a paragraph is daring. Arranging a sentence is valiant. Finding the right word is heroic.” The vision of producing might come in a burst. An initial motivation, enhanced by notions of grandeur and a keen desire to share oneself with others, leads one to first express ambition in the form of a fully formed product: a book written, a film produced,

an experiment devised and carried out. Yet only after this is it possible to realize the task cannot be achieved in the abstract, in broad strokes of genius; it requires the forethought and execution of a number of often tedious steps, ultimately coming to grammar, syntax, and the real cores of meaning-making. It doubtfully takes Foucault or Saussure to demonstrate the most basic elements of production to be the most central.

Language becomes the medium, then, through which to publicize as well as personally concretize one’s awareness of human ability, capability, and limitation. Writing becomes the saving grace of both failure and success: while one might achieve and another might not, both have the power of the pen upon the acquiescent page to design the shapes and angles by which these experiences are redeemed through narrative.

Fear of failure has not made people out of men. It does not humanize, dignify, impress. Only confidence coupled with the initially-ironic yet deeply complementary bedfellow of humility allows the growth and ingenuity which distinguishes human from beast. While many will scoff and mistake confidence for pretension and humility for self-abnegation, they will be terribly humbled if they chance upon one of Wilde’s poems, one of Byron’s verses. How many contemporaries scoffed at those men, as well, demanding submission and self-denial? While nature and society conspired against geniuses, their will was never broken, and the present bears testament to their contributions and tenacity.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED
ON CAMPUS
WHILE BUILDING YOUR RESUME AND
IMPROVING YOUR SKILLS
AS A WRITER?
JOIN THE OBSERVER
AND ALWAYS WRITE ON!

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

JACKIE BENAYOUN

Jackie Benayoun “Our brains are getting constantly hijacked.” This isn’t a line from the latest Sci-Fi-thriller about hidden plots or demonic creatures controlling society. It actually relates to a real, more pressing issue which makes it all the more frightening. This quote was spoken by Dr. David Kessler, who was the commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) from 1990 to 1997, where he worked tirelessly on enforcing tobacco regulations. Recently, Dr. Kessler has focused his attention on the current major American health crisis; how and what we eat.

In the new film “Fed Up” that documents the deadly eating habits of many Americans, Dr. Kessler points out the growing pervasiveness of junk food in the American home, especially in homes with young children. Dr. Margo Wootan, Harvard-educated director of nutrition policy at the Center for Science in the Public Interest, reinforces Kessler’s position by stating, “There’s junk food at the checkout everywhere: at toy stores, at drug stores... [When you] go to buy stationary supplies, linens, electronics. Every store these days has junk food right at the eye-level of your kids.”

This idea, that junk-food is present in almost all types of stores and with easy access, is the crux of the problem. But even more than that, Kessler explains that it’s not just the availability of unhealthy foods that is detrimental for kids, but also the “emotional gloss”, or how they are packaged and mar-

keted. Licensed cartoon characters, included toys, and playground equipment in restaurants all add to the psychological conditioning for young minds. Kessler states, “You add all these additional layers of stimuli, and in the end, you end up with one of the great public health epidemics of our time.”

Studies have shown that advertising affects children’s consumption habits significantly. For instance, when children watch TV programs with food advertisements, they will actually eat more snacks than when viewing shows without commercials. And in just the past few years the number of ads for junk foods that kids see on a daily basis has dramatically increased thanks to online promotions.

The makers of the film “Fed Up” assert that “80 percent of the 600,000 food products sold in this country have added sugar,” and that if the current rate continues, one in three Americans will be diagnosed with diabetes by the year 2050. The American Heart Association recommends a daily allowance of 6-9 teaspoons of added sugar, but a typical 20-ounce bottle of soda contains 16 teaspoons of high fructose corn syrup, more than double as much. Nearly 80 percent of foods at grocery stores have added sugar in one form or another, and as a result Americans have doubled their intake of sugar in the past thirty years.

Additionally, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), one billion adults are overweight (300 million are

obese), and this figure is estimated to reach 1.5 billion by 2015. WHO also reported that at least 2.6 million people die each year as a result of being overweight or obese. Over 42 million children under 5 years of age are overweight. People are literally eating themselves to death through a regular diet of junk food!

Obesity is fast approaching the most common preventable cause of death—a close second behind tobacco. The surgeon general reported “even moderate weight excess (10 to 20 pounds for a person of average height) increases the risk of death, particularly among adults aged 30 to 64 years. Individuals who are obese have a 50 to 100% increased risk of premature death from all causes, compared to individuals with a healthy weight.” Similarly, John Hopkins Medical Institution put out a study of 7,000 men and women by the Multiethnic Study of Atherosclerosis (MESA). The study showed that obesity doubles the chances of someone developing heart failure. A senior researcher stated, “Even if obese people feel otherwise healthy, there are measurable and early chemical signs of damage to their heart, beyond the well-known implications for diabetes and high blood pressure.”

Which leads me to my next point: many of us know people- or ourselves- consume excess junk food and look and feel fine. Yet you don’t have to be over-weight and can in fact be thin and cause tremendous damage to your body’s insides. Consuming chemicals

Fed Up With Junk Food

like cellulose gum, alloxen, corn dextrin, and high fructose syrup can accumulate inside the body before causing any problems. When you eat a poor diet, you severely impair the body’s ability—through its immune system—to fight off toxins and diseased cells. The negative effects of wrong eating often take years to manifest themselves so a person may continue his/her bad habits until it’s too late. This is where cancer comes in. Consuming junk food is now recognized as a main contributing factor to the development of cancerous cells.

While all of this is clearly true, and many know that junk food and fast food are associated with an increase in obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer and, tooth decay, the popularity “junk” food continues to grow. Deep down, most desire to eat balanced meals, and being physically fit. But with a busy schedule and the mass appeal of French fries and Ben & Jerry’s, what is a junk-food junkie to do?

Although challenging, it’s not impossible to limit one’s junk food consumption. Here are a few simple tips. After all, a person needs healthful food to think, work and thrive!

- Read the label and stay away from highly processed foods, sugar, artificial sweeteners, refined grains, trans fats, and products that have a lot of salt.
- Limit the amount of beef in your diet. According to a U.S. National Cancer Institute study, “Diets high in red meat and in processed meat shorten life span not just from cancer and heart disease but from Alzheimer’s, stomach ulcers and an array of other conditions as well”. Try substituting beef with fish, turkey or chicken.
- Eat raw fruits and vegetables. Natural foods play important roles in your body: fruits cleanse, vegetables build, grains sustain, and herbs help heal.

The Power of Smiling: Worth its Weight in Chocolate

Emily Chase Just how powerful is a smile? Can smiling have life-altering effects? Are there any biochemical or neurological pathways that are enhanced with frequent smiling? The question of the day is this: Does smiling really make one happier?

Psychologists at the University of Cardiff in Wales sought to answer this question by injecting Botox into female subjects to stop them from frowning. The Botox recipients reported feeling happier and less anxious than the control group; yet they did not report feeling any more attractive; which suggests that the emotional effects were not driven by a psychological boost that could come from the treatment’s cosmetic nature. According to researcher Michael Lewis, a co-author of the study, “It would appear that the way we feel emotions isn’t just restricted to our brain—there are parts of our bodies that help and reinforce the feelings we’re having. It’s like a feedback loop.”

In another study performed in Germany at the Echnische Universitat, scientists injected Botox into people to stop them from smiling and measured the brain activity before and after they injected the Botox. They found that that the smiling activated the

brain’s region of emotional processing, the amygdala and hypothal-amus, which suggests that smiling does in fact make people happier.

Does the type of smile change a person’s degree of happiness? Professors at UC Berkeley measured the yearbook smiles of students who had graduated, and then analyzed their well-being over the course of their lives. The professors found that overall people with wider smiles had higher scores on standardized tests of well-being and happiness.

On the flip side, it appears that frowning can also decrease a person’s level of happiness. A study published in May 2008 in the Journal of Pain noted that people who frown during an unpleasant procedure report feeling more pain than those who do not. Researchers applied heat to the forearms of twenty-nine

participants, who were asked to either make unhappy, neutral or relaxed faces during the procedure. The people who made unhappy facial expressions reported being in more pain than those who did not.

Research indicates a definite correlation between smiling and feelings of happiness, but does the same apply if someone smiles at you? Does that cause the smile’s recipient to feel happier? An expert on the subject, Ron Gutman, publicized an interesting finding conducted by Hewlett Packard. The researchers tested 109 people by showing them photos of various people smiling, giving them chocolate and money, and then measuring their brain activity and heart rate to interpret responses to the stimuli. They found that the smile of a friend was equal to 200 chocolate bars, the smile of a loved one was equal to 600 chocolate bars, and

the smile of a child was equal to the extraordinary amount of 2,000 chocolate bars.

Psychologist Dr. David Lewis says, “The powerful emotions triggered when someone important in our lives smiles at us, and we smile back, changes our brain chemistry.” But it can’t be a fake smile; it has to be a real genuine smile. Dr. Lewis continues, “...the fake smiles of royalty and politicians are detected and have the opposite effect, giving the person an untrustworthy and hypocritical image.”

Furthermore, researchers Tara Kraft and Sarah Pressman told their subjects to use chopsticks to form smiles on their faces. They were told either to form forced smiles, to form full smiles that include the eyes, or to remain expressionless. They found that those who forced smiles were less stressed than the ones who remained expressionless, but those that smiled fully were even less stress than those who forced smiles. According to this study, it seems that smiling can decrease stress. This is a good point of advice; smile more, stress less. After all, a smile is worth its weight in chocolate.



Swimming Pools: Cancer Causing?

Michal Schechter As summer approaches, swimming is a popular activity and a great way to keep in shape during the heat-filled lazy days. Working out in water enables more muscles to be exercised, while putting relatively little stress on the joints. This makes swimming an ideal workout for those affected by arthritis. However, people should be aware that while swimming does have health benefits, swimming pools do have carcinogenic (cancer-related) risks associated with them. It is important for swimmers to be aware of the pros and cons associated with the water they will be splashing in these upcoming months.

Pool water is not just composed of filtered tap water, but it's also treated with chemicals in order to rid the water of potentially dangerous germs and pathogens. To keep the pool clean and germ-free, the most common chemical used in order to disinfect the pool water is a chlorine-based disinfectant. This disinfectant, which is both effective and relatively inexpensive, releases hypochlorous acid into the water that destroys the harmful bacteria found in the pool. Aside from reacting with the matter already in the pool area, the chlorine also reacts with organic substances that the swimmers themselves introduce into the pool, such as sweat, urine, lotion, and sunscreen. These reactions produce harmful disinfectant byproducts, known as DBP's.

Chemicals from the water may af-

fect people in the pool either through skin-contact with the water, or by swallowing the pool water. Often, the chemical reactions that take place between the chlorine and the materials in the pool water cause gases to be released into the pool atmosphere and stay above the water. Aside from ingesting the water with the DBP's and absorbing them through their skin, swimmers breathe in chemicals from the air above the pool. In indoor pools, chloroform and trichloramine are present in the air, and various aerosols are found above the surface of outdoor pools. Interestingly, heated pools also have a higher concentration of DBP's than unheated pools.

A study done on swimming pool water was performed and significant mutagenic responses were recorded. A high level of DNA breaks were found in cultured human cells after exposure to chlorinated water. Additionally, an investigation conducted in 2010 examined urine samples collected from people before and after swimming. An Ames assay, or assay

that tests for mutagenicity of a substance, showed a significant rise in the mutagenicity of the urine samples after swimming. Blood samples from the swimmers were also obtained, and an increased frequency of DNA damage was observed. Research done on reconstructed human skin also showed that there were abnormalities in the cells of the skin models upon exposure to the DBP's in the chlorinated water.

Moreover, a study compared the mutagenicity of pool water and drinking water. Surprisingly, the researchers learned that while the pool water did have genotoxic properties, so did the drinking water. In fact, they discovered that the drinking water was just as mutagenic as the swimming pool water.

Additional research has been done to determine whether swimming pool water may cause asthma. Some studies have concluded that the gases released by the chlorination in water treatments can result in induced asthma. This would help explain why asthma affects a higher percentage of

athletes who swim than athletes who do not. Yet it is still unclear whether chlorine actually causes asthma, or whether people with asthma are more likely to swim.

It is important to work on gaining a better understanding of the chemistry of swimming pool water and the potential risks associated with the water. Most of the research on the effects of disinfectant by-products from the chlorination of pool water has only been published in the last few years, so this field of research is still relatively new. Although the potentially adverse health effects of the pool are not fully known, steps may still be taken in order to minimize harm. The general public should become more willing to modify their behaviors in relation to swimming pools and there are a few hygiene requirements that public pools in the United States can require of their swimmers either before or during swimming. Public swimming pools should oblige their participants to shower before entering the pool area, which will reduce the amount of disinfectant needed and therefore the amount of DBP's that the swimmers will be exposed to. Swimmers should also be encouraged to take frequent bathroom breaks. By making the public more aware of pool hygiene, swimming pools will become a safer and healthier place for people to swim in, whether for exercise or pleasure.



Tall Tales of Mind-Controlting Parasites

Yael Horvath When we think of animals in the African Sahara, we picture herds of zebra, families of elephants, and flocks of birds. We see animals travelling in groups because we assume that there is a safety to large numbers or a mating and breeding advantage. But underlying this assumption is the notion that these animals are acting of their own accord. We assume that like us, animals are in control of their own behavior.

But are they really?

Artemia, a brine shrimp, more commonly known as the sea monkey, typically lives a solitary life in the depths of the ocean. However, these shrimp are occasionally found in large red swarms that sometimes span for meters. Biologists have been puzzled by this phenomenon, and after years of research, have found that their change in social behavior is due to a manipulative parasite. A parasitic tapeworm invades the shrimp's system and not only drains nutrients, but also changes its body color from transparent to bright red. Additionally, it causes the shrimp to swim in large groups. The reason for this is that ultimately, the shrimp are just a temporary stepping stone in the tapeworm's ultimate voyage toward reproduction, which it can only do in the intestine of a flamingo. Thus, to get there, it manipulates its shrimp-host into forming conspicuous swarms that are easy for flamingo to spot. Instead of the shrimp acting socially of its own accord, it is being controlled by an insidious parasite.

Another example of a parasitic manipu-

lation is the suicidal cricket. When a cricket swallows the larvae of a certain worm, the worm hatches and grows within the cricket's body. The worm, however, can only mate and reproduce in water, so it releases proteins that addle the cricket's brain, causing it to behave unpredictably and irrationally. Thus, when the cricket nears a body of water, it jumps in and drowns itself, and the worm, wriggling out of its host, mates in its ideal habitat.

Examples of parasitic hijacking are numerous, which leads to the terrifying question of just how prevalent these occurrences are, and just how much influence they have over living organisms. After reading about these phenomena, I would like to find solace in the fact that these high tales of mind-control are mere outliers of the natural world that oppose the norm.

However, Kevin Lafferty's research group found that parasites exist in extreme abundance. Just a single species of parasites called trematodes are microscopic on an individual level, but collectively, weigh as much as all the fish in the coastal body of water he was studying. In addition, Japanese scientist Takuya Sato found that just one stream he was studying contained so many corpses of the above mentioned suicidal cricket that the weight of the drowned insects made up 60% of the diet of local trout. Therefore, manipulation is not the oddity. As disquieting as it sounds, it is critical and common in the natural world around us.

What makes these stories about parasites so sinister - and yet so compelling - is that they expose our most primal fears of being stripped of the independence and free-will we pride ourselves on. While we, humans, are no strangers to manipulation - taking drugs to shift the chemistries of our brains to change our moods, and succumbing to advertisements that are designed to influence our thinking - we have yet to experience the fine-tuned artistry of parasitic control. The premium we place on our own freedom is manifest when the thought of losing it is written in literature as the stuff of the darkest fiction. We simply cannot fathom the possibility of being controlled by anything other than our own minds. And so we wonder - with tentative and halting breath - whether there are, in fact, incidences of sinister parasites affecting human behavior.

One parasite, *Toxoplasma gondii*, or toxo, for short, infects a wide variety of mammals, but can only reproduce inside a cat. Scientist Joanne Webster has found that when toxo gets into a rat or a mouse, it chemically alters its brain to deliberately seek out the smell of cat urine, rather than to run away from it. Thus the cat preys on the mouse, and toxo, now at its final destination, reproduces. The eerie thing about this example is that cats, like people, are mammals. We are made of the same basic structure, the same type of cells, and we have the same chemicals running through our brains. It's not surprising, therefore, to learn that toxo

exists in humans as well.

According to the CDC, more than sixty million people in the United States may be infected with the toxo parasite. Similarly, serological studies estimate that up to one third of the world's population has been exposed to and may be chronically infected with toxo, although infection rates vary by country. Though it is not connected to any overt and deadly illness, it can manifest itself in those with compromised immune systems, such as infants and pregnant women. The most common ways that toxo is transmitted include: consuming raw or undercooked meat containing *T. gondii* tissue cysts, by ingesting water, soil, or vegetables contaminated with cysts shed in the feces of an infected animal, from a blood transfusion or organ transplant, or trans-placental transmission from mother to fetus, especially in a case where *T. gondii* is contracted during pregnancy.

Further research has shown that toxo infection can cause changes in personality and some researchers even say that those with schizophrenia are more likely to be infected with toxo. Therefore, while evidence and data are still highly inconclusive, it would be implausible for us to think that humans are resistant to parasitic manipulation. We too, are affected, and it is worth recognizing the beauty of their prevalence, to explore these invisible critters that crank the wheels of Mother Nature, and shape the world as we know it.

Open Hearts, Open Doors: Social Media Project at Stern Goes Viral

Continued from page 5

Media Studies. “I just sat there refreshing the page for three hours and sending emails and messages to my family and friends about our campaign and its rapid success.”

Open Hearts: Open Doors had reached its goal, and doubled it, in a matter of twenty-four hours. Weizman and the group were getting calls from Sara’s entire extended family thanking them for all their help and efforts and behalf of their family. The group quickly updated their page, thanking all their supporters and updating the new goal to be \$24,000, to help remodel other areas of the house.

By class that evening, the group’s professor, Robert Longert, co-founder and manager of Day One Agency and media expert who had been teaching social media and Stern for three semesters, was speechless as well. “It’s amazing to see something like this happen,” he told the class. “Congratulations so far, but there’s still so much more to go.”

The group took Longert’s encouragement and continued to publicize their campaign, and its success to family and friends. By the weekend, in a matter of 100 hours, the campaign had raised over \$24,000 for Sara and her family, hitting their new goal. Now, Open Hearts: Open Doors was not only helping Sara tremendously, but instantly becoming a celebrated campaign in both the Jewish and crowd-funding scenes.

Nicole Berlin, a resident of Great Neck, saw how her friends in her community were

quickly spreading Sara’s story though Facebook updates and messages. But even so, she was astounded at how a few Facebook messages could translate into funds. “I knew we would raise the amount we set out to raise,” she shares, “but I was not expecting it to happen and such a short amount of time - and then far exceeding our goal.”

Aleah Gornbein, another team member, was not only surprised at how quickly the money was pouring in, but at people’s generosity and willingness to give so much. The campaign received multiple donations of over \$1,000, many of which were anonymous.

Michal Kaplan-Nadel, a senior majoring in Media Studies, credits the skills that Professor Longert taught in his course to the campaign’s success. She reflects that, “All semester long, and throughout the entire year of learning about social media, Rob stressed that the key to a successful campaign would be to bring a good, sharable story to the right audience. This campaign really brought out to life and put it into a reality.”

How did the campaign share Sara’s story? “People just shared it with friends and family. When they connected to the story, they wanted to tell it over to their friends and family. We had a large group of people.” Longert adds, “It’s spreadable media at its best. There is emotion connected, people are invested.”

Many in the group said that they expected to raise maybe \$400, and perhaps even if they focused their efforts on advertising the story to influencers with large online com-

munities, they would reach their goal. The rapid and enormous responses that Open Hearts: Open Doors received propel the group to continue the campaign in bigger and better ways.

The group largely credits their family and friends for donations, but recognizes that a large amount of funds came from Sara’s community in Long Island, Great Neck. Sara’s mom Tamar credits Sara, the Great Neck community, and social media for the campaign’s overwhelming success. “The funds raised are a testimony to how amazing this kid is, to how amazing to the community supporting her is, to the fabulous things that can be done through social media, and that there are so many caring people in the world,” she says.

As per supporter request, the group is working towards providing a tax deductible. The group also made it to the Indiegogo homepage, a space reserved to highlight some of its most successful campaigns. And now, the group is learning how to juggle the responsibility of making sure the perks are delivered to all the supporters, updating and maintaining the community, and publicizing this even bigger story than they had

set out to tell. “We’ve now had to shift our efforts from local publicity and just securing the funds to having the entire story, the story of Sara and of the community’s outpouring of support,” says Public Relations manager for the team, Kayla Weil, who is working with all the others to secure media coverage from Great Neck, Long Island, and New York broadcast and print outlets.

“It was a sellable story,” says Weizman, looking back on the success of the campaign. “It’s a story about a girl with a beautiful family overcoming barriers, and she deserved our help and support.”

“It’s really special,” says Longert. “There was no expectation, it was just an experiment. It’s not every day something like this happens.”

Update: The campaign has raised \$29,640 as of 5/9.



THIS MONTH IN STERN...

May 2014						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 BB vs Baruch College	2	3 Parshat Emor MES and Israel Club Shabbaton
4	5	6 Yom Ha’atzmaut	7 Reading Day	8 Reading Day	9 Reading Day	10 Parshat Behar Reading Week Shabbaton
11 Reading Day	12 Reading Day	13 Reading Day	14 SCW Final Exams B – 9:30 am E – 1:00 pm	15 SCW Final Exams J – 9:30 am M – 1:00 pm	16 SCW Final Exams L – 9:00 am N – 12:00 pm	17 Parshat Bechukotai Finals Shabbaton
18 SCW Final Exams HEBR – 10:00 am F – 1:00 pm	19 SCW Final Exams A – 9:30 am D – 1:00 pm	20 SCW Final Exams K – 9:30 am PQ & Organic Chem – 1:00 pm	21 SCW Final Exams C – 9:30 am GH – 1:00 pm	22 Commencement	23	24 Parshat Bamidbar In-House Shabbaton
25	26 Memorial Day	27 Summer Session 1 Begins	28	29	30	31