



The Yeshiva University

OBSERVER

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HAPPY 62ND BIRTHDAY, ISRAEL!

New Course on War Ethics to Culminate with Seminar in Jerusalem

Yaelle Frohlich

Yeshiva University's undergraduate schools will be pairing up with YU's Center for Ethics this fall to offer an interdisciplinary course in philosophy and political science called "Philosophical and Jewish Perspectives on Ethics and War." The semester's work will culminate in a four-day intensive seminar in January 2011 at Jerusalem's Mishknot Sha'ananim conference center, a hotspot for cultural activities overlooking the Old City, located in the Yemin Moshe neighborhood.

The questions listed in the course description read: "What Justifies War? How should prisoners be treated? Targeting civilians? How does Judaism view violence? What is the role of the military in Israel?"

Led by Rabbi Shalom Carmy and Center for Ethics Director Adrienne Asch, specific issues studied will include: Operation Cast Lead, Orthodoxy and military service, bioethics and non-conventional warfare and the relationship between halakha and warfare, to name a few.

The course will be open to students on both the Beren and Wilf Campuses, and will consist of ten sessions during the fall term. Five will be led at the Wilf Campus, five

at Beren. These NY classroom lessons will utilize video-conferencing, while the January seminar in Jerusalem will be co-ed in person.

Carmy, who has published several articles on Jewish attitudes toward different aspects of war in the "Torah uMadda Journal" and the "Orthodox Forum" (volume War and Peace), advises that students who are likely to benefit from this course are "[t]hose interested in general philosophical treatment of war and military action or in halakhic literature on the subject. In addition, students interested in the realities of Israeli existence; possibly those concerned about whether Jews and other pro-Zionists can explain their political position adequately to the liberal world."

Center for Ethics Program Director Dr. John Fousek believes that the course could also have practical applications for students who are, for example, thinking about living in Israel, joining the U.S. military (or any military) or going into public policy.

The course began as a suggestion of the University of Haifa's Professor of Philosophy Daniel Statman to bring together YU students for an intensive seminar/workshop about war ethics. Statman, a visit-

ing scholar to YU in fall 2007, has held military and war ethics as long-term research interests, according to Fousek. After YU faculty discussed the idea of the seminar, says Fousek, they came to the conclusion that a full course prior to the seminar would be "the best way to have this of greatest value."

Statman and Rabbi Yuval Chertok, the head of Petach Tikva's Yeshivat Hesder, will be coordinating the Jerusalem seminar, bringing together an array of military leaders, professors and roshei yeshiva to speak with students.

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The Observer

A maximum of 30 students will get to participate in the fall 2010 course, "Philosophical and Jewish Perspectives on Ethics and War," which will culminate in a four-day seminar in Jerusalem.

Inflated GPAs Finally Tackled

Tziona Rosenzveig

Under the auspices of Dean Karen Bacon, Stern College for Women has instituted a task force committee to tackle the distressing issue of grade inflation rampant at Stern College for Women. Many underestimate the magnitude and consequences of SCW's grade inflation reality. As Dr. Linda Shires, chair of the grade inflation task force and chair of the English department, acknowledged, grades have "spiraled out of control" to the point where "the B has become the new C."

The SCW task force advises and creates policies to help guide the teachers and faculty at SCW to ensure credit is given to students only when deserved. The new standards, which took effect in 2009, include possibly eliminating extra credit, clarifying syllabi, and emphasizing the students' performance rather than effort. Dr. Dennis Hoover, the Clinical Associate Professor in the SCW Economics Department, has implemented the policies of the task force in all of his classes. One such way that Hoover administered these changes was through "the elimination of all extra credit as a grading tool,"

as clarified in his syllabus.

Grade inflation has an impact beyond college—it affects who gets hired. Because of inflated grades, employers are unable to differentiate between superior and inferior employee applicants. High GPAs have become easier to achieve and are attained by 'average' students, putting more conscientious students at a disadvantage.

Stern College isn't the only institution to suffer from grade inflation; the growing problem has plagued universities of all sizes and prestige. SCW is following in the footsteps of Princeton University, which implemented an aggressive grade deflation policy in 2004; today the mean GPA is 3.39, down .07 points from 2003. Other universities—among them UC Berkeley, Duke and Harvard—have attested to the same problem of grade inflation.

At SCW, the hope of the grade inflation committee is that the new regulations will differentiate between a student who tries hard and one who does well; the latter being the student who deserves the A.

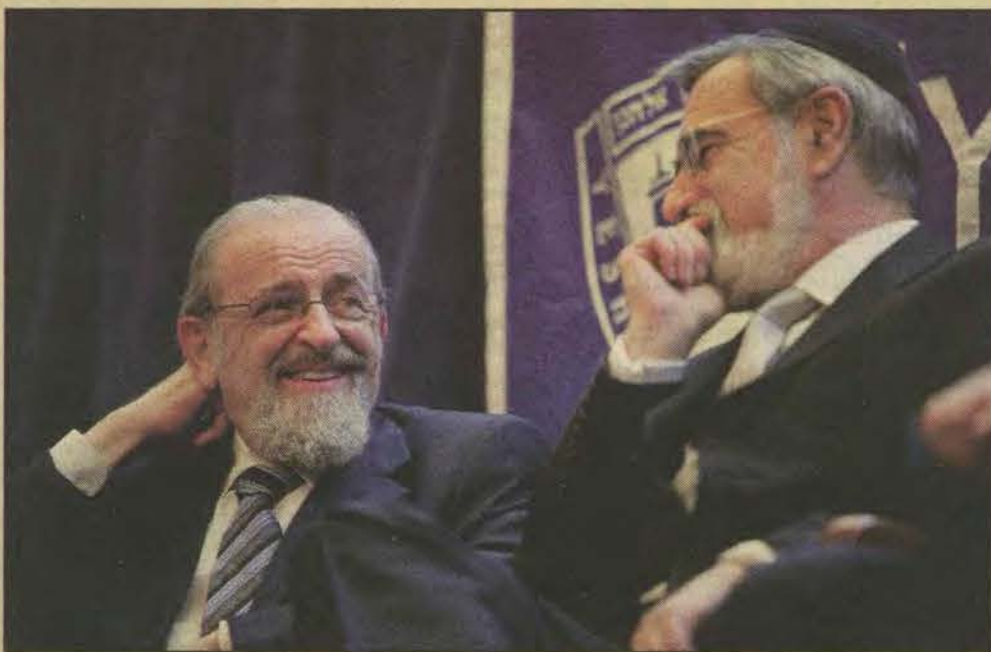


Image courtesy of Yeshiva University

Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth Lord Jonathan Sacks (pictured right, beside YU Chancellor and Rosh HaYeshiva Norman Lamm) received the inaugural Norman Lamm Prize on March 16. He, along with his wife, Lady Elaine Sacks, spent a week at Yeshiva University, addressing students, faculty and community members about topics on Jewish life, and graced Stern College for Women for a special March 20 Shabbaton.

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THOUGHTS OF STUDENT LEADERS

The Armchair Zionists and Me

Yaelle Frohlich, Editor-in-Chief



In 2007, after a series of "only in Israel" events, I found myself with my friend, Shayna, in the living room of recipient and master storytelling scholar Dov Noy. Although Shayna and I had expected to find a storytelling circle, in reality, the only other people there were Noy, Professor Rose Bilbool and an archeologist whose name I have since forgotten.

For most of the evening, we listened with wide-eyes as Bilbool (the name derives from the "pilpul" method of Talmud study) told the story of her escape from Nazi Europe. Bilbool, in her nineties, had grown up in Sighet, Transylvania, the hometown of Elie Wiesel (whom she remembers as a child). She had Zionist sentiments that were shared by her family, but while Bilbool wanted to move to the Land of Israel, her relatives, as she termed them, were "armchair Zionists"—content to analyze Zionist politics from their living rooms.

Bilbool enrolled at a Belgian university to study chemistry. When Jews were about to be expelled, one of her professors offered her the opportunity to use his connections to allow her to continue her studies in Jerusalem. Bilbool accepted. She was to become an accomplished chemist—a specialist in papaya enzymes, to be exact, whose healing properties she discovered accidentally when she cut open a papaya to salve the wounds of an injured British soldier she and a friend chanced upon while traveling to Jerusalem—and has operated her own laboratory in Jericho since the 1940s.

My chance encounter with some of Israel's educated European elite is, perhaps, a story worth telling in its own right. But it wasn't just the miracles of the papaya fruit that remained in my mind afterward. The phrase that Bilbool used for her European family and friends, "armchair Zionists," had a ring of bitter, humorous truth.

Since returning to North America after my year in Israeli seminary, I have thought often about what it means to be an armchair Zionist, if, indeed, I and so many others have unofficially joined their ranks. For now, at least, the answer seems to be yes. We all have political opinions, and some of our families even have Jerusalem apartments, but few of us have served in the IDF, done National Service or lost a loved one in a terrorist attack or Arab-Israeli war—tragically, one of the strongest bonds shared by "true" Israelis.

So what is the role of the armchair Zionists? Can the majority of us have any real role at all? How can I look my mother's friend in the eye, the friend who, during Operation Cast Lead, had a son on the Israel-Lebanon border and a daughter on a shelter-less military base just outside Gaza, and claim that I love Israel? Should I accept without question the guilt I so frequently feel?

Perhaps, or perhaps not.

At YU, all it takes is one day's worth of mass student emails to see the work that students and other community members are doing on behalf of the Jewish state. These activities range from Magen David Adom fundraisers to 5K excursions to rallies outside the United Nations. An Israel-themed edition of The Observer in honor of Israeli Independence Day is my own minute contribution to our homeland.

And yet, the UN rallies in which civil disobedience was the fiery norm in free Jewry's demand for justice seem long gone; in one of our February articles, one writer described how only a handful of

students turned up for a Reading Week counter-rally against Israel's demonizers. Iran inches closer and closer to achieving nuclear capacity, and the future of Israel and the free world looks uncertain (as always, some might claim).

I don't have the answers to the question that it means to live as a Jew outside the Jewish state, or what the future will bring. Traditionally, we trust that our people will physically and spiritually survive the ambiguous state of exile in which we find ourselves.

Today, despite hostile world politics, we celebrate the "silver platter on which the State of the Jews was given" to us, and mourn the lives of those who fell for our sakes—for don't ever believe that our safety in all the lands of our dispersion isn't thanks to their sacrifice. Today, from our University version of the Babylonian Yeshiva, on Israel's 62nd birthday and 43 years since we returned to Jerusalem, our sole and eternal Capital, we celebrate in our armchairs, in our dancing circles and in our hearts.

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NEWS

Valedictorian

Estie Neff

The General and Judaic studies valedictorian awards, purely GPA-based, will be presented at an award ceremony by the end of the current semester at Stern College for Women (SCW) once seniors file for graduation.

"We can't start the process of identifying a valedictorian until students file for graduation," said Associate Dean Ethel Orlian who, responsible for overseeing the entire SCW valedictorian decision process, has become an expert on the procedure.

Valedictorians at SCW are chosen based solely on their cumulative GPA. "We review the transcripts and award the honor to the student with the highest GPA," said Dean Orlian in an interview. The registrar usually asks students to file for graduation by the end of February and produces a report of candidates for graduation by descending GPA. Dean Orlian reviews the report, identifies those with the highest GPA, and carefully reviews their transcripts in order to announce the valedictorian prior to the Awards Assembly in May, and in time for the names to be published in the Commencement booklet. Seniors' current semester's grades are not taken into account.

If there is a tie for the highest GPA, the student who has taken the most credits on campus is selected, "since a student who took more credits, obviously excelled in more courses," Dean Orlian explains. Therefore, though seniors' last-semester grades have no bearing, their "credits in progress," as Dean Orlian calls them, may be the deciding factor between candidates for valedictorian.

This strict, clear-cut decision process is different from the previous procedure at SCW. Previously, the senior class would vote for valedictorian from the three students with the highest GPAs.

The voting system was phased out since "it didn't represent what

it was supposed to represent and students often felt that...it related to popularity," says Dean Orlian. After a request by the student body to reevaluate how the valedictorian was chosen, and "much discussion and investigation," recalls Dean Orlian, "the faculty and the Committee on Academic Standards—who put a proposal before the faculty—felt it was most fair that this academic award go to the candidate with the highest GPA." The Committee on Academic Standards, comprised of faculty, administrators, Student Affairs members and a student representative, deals with requests by students for accommodations to school policy. The Committee effectively ended the voting system between 1988 and 1990.

At Yeshiva College (YC), students still vote on the valedictorian. Fred Sugarman, associate dean of operations and student affairs, reviews a GPA list of YC seniors who fulfill the 94 on-campus credit requirement. Dean Sugarman and the GPA Faculty Panel choose ten finalists from the list, on which the entire YC student body votes to produce three top contenders for valedictorian. Finally, the senior student body votes on the top three, and the valedictorian is announced.

Students at SCW must also meet a residency requirement, albeit less than YC students, of at least 84 in-house credits and four semesters on campus to be considered for the valedictorian position, stresses Dean Orlian. Students who have been considered for May awards but who, upon a final check, fail to meet degree requirements in May are not considered for awards again at a later graduation date.

The Judaic studies valedictorian has a special significance in SCW, a school that distinguishes itself from other universities by balancing the secular world with Torah knowledge and ideology.

"Anyone who looks at an SCW transcript, and at a student's

overall college program, can appreciate just how significant Jewish Studies is, from both the academic and personal perspectives to our students and to our school," said Rabbi Dr. Ephraim Kanarfogel, chairman of the Judaic Studies department. "I would hope and imagine that being named the Jewish Studies valedictorian says to our students and to any outside observers that this student has the drive and the desire...to achieve academic success in an area that is most important to our school and to our university," he concluded.

Though SCW does not have a salutatorian, it has many awards for other academic and extra-curricular areas. This year's updated awards list includes awards for an "outstanding scholar athlete," public school students who have shown "growth and commitment to Jewish Studies," and "volunteer work in cancer research or with patients." Some awards are labeled "Any Subject"—unspecified, meant for departments that do not have their own awards but would like to nominate a student for one. Recipients of these awards receive cash prizes.

Both Dean Orlian and Rabbi Kanarfogel agree that students should not go to college with the singular goal of being crowned valedictorian. Rather, students should enjoy their classes and view their college years as a journey toward self-discovery and broadened horizons.

"I'm not sure that it is such a good idea to aim to be valedictorian," explained Rabbi Kanarfogel, suggesting instead that "students should choose classes that are challenging for them and that they believe will help them grow in terms of both knowledge and critical thinking." Dean Orlian would advise students "to take advantage of these years, and to learn as much as they can, and to do the best they can."

Volunteering a Helping Hand

Ayelet Kahane

When looking for a volunteer opportunity at the beginning of the year, Esther Shechtman, (SCW '11) found that she wasn't finding what she was looking for. "I didn't want to help people with their homework," said Shechtman, "I wanted to reach out to people." After looking into many different options, an idea of her own started to take form: to start a tutoring program with the public school in Murray Hill. Working in Murray Hill would allow for community relationships to take hold and be logistically effective.

With this idea, Shechtman turned to Stern staff and sent out a student e-mail to gauge student support. Through student e-mails, Shechtman learned of a program called Learning Leaders, which trains students to become tutors and then set them up in different high schools throughout the city. After speaking to Learning Leaders, she learned that the public school in Murray Hill has an abundance of help, and that therefore her help was needed elsewhere. She was then directed to Lanette Murphy, the parent-student coordinator at P.S. 15, a public school on the Lower East Side.

It was at this time that Shechtman found herself a partner: Avielle Schachter (SCW '11). Ironically, Schachter had spent hours over the summer doing the same legwork that Shechtman had just done, looking for a volunteer initiative in education. As a high school student at Mizrahi in Cleveland, she had been a tutor volunteer and, having loved the experience, wanted to create a similar program at Stern.

So the two met up, shared ideas, and devised the creative name "Helping Hands" for their newly constructed volunteer initiative. They then met with "Miss Mia"—Murphy's given nickname at P.S. 15—to coordinate ideas and set up a schedule for student volunteers.

In its first semester, Helping Hands had 25 ready student volunteers. This semester their number nearly doubled, with 40

student volunteers. The volunteers request age groups and once given a specific class, are responsible to spend a minimum of one hour a week at P.S. 15. There, they work as teachers' aides and help the students with their academic work. Most importantly, though, they provide the students of P.S. 15 with the attention and concern they rarely get.

"I try and be light with them, smile, and have fun with them," said Shechtman, "because it's all about giving these kids the attention and affection they're lacking at home." After having spent nearly the entire year in the same kindergarten class, Shechtman said that she feels close to the kids in her class and has great relationships with them. Schachter echoed these sentiments, adding that she feels that she and the other volunteers have inspired the kids of P.S. 15. "When they hear that we are in college, and aspiring to become, let's say, doctors, they are inspired to do the same," said Schachter.

It is important that the volunteers stay committed to the program, responsibly showing up at the school every single week because many of the students at P.S. 15 have little structure in their lives. In fact, Schachter recently learned that many of the kids are homeless, part of families living in various shelters. The transient nature of their lives gives them little stability and consistency. Volunteering for Helping Hands, therefore, requires great commitment, which the Stern student volunteers have demonstrated.

The program's feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. The volunteers love it, the teachers of P.S. 15 love it, and, most importantly, the children of P.S. 15 love it—and love the volunteers. "Randomly, the kids come up and hug me," said Shechtman. A true sign of affection, to be sure, and testament to the great reciprocity involved when lending another a Helping Hand.

New York Congressional District Candidates Discuss Israel

Hannah Robinow

On 15 March, 40 men and women from Yeshiva University and Stern College convened in Furst Hall to hear three candidates running for New York's 15th Congressional District, which includes Washington Heights, discuss their policies on U.S.-Israel relations, the Mideast peace process, and the Iranian nuclear threat.

The evening began with a statement sent in by Representative

Charles Rangel, the incumbent representative who is expected to lose his seat because of involvement in a tax scandal, who could not attend. It is in everyone's best interests to provide for a lasting peace to create economic opportunities for the Palestinians, he said, endorsing the continued negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians. In addition, he stated his continued support for House

Resolution 2194, which enacted stringent economic sanctions on the Iranian regime.

The other Democratic candidate, Vincent Morgan, has a different take on Iranian-US relations; he declared that we must differentiate between the regime and the people of Iran—we're talking about people versus a few bad apples. He also affirmed that the Middle East peace process must continue, but

the Israelis cannot negotiate with extremists; must try to protect people from such factions. Morgan discussed the need to bring the international community into negotiations, broadening the dialogue.

Reverend Michael Faulkner, the lone Republican candidate at the event, declared, the best hope we have for peace is a strong Israel. He then added, in reference to ho-

micide bombings that have taken place during previous attempts to negotiate peace in the Middle East, there is no easy road to peace when people are willing to lay down their lives to destroy the peace process. Faulkner is also a former New York Jet and pastor of the New Horizon Church in Harlem.

NEWS

Haiti: A Window into Israel's Aid Abroad

Tamara Freiden

Four months after the earthquake in Haiti, Israel continues to do its part within the international community for the remaining survivors. While receiving positive media coverage for setting up a field hospital only days after the disaster struck, many muted the praise by noting the apparent irony given Israel's role in humanitarian-aid supported Gaza.

Despite the international community's ambivalent attitude towards Israel's efforts, the state, all too familiar with disaster relief,

immediately came forward and sprung into action. The day after the quake struck it sent a 220-member delegation consisting of 40 doctors, 24 nurses, medics, X-ray technicians, and paramedics to set up a Medical Corp Field Hospital. From that point on stories of Israel's involvement were broadcast by media such as NBC.

It wasn't only the Israeli government that played a role in rescuing victims. Various organizations of numerous affiliations helped out in turn, as if providing a window

into the values that permeate Israeli culture. ZAKA was the first Israeli team to arrive in the area, flying straight from Mexico City, where they were working on a recovery mission following a helicopter crash. As the introduction to ZAKA's website notes, it is "the dominant rescue, life-saving and recovery non-governmental organization in Israel, working alongside law enforcement and emergency personnel in responding to incidents of terrorism, accidents or disasters." They do not only

work when disaster strikes Israel; many of the members working in Haiti gained their experience from serving in wake of Hurricane Katrina and the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami.

Immediate relief is not Israel's only emphasis, however. Israel Flying Aid (IFA), another organization bent on providing support during natural disasters, together with Orange Israel Telecommunications, is rebuilding an orphanage that will ultimately house 200 children for the long-term. Two weeks

after the earthquake struck, representatives set up tents and medical care to provide support to those children housed in the ruins of the old orphanage. Initially, the IDF provided tents, water, a generator, and primary medical care. Orange and IFA will continue from here, to reconstruct the orphanage in a three-stage process, as stated in a release by Joel Leyden of Israel News Agency.

While the rest of the world may take note only now of their actions abroad, various organizations have for years expanded beyond Israel's tiny borders to assist in international disasters, despite Israel's fair share of conflict and trauma. Among such organizations is the Israel Forum for International Humanitarian Aid (IsraAID), which was established to unite various organizations in Israel with similar goals in helping mankind in distress on a global level.

A member of IsraAID, Fast Israeli Rescue and Search Team (F.I.R.S.T.), was established in 1986 to do just that. They provide search and rescue teams whose main goal is to respond to disastrous situations around the world. There are 11 units based from Turkey to Mexico to Greece, and the teams are compiled of over 550 Israeli volunteers.

Disaster relief is only one element of Israel's sense of re-

sponsibility abroad, it also reaches out on the international health front. An example of their health work is the Save a Child's Heart Foundation's (SACH), which was created to "provide urgently needed pediatric cardiac surgery and advanced follow-up care for children from developing countries suffering congenital heart diseases," according to their mission statement. SACH treats children from Ethiopia, Nigeria, Zanzibar, Congo, China, Vietnam, Ghana, Jordan and more, both on site and abroad. Another health initiative is the Jerusalem AIDS Project (JAIP) which works to combat, prevent, and provide education for HIV. JAIP's models have been adapted in over 27 countries.

Israel's involvement around the globe goes on. Regarding the earthquake in Haiti, Prime Minister Netanyahu said that Israel's response "expresses the deep values that have characterized the Jewish people and the State of Israel all throughout our history." The many organizations who not only came to Haiti, but have been helping victims of one global disaster after another, attest to the character and compassion that the people of Israel feel for those beyond their own country. For more information about these organizations and others, visit the website Israaid.org.il.

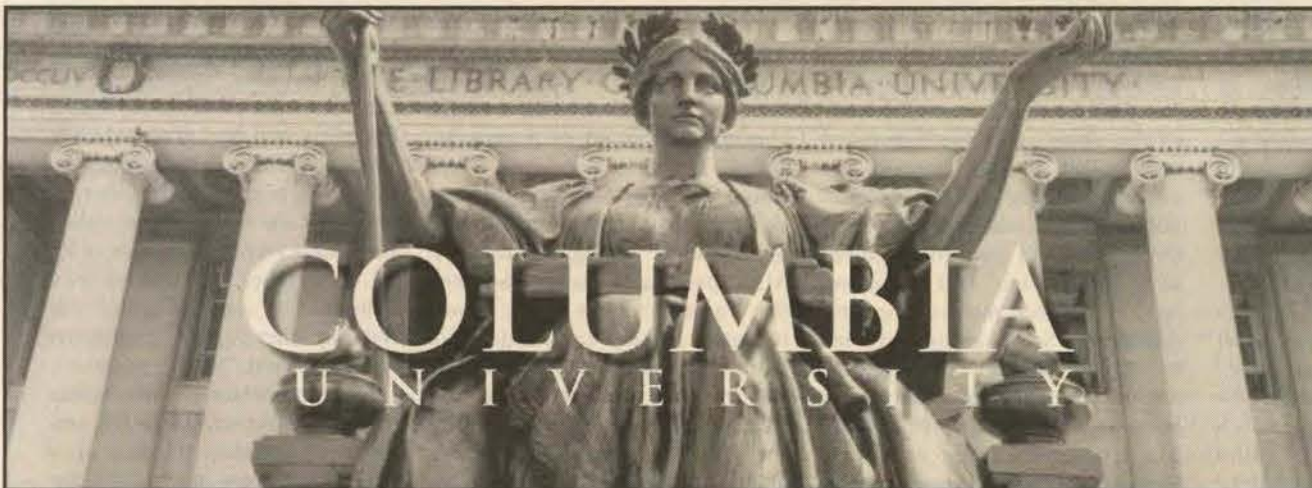
New Course on War Ethics

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"In a way, [the seminar] is both the culmination and the core of the course," explains Fousek. "...One of the things we're excited about in bringing this to Stern and Yeshiva College students is the unique opportunity to study these questions in Israel with people who are really leading experts in the field...the perspective of a society that lives with war and the threat of war in a way that the United States does not."

"The people he's going to be bringing together, we wouldn't be able to bring together in New York," he adds.

While the cost of the Jerusalem seminar will be covered by the tuition for the course, it is not yet confirmed whether students will be expected to provide their own airfare to Israel. "The university is seeking additional funding to provide air travel for all students enrolled in the course," writes Asch. "Regardless of that additional funding, the Center for Ethics is working with the student financial aid offices to make funds available for airfare for students with demonstrated financial need."



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FEATURES

What SCW Loves About Israel

Compiled by Liatte Tsarfati

Six years after the state of Israel was declared, Stern College for Women was born. Over the years, Stern women have studied in Israeli seminaries, danced in New York City's Israel Day parades, consumed countless quantities of Israeli food, studied the various religious, historical, and political aspects of the holy land in classes, and hosted Israeli speakers, rabbis, soldiers, and students. In honor of the treasured state's 62nd Independence Day, "The YU Observer" is proud to present what Stern College for Women loves about Israel...

I love to stand on Har HaZeitim where I experience the warm embrace of my beloved parents who rest in its soil and where I hear the promise of our historic destiny carried on the wind. -Dean Karen Bacon

Bus drivers who wish you "Shabbat Shalom"! - Rivka Dobin, '11

Seeing yeshiva students and chayalim [soldiers] davening and dancing together at the Kotel. The Kotel has this power in bringing forth an achdus [unity] that is so unique that no other place in the world has. - Atara Arbesfeld, '13

I love that it is normal to eat falafel for breakfast while reading the newspaper in the center of Shuk Machane Yehuda. - Ayala Kurlander, '10

I love that when I go back [to Israel] it's like slipping right back into a comfy, old, worn-in sweatshirt I haven't worn in awhile. I love that everyone there is like family; no one is afraid to yell at each other! And that no matter where I go, I feel safe because it is my land, it is my home. - Aliyah Guttman, '12

What I love about Israel is that even though I'm so far away, I will never lose my connection. - Ilana Brandt, '12

We love our fro-yo on the way to the Kotel! - Shoshana Arnow '11, Gila Mandelcorn '11, Liron Krishtal '11

What I love most about Israel is the atmosphere in which vigorous, vibrant, spirited, and informed conversation and debate about things Jewish can be had amongst Jews of different backgrounds, views, and stations in life- anywhere, in any situation, and in a moment's notice- and in a spirit of "it's all in the family". This is going on some of the time today. It ought to happen more. - Rabbi Dr. Aharon H. Fried
Fresh hot falafel in a laffa!

- Melissa Lowinger, '10

That when you travel throughout the land, you pass a highway sign and think to yourself "Dovid Hamelech fought a battle there!" - Adina C. Brizel, '10

I love the terms of endearment- kapara, motek, neshama, etc. - Alyson Jacobs, '10

Milk comes in a bag! - Danielle Lent, '11

Singing Baqashot at the Ades synagogue according to the Aleppian tradition at 4:00AM Shabbat mornings while drinking Turkish coffee. - Rabbi Richard Hidary

The Hebrew version of the word snorkel- "shnorkel"! - Sara Hindin, '10

How the buses in Israel say "chag sameach" whenever there is a chag [holiday]- I LOVE that! - Raquel Amram, '11

I love arsim [punks]. - Naomi Friede, '12

It's the only place in the world where your taxi driver invites you over for Shabbat dinner. - Debra Strashun, '12

I love that when I hike in Israel I

feel like I am doing something holy. - Aliza Abrams, CJF

I love walking the streets of Jerusalem and seeing how our history is interwoven into the fabric of the modern city. - Professor Deena Rabinovich

What I love about Israel: Where the #1 song on the radio is "V'hee Sheamda." - Ruthie Braffman, '10

How everyone calls you "Chamuda"! - Yael Brodsky, '10

The rhythm of the streets. - Ilana Hostyk, '12

Hearing a Torah shiur being played out loud on Jerusalem's city bus. - Shira Goldstein, '11

Burgers Bar! - Tova Kelman, '11

THE MEN! - Anonymous, '10

I love the sense of camaraderie I feel with every person I see, it's like we're one big extended family. - Chana Scholl, '11

I treasure the opportunities that I have to conduct manuscript research in Israel and to share my findings with my colleagues there. I return to the States from every single one of those trips, no matter how brief, palpably re-energized in my commitments to studying and

teaching Torah, and in my love for Erez and Medinat Yisra'el. - Rabbi Dr. Ephraim Kanarfogel

I love the siren that goes off every Friday warning us that Shabbat is coming. - Suri Berman, '11

I love pita bread. - Rebecca Palgon, '10

Tremping! - Leora Niderberg, '12

I love the multi-kippah mincha minyans that sprout up in parks during chol hamoed bar-b-ques. - Estie Neff, '11

One of the things that stands out for me about Israel is the sense that Israel is history in the making for the Jewish people. It's the feeling that the essence of the Jewish people stems from our homeland. When I am in Israel, I'm enveloped by that essence. - Dean Beth Hait

Today there are 32 mitzvot we can only do in Eretz Yisrael that we cannot do in America. That's 32 more ways to serve Hashem! - Samantha Hyman

Falafel b'laffa. - Sarah Mansher, '12

I love the open miracles on a day to day basis. We still exist. - Metukah Hechtman, '11

I love the ability to sit next to a complete stranger on a bus in Israel, and get into a conversation about Judaism, politics, or any other topic, and feel as though I am speaking to a long-lost family member I just hadn't had the opportunity to meet yet!

- Rabbi Lawrence Hajioff

In a cab back from the doctor's, suffering from my second sinus infection in three weeks, my driver asked me why I chose his taxi over all the other taxis. I told him I'd seen the "Rehavia" sign in his window, and knew that his was an authorized Jerusalem cab. He then gave me a wonderful mussar lesson. The previous day, he'd been worried about his income, and hadn't halted his driving to visit his mother in hospital. Yet, business had been bad all day. Today, however, he had stopped to visit her and—wonder of wonders!—business had flowed steadily. "There's no such thing as coincidence," he enthused in Hebrew. "HaKadosh Barukh Hu is telling me that you should never be so worried about your parnassah [livelihood] that you're afraid to do a mitzvah." It was the best sinus infection of my life.

-Yaelle Frohlich, '10

I love Israel because it is a holy land that Hashem gave to us as a present. - Rebecca Schechter, '11



"The Streets of Jerusalem"

Richard Frank

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FEATURES



Interview: Kenya McGrier

Ilana Hostyk

The interview was conducted in the Stanton Hall Cafeteria-Kushner Dining Hall.

She rules the room with a strong smile and a stronger backbone, the woman we look to for lunch-time encouragement and midday snacks to reinvigorate us for the studies at hand. She's the swiftest and most efficient at working the Caf machines, and the person who keeps the room organized and clean. Kenya McGrier always has a good word and a bright smile for us. Encouraging us with her fashion-sense and sense of humor—this snazzy lady brightens up our whitewashed cafeteria.

Q: Where you are from?

I am from the Bronx, and have lived there my whole life. My mom and dad were both from the Bronx. I have one brother, older, who lives in Germany. I have another sister in Long Island (she's the oldest). I'm the baby, but the first to do everything. I have six nephews, and two nieces.

Q: What is your brother doing in Germany?

He's a Colonel in the U.S. army, been in the army for over 30 years. He's married and has six kids.

Q: Did you ever go visit?

Sure. It's beautiful over there, clean, and the food tastes different. It's an acquired taste—the meat is cooked differently, the salad has actual flowers in it.

Q: Whom did you get your name from?

My name is actually an African country. My mom liked that name the best. We all have African American names. Turkia, we call her Teena. My brother is Keenan, like the comedian Kaleem.

Q: Can you give us a short summary of your childhood?

I was a real quiet kid, did everything I was supposed to do. Had my first kid when I was 16. I still went to school and finished school. College was really hard because I was working and taking care of my

baby. I did what I was supposed to do. I finished college, got my BA. I was going to John Jay for criminal law, but kept working and working. Then I went to get my business administrative degree. Today, I do what I have to do to support my family.

Q: How many kids do you have?
Three kids, Justin 15, Kaijah 8, Noah 9 months. Joyce [another beloved YU staff member] is my baby's godmother. I leave my house at 5:30 AM to take my baby to the babysitter before work. I don't see the two older ones before they go to school; I try to get them all ready for school at night. The girl, she's more responsible than the boy. She wakes him up!

It's not the best thing in the world, but my husband and my kids, that's the thing that keeps me going. My husband puts me in my place once in a while, because I got a real sharp mouth sometimes (laughs), but I love him. I couldn't do much without him.

Q: When did you start working at YU?

October, 2004. The beginning was nice, people were friendly.

I live in the Bronx, but take the train. The train ride takes around 40 minutes. I listen to my iPod, read. I like to read. Urban books, they're fun, not all of it relates to me, but it keeps you going. They're fun, different categories. Shows you how with some girls, trouble catches up to them.

Q: Two most played songs on your iPod:

I would listen to God speak before I listen to anything else. I am very religious. I may cuss, I may drink, but I never forgot that I was born and raised in the church. I do sing, but only in church and to my kids. I believe in one God, one Jesus, my angels, and that's it. My two favorite songs are "I won't complain" and the other one is "Endow." The radio is not really my style. I'm more of a slow type of person. I don't like that rap and stuff.

Renee Kestenbaum

The eight-year-old and his six-year-old sister scramble down a mountain of dirt, he with flyaway peyoyth (sidelocks) riding the wind and one hand securing his hand-knitted kippah, she with curls bouncing and dress clinging to her knees as she runs, both raising clouds of white dust around ragged sandals. After school every day they explore new tracks down the side of the mountain, headed home. Each afternoon is different. The cleared paths through the rubble may have shifted or disappeared completely since their morning hike to school, depending on how much progress the builders have made. But that's life while the settlement is expanding.

Eight- and six-year-old Shmuel and Miriam Cohen live in the settlement Mitzpe Yericho, an oasis transplanted from some more fertile valley to a mountain in the Judean Desert, surrounded by sand dunes and overlooking the ancient-destroyed, modernly rebuilt Arab city of Yericho (Jericho) to the east. On a clear day you can see Yam HaMelah, the Dead Sea, in the distance.

In the thirty-two years since Mitzpe Yericho was established, the small Jewish subsection of the "Benjamin Area," land that was biblically apportioned to the tribe of Binyamin, has flourished into a multi-faceted community. Its continued existence is the subject of constant peace talks, always at risk, though Mitzpe's 300 families show no signs of knowing it. They are prepared to live on the mountaintop forever. They've built all the necessities for Jewish life: several different shuls, a yeshiva, an elementary school, a wedding hall, and a makolet (corner store). Small playgrounds squeeze themselves between every few houses, sheltered by olive and carob trees and rough desert stone. Shmuel and Miriam don't know that their lives and their homes are contested by most of the Western world and its leaders. These are their streets, their gardens and hideaways, their mountain of rubble.

The adults may have reason to worry. One of the major roadblock issues between Israel and her enemies (and, arguably, her allies) is removing illegal outposts.

The Israeli government imposes

Q: Does the job here ever get boring?

It's not boring, it keeps you going, but on the other hand, when you're tired, and want to take a break, you can't. The break goes by so fast, we get 15 minutes, then 45 another time, different from other departments, they get 15 minutes more to change into their clothes. Body wise, the lifting, the carrying, it takes a toll on you. Food Services is different from other jobs. But I've

continued on page 9

Down to Earth

strict codes on construction in the disputed territories. Structures within a settlement that fail to meet these requirements are considered "illegal outposts," and there are committees set up to investigate construction. All construction in the disputed territories has been "frozen."

Barry Cohen, Shmuel and Miriam's father, laughs when he tells the story of how one lone caravan came to land on a nearby mountaintop. "The minute they said to freeze, he started building," he relates of that Mitzpe settler. "He pushed the government to run pipes out to him, and he won!"

It's a typical reaction of impassioned settlers. Sharona Fried of Beit-El, a stone's throw from Ramallah, tells a similar story of a group of young couples who set up house in caravans in order to expand their settlement. "The police came to stop them," she recalls.

Unlike the Cohens, who made aliyah as a young family, Sharona is a fully bloomed sabra. She grew up in Beit-El, and remembers when settlers were expelled from Gush Katif in 2005. She even protested in the Gush on their behalf, but does not imagine that the same could happen to her. Like every 21-year-old, she is idealistic and excited about life. She is eager to improve her English, and she likes to jog and do yoga. During the week she lives in Yerushalayim (Jerusalem), where she is studying to become a nurse, but Sharona returns home every week for Shabbat.

Shabbat is a spiritual recharge, for all Jews, but it is particularly special to witness in the settlements. The great majority of these settlements are religious, described as Dati Leumi by Sharona Fried and as Tzioni by Barry Cohen and as Mizrahi by others. They are a difficult group to label. The clearest definition is the example of the Fried family, who are as proud of one son who serves in the religious sector of the Israeli army as they are of their youngest son, their "little chassid," who learns full-time in a yeshiva.

These families take Shabbat seriously. On Friday night, when the candles are lit and the streets are filled with children playing and white-clad shul-goers, a sense of peace settles. The Cohens' shul in Mitzpe Yericho is heavily influenced by the teachings of Shlomo Carlebach, and Kabbalat Shabbat (the psalms and liturgy that usher in the Sabbath) features a healthy dose of singing, clapping, and dancing. Shabbat demands a break from creative, constructive activity and a focus instead on the ultimate purpose behind everything that we as Jews undertake. Shabbat gives meaning to all the toils of the week.

The weekly toils on a settlement are especially difficult. Though life seems stable, there are constant

reminders that it is not.

These reminders often come from Arab neighbors.

Sometimes the reminder is an annoyance, like long lines at the checkpoint barriers at the Green Line. Sometimes, it is a cement blockade in the middle of a road. Aliza Tannenbaum, a resident of Efrat (one of the largest settlements in the Gush Etzion area, popular with American olim) lives on a road with such a blockade. She says that it was built by an Arab from another village who owns that stretch of road. He refuses to sell the several feet of land, and he built the blockade to prevent drivers from using it.

Barry Cohen jokes that an Arab poisoned his litter of puppies after the one that he had sold him ran away. "But I can't prove anything," he says.

Sometimes the reminders are more devastating, as in the case of 13-year-old Shlomo Nativ who was axed to death on April 2, 2009 just outside Bat Ayin, a community not far from Efrat. Anshel Pfeffer of "Haaretz News" writes that random acts of violence have been increasing since March of last year, several knifings and shootings and a car bomb.

Last fall, Mitzpe Yericho also suffered a tragedy - three families lost their adolescent sons to a car accident.

But the settlers choose instead to focus on the ultimate goal of all the Jewish people, the times of Moshiach (the Messiah). The hope is tantalizing, exciting. Reminders of Moshiach are everywhere in Mitzpe Yericho: an image of Maarat HaMachpela (the Cave of the Patriarchs/Matriarchs) carved into a stone near the Cohens' shul, a toy model of a rebuilt Beit Hamikdash on display outside a neighbor's home. Recently, the community has taken this idea one step further. On Sukkoth the community, sponsored by the Temple Institute, began building a full-size model of the Beit Hamikdash complete with all its vessels and garments. They also hold training classes for kohanim and leviim, instructing them in the daily tasks they will undertake in the future. The kick-off party for these programs was a hol hamoed extravaganza that the Cohen kids still talk about.

They talk about the rappelling and the cotton candy just as they talk about the mizbeah, and the new songs they learned in school, the project they did in an art club, or their high scores on a computer game. Shmuel and Miriam absorb many lessons, but many things fly over their heads. They may not see or understand the implications of the Beit HaMikdash, or realize that building it is as controversial as building the new neighborhood. For them, Mitzpe is not a news item or protest, a hope or prayer. It's home.

FEATURES

Hadassah Hospital: A Point of Light

Ayelet Kahane

Two years ago, while celebrating Israel's 60th birthday in Israel, I remember wondering if I would one day celebrate Israel's 100th birthday in Israel, too. Morbid as it may sound, I wondered if I would be around for the occasion, and furthermore if I would be fortunate enough to be in Israel. It suddenly struck me that I could ask the same question about Israel itself: would Israel be around on its 100th birthday?

While our generation tends to take Israel for granted, relating to our Jewish state as an in-

vincible entity, there is no way to ignore the plethora of threats to the very existence of the Jewish state. Terror attacks, belligerent neighboring countries, dangerous demographic developments and shortages of water are among the threats that overwhelm me when thinking about Israel's future. Perhaps most pressing, though, is the seemingly perpetual Arab-Israeli conflict in Israel. The conflict originated with waves of Jewish immigration to Palestine, and intensified with the War of Independence in 1948 (or Al-Nakba, "the

catastrophe," as Arabs refer to it) and the Six Day War in 1967. The ensuing Palestinian refugee crisis and continuous wars and antagonistic behaviors have left deep-seeded animosity between the two peoples, manifesting in an endless hostile conflict that we are still contending with today. Solutions seem hopeless, and many wonder how a resolution will ever be reached.

Although I certainly do not have the answers, recent experiences at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem have offered me a glimmer of hope

and revived my belief in the possibility of a future peace.

A few weeks ago, my family planned a birthday extravaganza for my grandmother's 70th birthday. The entire family had come to Israel for Pesach in order to celebrate this milestone together. The day began with bike riding and golf carting at the Hula Valley. My grandmother is not a very physically active person, but expressing a desire to assert her youthful spirit on her 70th birthday, she opted to ride a bike instead of a golf cart. Unfortunately, within minutes she fell from her bike, broke her femur bone, and was rushed to Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem for surgery and recovery.

It was for this reason that I spent a good portion of my week in Hadassah Hospital. I generally keep my hospital visits as short as possible; I don't have the stomach for them. But the more time I spent at Hadassah the more impressed I was with it. As I walked through the hospital I found myself amongst a wholly heterogeneous group of people. Head coverings ranged from hijabs to sheitels, kaffiyahs to kippahs. In my grandmother's room alone there was a Russian woman, an Israeli woman, a Moroccan woman, an Arab woman from the West Bank, and my grandmother, the American. The hospital staff, too, boasted of diversity. Arab and Israeli doctors and nurses worked side-by-side to heal the sick. It appeared that Hadassah Hospital was a successful microcosm of Arab-Israeli coexistence.

"Working in Hadassah Hospital has helped me work with all different kinds of people," said Na'ama, 21, an Arab medical aid who told me about her experiences working in a diverse environment. "The bottom line is that we all come to work, and to work together. Political matters don't come here."

Rania, 28, a Christian Arab nurse, echoes Na'ama's sentiments. "If you don't have the skills to work with all different kinds of people, then you can't work in this field," she stated. "In this hospital, people are people; you don't relate to someone as an Arab or a Muslim or a Jew." In her experience, the people who work in Hadassah Hospital know that "work is work," and so regardless of religious or political views, everyone is treated in Hadassah Hospital as equals.

My grandmother, Esther

Press, posited that this philosophy was, in fact, being actualized. "It's an incredible thing that everyone is treated exactly the same here," said my grandmother, "regardless of ethnicity."

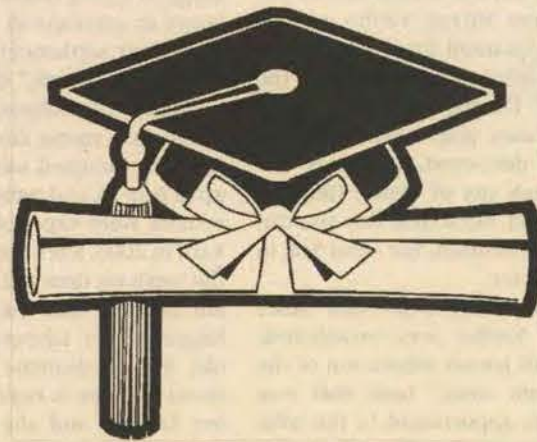
In the orthopedic ward's thank-you book, my grandmother's Arab roommate's husband wrote the following: "I would like to thank all the doctors of the orthopedics department in Hadassah Hospital - especially Dr. Amal Khoury and Dr. Ofer Elishoov - for the very great care and the importance which they offered to my wife during her stay in the Hospital."

The fact that two doctors, one Arab and one Israeli, effectively collaborated to treat an ailing Arab woman in Israel struck me as remarkable.

Relationships between the patients, as described to me by my grandmother, seemed to slightly differ. My grandmother explained how the Moroccan woman in her room, Adina, did express resentment that an Arab woman would be in an Israeli hospital receiving the same treatment that she had just received.

Interestingly, Sonya, the Israeli woman in my grandmother's room, felt differently than Adina. Despite the fact that Sonya was in the hospital for a leg break that happened while running to a bomb shelter during a "tzeva adom" (literally "color red"), a warning signal for an imminent kassam rocket from Gaza, she was much more receptive to her Arab roommate. "I believe if we can work together in this microcosm, then it can happen on a larger level," said Sonya. "We just need many microcosms." She described these successful microcosms as "nikudot shel or," points of light. "These points of light do not exist everywhere, obviously, but if we create more and more points of light," argued Sonya, "then there's a future."

This calls for a transformation of Arab-Israeli relations. While I am incapable of proposing an actual, large-scale strategy for achieving this transformation, I assert the broader idea with hope. Dare to dream. Instead of warring, let us create a collaborative relationship that draws its strength from working together for the betterment of both peoples and the entire country. Granted, the reality in Israel between Arabs and Israelis is dimensional, overwhelmingly complex, but if a microcosm of "light," of coexistence, does exist, then why can it not exist more? As the generation responsible for seeing Israel reach 100 years old and beyond, may we work to, in the words of African American leader Booker T. Washington, "cast down [our] bucket," drop deep-seeded prejudices and work together for a future peace.



COMMENCEMENT 2010

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OPINIONS

A Techie's Review of Google Buzz

Hannah Robinow

I have a confession to make. I Twitter a lot. I Facebook often. I Digg daily. I even Google from time to time, usually in search of MySpace. As a proud member of Generation Y, I can truthfully say that the digital world permeates every aspect of my life, from communicating with my mother in Kansas over Skype to keeping track of my friends' birthdays thanks to notifications on Facebook. As a digital consumer, I look for accessibility and functionality in the online applications I use. This has been a common thread in all of the social media that I have used over the past decade, as social media has evolved from sharing opinions via two cups strung together to a completely new, all-digital lifestyle.

When you first sign onto your new Google Buzz account, a link cheerily invites you to create a profile and start following the Buzz from other users, which are Twitter-like short messages that relay any random thoughts the user might be struck by at the moment he or she updates his or her Buzz. Once you have created your profile, you are then faced with a menu bar that resembles the rest of Google's plain-text menus throughout the entire sphere of their applications.

Since the Buzz menu includes status updates, media sharing, and a video chat function, it is obvious that this is Google's attempt to compete with the functions offered by Facebook and Skype. (What's next, Google? Are you going to start printing out slices of bread to reinvent that, as well?) However, Google's Buzz applications fail in their attempt to mimic the comprehensive functionality of Facebook and the sheer convenience of Skype. For instance, the Buzz window, obviously copied from Twitter as well as from Facebook, invites users to upload pictures, video, and so forth. Unlike Facebook, and to some extent MySpace, this window fails to provide separate upload menus for each type of media. This lack of organization can eventually result in a discombobulated list of Buzz updates that include videos, pictures, and text updates with no easy way to search for a given type of file. If you want a better idea of what I am talking about, imagine what would happen if Facebook suddenly lumped all the media files uploaded onto their servers together. The result would be total chaos, as you would have to continually scroll just to keep pace with what's being uploaded in real-time, let alone find an album of your best friend's wedding shower that she posted last night.

A second point is accessibility. The video chat feature is only viable if you have a functional we-

bcam. Most Apple laptops come equipped with an integrated video camera at the top of their monitor frames, for instance. However, Apple laptops are not within financial reach for everyone. An external webcam of comparable quality will run you about \$70-\$80, which is not always within reach for everyone, especially for a college student or recent graduate who is trying to balance paying for an apartment and food, let alone finding extra money for a webcam that, let's face it, isn't a dire need. Also, even though you cannot search for a person's conversation feed through Google, you can do so when logged into Gmail. In other words, you can still be stalked online, as long as your would-be stalker has a Gmail account and shares mutual friends with you.

However, there is one feature in particular that captures the quintessential creepy factor that comes with being able to disseminate a lot of personal information with thousands of your "closest friends" at once—the recommended Buzz feature. This feature puts feeds of mutual friends and other people that the Google Buzz software

engine calculates you might be interested in, even if you have never even heard of them. This means that even if you aren't friends with this person, you can see their information and vice versa. This feature is different from Facebook, which does not allow you to see anyone's designated "personal" information unless you're friends with them, which keeps your information much more secure than it would be on Google Buzz.

In short, Google's attempt to capture Facebook's estimated 60% share of the social media market (2009 figures from Experian Hitwise) is admirable. It attempts to collate the multiple options for sharing media online into one handy feed, and it can be conveniently downloaded onto the iPhone and Android phone as an application. However, this initial attempt to traverse the growing sea of online social media still needs development in terms of its functionality and accessibility. If Google Buzz can improve in these two departments, it might become easier to use and thus develop into a viable (and less addictive!) alternative to Facebook.

Ilana Hostyk

The *beit midrash* (study hall). Rows of texts as alive as the day they were composed. Soaring Aramaic phrases and thunderous intoned discussions. Animated words and turning pages. Shuffling, praying feet, accompanied by urgent, yet devoted, murmured voices. Loud disputes between *havrutot* energizing the classic love-hate relationship one has with the only person who can help one achieve new depths in textual learning by simultaneously disputing every word one says.

This is a scene so familiar to the Jew. The *beit midrash* is a place so entrenched in the Jewish soul and engrained in the Jew's psyche. This room, stretching back to the time of the Second Commonwealth period, has been both a catalyst and an incubator of Jewish learning. However, this room that seems so familiar is different than in years past; this room is now filled with women.

It is women who are disputing the validity of a "*migo le'maphrayah*." It is women who are entrenched in *mahloket ha-Rambam vi-ha-Ramban*. It is women devoting themselves to every word of *Tanakh*. It is women praying to G-d. It is women finding fulfillment as part of the Jewish people.

One enters the Stern College for Women Beit Midrash and is confronted by a scene that does not strike anyone as odd—today. My favorite place on campus, it hums with dedicated learning from 7:30

in the morning until the wee hours of the night, and it is my defense of Rabba Hurwitz.

Stern College for Women is an institution that has demonstrated that women are more than capable of achieving the same heights in learning as any man. It is a school that has demonstrated over and over the extreme dedication women have to the Jewish *limud* tradition. We women have jumped at each opportunity given to us within Judaism. However, one could not have expected all of this learning to be for naught. Jewish women could not reasonably be expected to remain in the same position they previously had in Judaism now that they have attained all of this knowledge. A leadership position within the framework of *halakha* is the logical, and necessary, next step. It really is not such a far leap. Women give *shurim* all the time in Orthodox *shuls* across America, lead prayer groups and *Tehillim* sessions, and run activities and support groups.

Yet, many refuse to recognize the already strong and growing presence of women within the Jewish community. The Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) insulted all women last month when they insulted Rabba Sara Hurwitz. By exerting male supremacy, by restricting women from being equal leaders within the Jewish community, the RCA has only hurt Judaism in the future. It is wrong that when women come out of GPATS

Interview: Kenya McGrier

continued from page 7

got kids to support, you know?

Q: What is your inspiration for your great makeup?

I like to be colorful; I don't like being plain. There are times you want to be earthy, but I like my pinks, purples, blues, greens.

Q: What's your favorite movie?

"Love and Basketball."

Q: What was your favorite job of all time?

I liked when I worked in The Services for the Underserved (SOS). It's a non-profit in Manhattan, but they actually have it in every borough. I was in the office in the Bronx, working with people with AIDS. People with AIDS stay there before moving on to apartments, it's a place for them to collect themselves. It's an apartment building, and the bottom floor was the greeting room. I was the secretary, and would do a short intake of information when people would walk in. We would buy things for them, make gift bags, made thanksgiving dinner—it was nice. I miss it there. I've worked in a lot of places.

Q: What's your political affiliation?

I'm a big Democrat. I'm the biggest Democrat. I try to vote all the time, but it's different when they're both talking about nothings. I'm like,

'Let them feud by themselves.'

Q: Do you like living in NY?

No, I hate it, I want to get out. I want to get to Florida. It's warm, quiet, calm. I want to be suburban, someplace nothing like the Bronx. Get my kids out of there.

Q: What are we going to do without you?

(laughs)

Q: What's the funniest thing you've ever been handed instead of a caf card?

I get laundry cards, metro cards, credit cards. I even get handed the food instead of the card!

Q: If you could meet someone famous, who would it be?

God. Barack Obama and Maya Angelou.

Q: If you won the lottery, what would be the first thing you do?

Go online, get a ticket, and go check out homes in Florida. Start my move out of here.

Q: If you had one piece of advice for the women at Stern what would it be?

Don't rely on anybody do anything for you. You got to do it for yourself. No one is going to be as reliable, accurate, or right. Not everyone is for you, you know what I mean? Life is too short to do all the things that are important, so keep your priorities in order.

In Defense of Rabba Hurwitz

and other learning programs as learned as any man coming out of *semikha*, they are told that they cannot use their learning in an official capacity because they are women.

Many have asked, "What does the title matter? Maintain the status quo!" Who can deny that Rabba Hurwitz is a wonderful, learned woman who can preside over a room with the quiet, yet forceful, dignity innate only in true leaders? The respect and awe with which I heard one of her congregants greet her arrival room one *Shabbos* is something that will always remain with me. "Here comes Rabba Hurwitz," said the congregant, in a tone of respect worthy of any major and influential Jewish leader.

Many of the women who come out of Stern College for Women are more learned in Jewish studies than anyone could have ever imagined women could be, whether in Jewish philosophy, *Tanakh*, *halakha*, or even *Gemara* itself. When I look at the women who keep the Stern Beit Midrash busy and full at all hours of the day, I am struck by how far we have come and by how much we are allowed to know. We know more than any *Amoraim* or *Tannaim* ever expected of us. When a teacher of mine was asked how he can justify teaching *Moreh Nevukhim* in a classroom at Yeshiva University, a text that Rambam intended only for the intellectual elite and not the masses, he answered that the definition of the

masses is so far from where we as Jews are today, that no well-educated Jew today would ever count as one of the "masses."

I would like to extrapolate this notion to the issue of women's learning. Any Jewish tradition regarding women needs to be put into context, just as my teacher did with the study of Rambam.

The fossilization of *halakha* has broadened to encompass the canonization of *hashkafa*, and that is where Modern Orthodoxy should draw the line. In all other ways, we have managed—we have disregarded the more *haredi* black hat and allowed a complex conjunction of *Torah u-maddah* in our learning. However, when it comes to women's issues, we are stagnant in a cesspool of discrimination.

Preventing women from achieving leadership positions will only hurt Judaism. Progress within *halakha* to allow women more involvement in community Judaism is crucial. Stronger women leaders will create a stronger connection in the next generation; children will be raised with a stronger connection to God and to Judaism and with a greater love for *Am Yisrael*.

So what does the title matter? It matters for the dignity of Jewish women and for the future of the Jewish people, both of which are not inconsequential. It is a title that will create and keep many *Batei Midrash* alive and vibrant in the far future.

OPINIONS

YU Students Visit Holocaust Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Aimee Rubenstein

"Never Again" has become more of a slogan than a commitment today. On 7 March, 17 Yeshiva University students participated in the first annual mission trip to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, D.C. Organized by the Student Holocaust Education Movement, the trip proved that although few took the initiative to promote Holocaust education, quality is certainly as valuable as quantity.

"Just bestiality everywhere," whispers a voice of a Holocaust survivor upon the entrance of the Permanent Exhibition. It seems more like a horror house than an educational memorial. The tour was fascinatingly able to capture the brutality of the war. After visiting Poland—I believe it a duty in life to visit the concentration camps—I felt that no museum was enough. Most museums' pictures and films and shoes seemed like a lost memory of something that seemed more like a dream than a genocide.

However, as I was faced with the abstract monologues and clever maps, USHMM seemed to be different in a substantial way. The museum was dim and packed to capacity. Completely in black and white, USHMM illustrated the history of Hitler, Poland, and how the Nazi power used propaganda to ensure the world that an Aryan race was not only essential, but the only way to live. In addition to the lack of color, I found it fascinating that the "Non-Jewish Rescuers" were in white. Big, resonating blocks listed millions of people who did take action, risking their own lives. These people were like doves keeping Jewish refugees under their wings. Is it possible that a non-Jew would risk their life while Jews around the world decided to keep a low profile, even profit abroad? The answer is yes. My own family was saved in the war because my grandfather's childhood friend remembered their bond of friendship. The path from the dark atrocities to those who did not stand by was enlightening.

The group was privileged to engage with Dr. Leah Wolfson, applied research scholar at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, in a conversation focused on Jewish responses to persecution. "This allowed for pointed and constructive discussion to be generated among students following their tour," explained Simon Goldberg, president of the Student Holocaust Education Movement.

Goldberg ran the program smoothly, and organized an activity that served as a strong metaphor. A human web was made: one person held a ball of yarn and passed it to another student, who does the same, and so on—the whole time sharing the emotions felt while walking through the

museum. If you think about it, that is what we Jews are: dispersed, but entangled with one another in an indestructible web.

"Perhaps the highlight of the trip was an interactive program during which students were given the floor to share their feelings on what struck them most as they walked through the museum," says Goldberg. "In this way, our individual voices of reflection were joined together in contemplation of moral responsibility in a post-Holocaust, post-modern world." While some tears were shed, wisdom was spread through the web. This seemed to spark the sort of inspiration that bridges the gap between education and activism in the field—-the original goal of the

program.

Today, 65 years after the Holocaust, we can barely relate to the survivors who are still our family, our past, our proof. As the last generation of Holocaust survivors that live today will soon tell their last first-hand narratives, it seems that Holocaust Education Movement at YU will be a movement that ensures our right to exist, and, of course, that we remember.

The most incredible thing to think about is the transition from Yom Hazikaron to Yom Haatzmaut in Israel. These days are full of such contrasting overlapping emotions that your inner spectrum becomes discombobulated. Whether you have journeyed with a school trip, visited with family or

spent a year of learning in Israel, we all know the importance that Israel holds even to its strangers. The Holocaust should not be the reason for the state of Israel to exist, but rather nurture its people to grow into the light they are destined to be.

Yom Haatzmaut is more than a day of Independence; it is a day of freedom. In order to savor such liberty, one must taste the bitter past. "Yom Ha'atzmaut is a celebration of our freedom" expresses Goldberg. "It is an affirmation of our liberty and a renewed acknowledgment of our progress as a nation. While it follows Yom Hazikaron and is, in some respects, grounded in a recognition of Jewish tragedy throughout time, it tells the story

of our survival and of the continued strength of our people."

For Holocaust survivors, Israel, in a way, is a re-birth of the six million Jews we have lost. If, even in the face of unspeakable cruelty and unimaginable conditions, there were those Jews who extended a helping hand, a last piece of bread, a Shabbat greeting, there exists freedom over captivity. This notion of human dignity was championed in the Holocaust. It kept alive the spirit of our people, and it is that very same spirit that is celebrated on Yom Ha'atzmaut, our day of Independence. It is time not to think silently, but to stand up and proclaim, "Never Again."

YU's Double Standard

Derora Tropp

I am an anomaly at Stern College for Women (SCW). No, it's not because I'm one of the few people who don't get excited when there is quiche for lunch. Rather, it is because I have opted to take the Advanced Talmud Beit Midrash class every semester for the six semesters that I have been on campus. The class meets every morning of the week and requires at least an hour and a half of preparation b'havruta every night outside of class before shiur the next day. I don't say this to toot my own horn. Though I am proud of how far I have come in my own learning since I began, had I been in Yeshiva College (YC), I would not have met even the most minimal limudei kodesh requirement.

My long-time havruta likes to tell the story of the day a few months into my first semester when I sat down to begin our preparation for the next day's class and shared with her a realization I had had that day. "Did you realize that at YC they learn all morning and then they have night seder?!" I remarked in amazement. She looked at me like I was an idiot and burst out laughing. I guess I had always known that uptown they had morning and night seder, but somehow that day the magnitude of the double standard hit me with full force. Why is it that Stern College does not have morning seder? Why is there no time set aside in the schedule for all students to be engaged in some form of Torah study? Does Yeshiva University believe that it is less important for women to learn Torah than it is for men?

Why do I have to try so

very hard to fit the Beit Midrash class into my schedule? Why must I choose, semester after semester, between limudei kodesh classes and secular classes that are in conflicting time slots? Why must I be required to ask the Dean's Office to move classes I need for my major into other time slots just so I can take my advanced Beit Midrash class? Why are classes like mine not already built into the schedule?

Stern students are reaching out for Torah learning all over campus. TAC organizes multiple shiurim every night of the week. Students have started Bavli Baboker to learn daf yomi every morning before class and have instituted a night seder time during which havruta learning is encouraged. The Advanced Bible Beit Midrash class is full to capacity this semester. It was student

initiative that first started the Beit Midrash classes in the first place. Every time the new course catalog comes out, I hear my friends complain about how, due to scheduling conflicts, they are unable to take the limudei kodesh classes that they would like. Students do care about learning and about learning on a higher level. I do not doubt that if students joined together on this issue and put pressure on the administration changes could be made.

While I would be overjoyed if students did take the initiative, in this case I think the responsibility lies with the administration. It is a question of values. If we really are a school that values higher learning for women and firmly believes in a Torah u-Madda course of study, there is no reason that students should be struggling in

order to learn Torah. There is no reason that time for Torah learning is not set aside and supported by the school itself.

Furthermore, Yeshiva University claims to be "committed to a policy of equal opportunity and nondiscrimination in [...] its educational programs and activities." Why, then, is there such a vast disparity in the way YC and SCW students learn Torah? I can say with absolute certainty that I have not been afforded the same opportunities in Torah learning that a man in my position has. This is an unacceptable double standard, and it is time for it to change.

Yeshiva University Undergraduate Catalog for Women 2009-2010. <http://www.yu.edu/uploadedFiles/CATALOG/a1%20Intro%20and%20disclaimers%20women.pdf>

Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future, in conjunction with the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies presents:

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with the Faculty of the Bernard Revel Graduate School

Sunday, April 25, 2010

Yeshiva University, Furst Hall • 500 West 185th St. New York, NY

9:30 am

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Halakhah, Hashkafah, and the Academic Study of Judaism

10:30 am

Dr. Debra Kaplan *Dr. Pinkhos Churgin Memorial Assistant Professor of Jewish History*
Women, Marriage and Property: From the Rishonim to Early Modern Frankfurt
Dr. Ronnie Perelis *Chief Rabbi Dr. Isaac Abraham and Jelena (Rachel) Alkairy Assistant Professor of Sephardic Studies*
"These Indians are Jews": Lost Tribes, Secret Jews and Brave New Worlds

11:30 am

Dr. Mordechai Cohen *Professor of Bible and Associate Dean*
New Perspective on the Rambam: His Contribution to Parshanut ha-Miqra
Dr. Jonathan Dauber *Assistant Professor of Jewish Mysticism*
Controversies in Early Kabbalah: On the Writing of the First Kabbalistic Texts

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ARTS AND CULTURE

“Interpreting the Interpretation”

Devora Isenberg

What do seven flat-screen TV's, a hundred hand mirrors, and a “megaphone for a demented, ego-maniacal giant” have to do with *Bereishit* (Book of Genesis)? Everything, according to the “Writers on View” program at the YU Museum this February, a response to the exhibit “In the Beginning: Artists Respond to Genesis.” Students from the Honors Program were invited to tour the exhibit and then watch selected writers deliver creative responses to the displays.

Museum Director Dr. Jacob Wisse introduced the exhibit, explaining that the display of ancient Torahs, including the Baal Shem Tov's own sefer Torah and the fifteenth century Prague Bible, are “arkisst participating in the tradition of textual exegesis.” A nearby video screen showed the astronauts of the Apollo space mission reciting the first chapter of Genesis. Wisse explained that these items were chosen as “a gripping reminder of the confluence and collision of scientific culture and a text that reflects a Divine source of the world.”

The first piece, “Playing God” by Alan Berliner, displayed seven words from Genesis on seven individual TV screens, seemingly at random. When a large red button is pressed, the words organize themselves in one of many biblical sentences, such as, “And now behold the winged fruit fly.” Dr. Cynthia Wachtell, head of the Honors Program, played first. She pressed the button, causing random words to flash across the screens, and then another to stop it, like a mystical game of musical chairs. There was a thunderclap and flashing images, of deserts and mountains – “a primordial landscape,” as Berliner described it. A “biblical Haiku, a way of putting words together for new meanings.”

The next piece was “Tzimtzum” by Mierle Laderman Ukeles. It explored the Kabbalistic conception of creation, in which Divine light was shattered into sparks, giving humans the responsibility of repairing the world. The artwork, rather than just portraying this concept, took part in it, asking visitors to fill out covenants of dedication to be hung alongside mirrors on long chains. A placard on the wall explained

the artist's ambitions for the impact of her work, admitting, “All this scares me. Does it scare you? Yet here we are, at the beginning.”

The next two works focused on the relationship between the ancient text and the modern world. Shirley Shor's “Well” swirled with phrases taken from the Internet, what she considers the meeting-place and “well” of the 21st century. According to Wisse, Ben Rubin's “God's Breath, Hovering Over the Waters” managed to “merged Biblical interpretation with scientific discovery” in a giant futuristic-looking device, modeled after the device used to discover cosmic radiation and add credence to the Big Bang theory. The last piece, an abstract work by Matthew Richie, explored the idea of parallel universes in a huge work that combined six colorful projected spheres enclosed in painted black tangles.

Leaving the exhibit, the students expressed interest, curiosity, and some confusion. One remarked, rather vehemently, “Well, I still don't believe in evolution!” Elizabeth Pollackof, another student, expressed ambivalence: “They're trying to synthesize Biblical ideas with secular, and its hard to know what perspective to approach it from—*frum* or secular.” Aviva Weinberg found the exhibit “impressive and thought-provoking,” but expressed some discomfort with “manipulating the text to create new ideas.”

After the exhibit, the event attendees settled into the YU Museum's auditorium for the next portion of the evening: the writers' response. The first writer, Jennifer Michael Hecht, recited a poem inspired by her experience with Berliner's interactive exhibit. “The earth was an open living seed,” she quoted her personal “Biblical Haiku,” glasses perched on the tip of her nose and her straight brown

hair swinging earnestly. Her poem was alternately tragic, pensive, and humorous. Next, Gabriel Brownstein presented a short story on the theme of the well—alternating between a take on the story of Yaakov and an account of the tensions between Israelis and Bedouins. Poet Henry Israeli meditated on cosmic noise, tomato plants, his mother's death, and heaven for rats. He challenged the belief in a Divine origin of the universe, emotionally claiming that “absurdly improbable accidents happen all the time,” a claim that made one student wonder, “This is interesting and all, but is it *kefirah*?”

Poet Sima Rabinowitz took the stage next, and asked for the audience's participation in a “poetry covenant” inspired by Ukeles' artwork. Each member of the audience was given a slip of paper with phrases on it and asked to end the phrases in her own words. Students assisting Rabinowitz inserted the audience contributions into the poem, creating an interactive poetry experience. Marlena Lynn, a student who participated, said, “It was really exciting to hear how different people responded to the prompts and hear how it all come together during the presentation.”

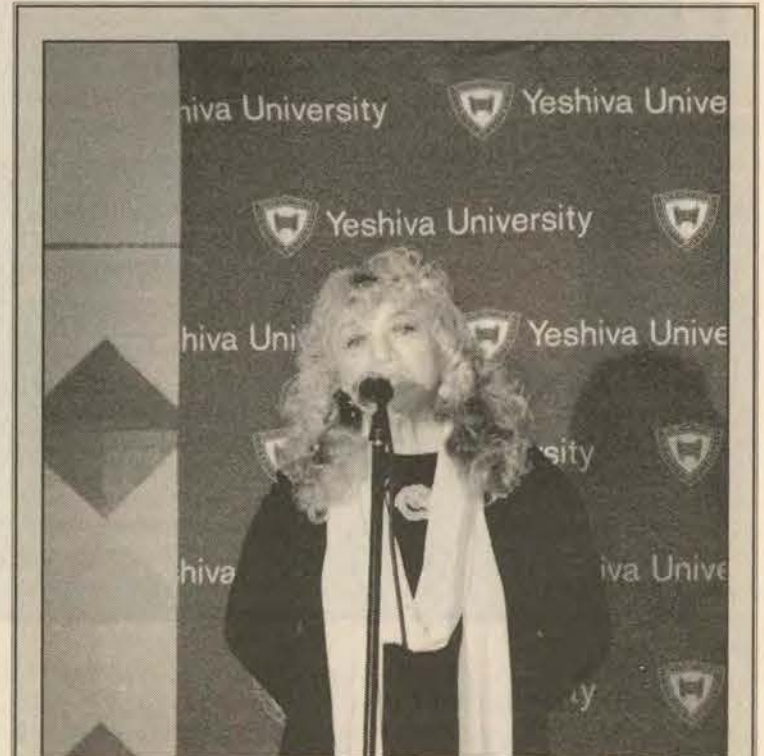
Novelist Dara Horn closed the evening with a riveting short story inspired by Matthew Richie's artwork. Lynn particularly liked this story, saying, “It seemed like a very realistic, simple story, while still addressing bigger ideas about the work.” She enjoyed the challenge of interpreting the connections between the written pieces and the visual art.

Leaving the museum, the babble of conversation followed the crowd of students as they retrieved their coats and headed into the cold night, excitedly discussing the role of art, the origin of the universe, and the enigmatic experience of those seven TV's.



Professor Linda Shores (right) converses with writers Alan Berliner and Mierle Laderman Ukeles at the YU Museum's “Written on View.”

Alisa Ungar-Sargon



Alisa Ungar-Sargon

Kayla Kaufman, the keynote speaker at the Yom Hashoah Ceremony this month, spoke about her experience in the Holocaust and how she survived.



Alisa Ungar-Sargon

Nava Applebaum (played by Chaya Kessler) and Ze'ev Jabotinsky (Tzvi Feifel), speakers in the Yom Hazikaron “Living Heroes” program. Organized by the Israel Club in conjunction with the Stern College Dramatics Society, the interactive exhibit featured different YU students acting as soldiers and terrorist attack victims. The different life stories told included, among others, Chana Szenes, Nachshon Wachsmann and Yonatan Netanyahu.

ARTS AND CULTURE



Alisa Ungar-Sargon

Esty Rollhaus (center) presides over her court while Laura Mitzner (left) interrogates Michal Schick in the SCDS spring production of "Sandbag Stage." (Left) look out for the review in our May issue!



Alisa Ungar-Sargon

Adina Erdfarb (left) poses with two of her dancers, Shlomit Friedman and Karen Steinberger, after this year's "So You Think Stern Can Dance" fundraiser in March. Erdfarb assisted in the show's production, with Yael Brodsky and Emily Harris.



Sam Ulrich

The Maccabeats, YU's male a cappella group, celebrated the release of their first CD with a concert on the Wilf Campus on 23 March.

"Laughter on the 23rd Floor": A Review

Karen Steinberger

The Yeshiva College Dramatic Society (YCDS) performed Neil Simon's comedy "Laughter on the 23rd Floor" from March 20-25. The play echoes the thoughts and attitudes felt in the 1950s and centers around a comedy writer's room, much like the one Neil Simon himself worked in for Sid Caesar. This comedy recounts Luis Brickman's (Yehuda Safier) work experiences as a writer on Max Prince's (Tani Isaacs) comedy show. It starts off slowly but then speeds forth with jokes pertaining to the issues at hand, including the witch hunt that was McCarthyism as well as the constant threat of Communism. Through the humor, an underlying theme of seriousness and concern emerged from the actors' portrayal of their characters.

The play begins with Brickman meandering nervously across the stage, providing a sense of unease within the audience. When he begins to speak, he attributes his nervousness to his naiveté in working at this most prestigious of places. His anxiety remained consistently present throughout the production, thanks to Safier's command of this subtle human quality. Milt Fields (Mark Brystowski), another writer, enters and immediately contrasts his sense of comfort and confidence with Safier's character. Brystowski's comedic timing is pitch perfect and received many laughs from the audience, especially when he wore a bright white jacket that completely defied Max Prince's rules. Brian Doyle (Josh Eckmann) respectively portrayed the attitude of vehemence associated with individuals of Irish descent. His conflict over humorous names with Ira Stone (Ariel Meiri) displayed Eckmann's qualities as an actor aware of timing and the appropriate use of aggression. Kenny Franks (Daniel Brystowski), on the other hand, exhibited a drier and more understated form of comedy. Brystowski, a new arrival to the YCDS stage, gave a solidly good performance, particularly challenged with a role focusing on a more subtle use of humor.

Then there is Herman (Shimon Gutstein), a man who desperately wants to be a part of the writer's clan and keeps a steady pace in the production with his continuous entering and exiting. Carl Wyman (David Shinefield), a hen-pecked husband whose customary yelling is exchanged for a steady and pleasant tone with his wife on the phone. Ira, a neurotic hypochondriac, developed an exhilarating love-hate relationship with his

audience.

Val Skolsky (Danny Hoffman), a comedic Russian immigrant, captured the hearts of the audience thanks to Hoffman's honest and intelligent portrayal. He engendered a sense of ease within his character, successfully putting on a convincing accent that left the audience wondering if he was originally from Russia. This ease remained constant throughout the performance, complemented by his thoughtful use of comedic timing.

Isaac, who played Max, the domineering boss of his comedy show, is another new arrival to the YCDS stage that shows great promise with his command of the stage and daring use of physical comedy. Like his character, Isaac exuded humor in almost every movement and clearly dominated the audience's attention.

This production was highlighted by the actors' absolute sense of comfort onstage. Every one of them moved with deliberation and consistently kept the comedy running smoothly. On the night that this writer attended, the table with coffee and bagels present in the writer's room at one point broke completely, spilling various items onto the stage. The actors, however, did not show any fear and worked well under the circumstances. Gutstein took to walking back and forth on the stage, effectively maintaining the attention on the actors.

There were points, though, when the audience members did not get the jokes, which might be a reflection of a time period gone by. This comedy has a very political edge and sometimes leans toward the solemn and tedious side. The actors did well in compensating, but not always. The production ends on somber note, with the cancellation of Max Prince's comedy hour, but Brickman manages to uplift the audience with his speech of inspiration.

The set was well constructed, displaying the experience of one David Mikofsky. The props and costumes presented a keen knowledge of the eccentricities present in the 1950s. On reflection, "Laughter on the 23rd Floor" was an intelligent comedy, fusing humor and a semi-sweet attention to the events that occurred in this most influential of eras. It was a comedy that leaves the audience with a feeling of light-heartedness and deeper understanding of the issues faced in this point in history.

ISRAEL

Garin Aliyah: Creating a Community

Lauren Burstein

Rachel Nemzer (SCW '10) is co-founder, along with Maz Saltzman of the Garin Aliyah, a movement on the Yeshiva University campus to build a community for those who wish to make aliyah.

Observer: What does the term "Garin Aliyah" mean?

Nemzer: Garin Aliyah means a 'seed' group of people who intend on planting themselves in Israel.

Observer: What are the main objectives of the Garin Aliyah?

Nemzer: To provide a social and informational network for people at YC and Stern who wish to make aliyah (move to Israel) in the next 5 or so years.

Observer: Who initiated the Garin on campus and why?

Nemzer: The Jewish agency started a program called the 'Campus Aliyah Fellowship', to assist students on campuses across north America to form a group of students like-minded about aliyah,

through social programming and practical information.

Observer: What types of events does the Garin Aliyah sponsor and what activities do you host?

Nemzer: A few activities we have had this year are 'Eat b'Ivrit' (Eat in Hebrew), a pizza and conversation event to keep our Hebrew sharp, meetings with a shaliach aliyah (an aliyah consultant), and discussions about how to move to Israel while still honoring your parents.

Observer: Do you participate in any inter-campus activities?

Nemzer: NYU hosted a Shabbaton that YC and Stern students attended, and we hope to join with NYU, Columbia, Barnard, Queens, and Rutgers for events in the future.

Observer: What do you feel you have accomplished thus far on the YU campus?

Nemzer: I feel that we have at least gotten the word out that we are here. If anyone has questions about aliyah, they know to come to me (or Max Saltzman on the Ye-

shiva College campus), and that I will have either answers to their questions, or an email and phone number of the right person to contact to properly answer them.

Observer: What do you foresee planning in the future?

Nemzer: Through the Jewish Agency, we are bringing a group of YU students on a pilot trip to Israel to get a glimpse of higher education and job options, *ulpanim* (Hebrew Language Courses), and communities that they will be entering when they make aliyah in the next few years. This allows them to feel more comfortable in their aliyah planning process, and assists them in that first big step that many are scared to take.

Observer: Do you encourage people to make Aliyah, or do you simply help those who already wish to?

Nemzer: I personally feel that it is not my place to 'convince' others to make aliyah. Thank G-d, many of us at YU have been raised in Zionist homes, camps, and

schools, and feel strongly about Israel already. My job is to be there for those who wish to move there and make the transition as smooth as possible.

Observer: Are you involved with other organizations, such as Nefesh B'Nefesh, in any way?

Nemzer: As part of my responsibilities as the aliyah coordinator for the YU Israel Club, I arrange one on one meetings between Nefesh B'Nefesh representatives and Stern students multiple times a year.

Observer: How can students get involved?

Nemzer: They can email us at nygarinaliyah@gmail.com, and tell us a bit about themselves! Who they are, what their plan for aliyah

is, etc. Since we are here for YOU, we want to hear your feedback of what type of events would cater best to your needs.



Rachel Nemzer

An Unexpected Juxtaposition

Lauren Burstein

For my gap year (the year between high school and college) I chose to study at Nishmat, an Israeli institute for advanced Women's Torah learning located in Jerusalem. I anticipated the cultural experience that I would receive being immersed in Israeli life—while Nishmat does provide a program for English speaking students, most of the classes are taught in Hebrew and the dorm rooms consist of one English speaker and four Israelis. I did not know what to expect. But I did know that I wanted a change. I wanted to take some time away from my Teaneck lifestyle. I wanted to feel the land of Israel, to experience the days and holidays with Israelis, to hear the Hebrew language in all places I went, to understand the quick paced, passionate society that I had never been tremendously exposed to before.

I arrived in Israel in the summer of 2007. Slowly, I picked up Hebrew. As the year went by, I looked for the differences between my life as a New Jerseyian and my roommates' lives as *dossim* (a slang term for religious Israelis.) I found a few. Sababa is definitely a good word to know. It means "cool" or "awesome." Everything in Israel is sababa.

"I went to the supermarket," I would tell my roommates.

Sababa.

"The class is so interesting!"

Sababa.

"Oh no! I can't find my toothbrush."

Sababa.

I saw how able my friends were to cope with minute inconveniences. My Israeli madricha (Hebrew

for "mentor") had a saying: "Lizrom," which means "to flow." Her philosophy was that people need to accept the world for what it is and free themselves of worrying about things they cannot control. "People need," she would say, "to go with the flow."

Of course, not every Israeli I encountered had this attitude. There were the horn honkers in the center of town who seemed very anxious about arriving at their destinations. There were the shoppers in the shuq (farmer's market) who would scream at other, possibly unfamiliar customers as they took their time paying for their produce. And, of course, there were the line pushers who, well, in a very proactive way, made sure the line moved quickly.

Yet, as a whole, Israel itself, a tiny country located in the Middle East, in the midst of wars and terror, inundated with death and grief, plagued with fighting and misery, somehow revels in a state of permanent exhilaration. The citizens find happiness in times of sorrow, they unite to cope with pain, they sing during times of insecurity. They make it possible to live through devastation.

Towards the end of my year in Israel, I was struck by the placement of two holidays. The first, Yom Hazikaron, commemorates all the fallen soldiers from every battle fought. The second, Yom Haatzmaut, celebrates the day the country was declared independent on the 5th of the Hebrew month of Iyyar, in 1948. The two holidays fall back to back respectively.

Having grown up in a Zionist community and having gone to

a Zionist elementary school and high school, I have always celebrated both days. I have always been taught the history behind the days, the reasons for commemorating and celebrating on them. I remember on one Yom Hazikaron watching a documentary about a Pennsylvania family who lost their son and brother in the Lebanon War. I also remember going home that night and sleeping in my own bed, refreshing from the day's sadness and waking up the next morning, new and whole. That morning, being Yom Haatzmaut, my high school celebrated with blue and white cookies, drinks, cupcakes, dancing, singing, music, balloons, smiles, happiness. We all were happy, purely and distinctly happy.

But being in Israel was very different. The night of Yom Hazikaron, all Nishmat students gathered into a classroom. There was a projector and we were going to watch a slide show. "A slide show," I thought. "Well, I have seen that before." I was expecting something similar to my previous experiences. A bitter taste of distant reality. But, what unfolded in the next three hours was something I could have never prepared for. The first image we saw was of a man, aged 23, smiling. I can't remember his name. But as his picture flashed onto the screen a friend of mine sitting one row ahead of me stood up. She began to speak about this person. Her brother-in-law. He died in the Gulf War of 1991. When she finished her short commemoration, another picture flashed onto the screen. A young man, aged 20. He looked like he

was taking a hike. My other friend stood up. This picture was of her friend who was killed in combat three years before. She cried. We all cried. And for every picture that came upon the screen, there was another story, told by another Nishmat student, another tragedy, another loss.

I hadn't even known that half of them lost loved ones. My friends. The people I ate lunch with. The people I went to class with. The people I joked around with. All had stories to tell. But they weren't stories; they were lives of people known and loved. I couldn't look at my friends in the same way after that night, knowing how much they suffered. I did not know how to tell them how sorry I was, or if I even should.

I also didn't know how to celebrate Independence Day the following evening. My school had prepared a hagiga (celebration) for the students and the community. But, how could I bring myself to smile and sing songs of praise when I was just introduced to the surrounding hardships? I entered the room of the hagiga. I saw cookies and cupcakes and balloons and drinks and dancing people. Lots and lots of dancing people. My Israeli friend saw me and grabbed my hand. She forced me to dance in the circle with the others, to smile and jump and sing like the others. She was smiling. She was passionate. I found myself imitating her. I began to smile and sing and jump. I became connected to the circle of people dancing. I remembered their faces from the night before. Most of them had spoken during the ceremony. All

of them had cried. And now, all of them were dancing.

What I realized beyond everything during those two days was this: For every time I celebrated those days before I went to Israel, I allowed myself to experience two separate emotions. On Yom Hazikaron, I felt sad. On Yom Haatzmaut, I felt happy. I transitioned from one to the other easily, as I was far away from where everything was happening. But, in Israel, feeling the close to where everything happened, I couldn't possibly transition from one day to the next. Both days were one and the same. Neither could exist without the other. For every Israeli, every day is a day of remembrance and celebration. Every day they remember those they have lost and celebrate the freedom they have gained. The two days called Yom Hazikaron and Yom Haatzmaut are there to emphasize the feelings that they constantly live with. Their emotions of grief and excitement are intertwined; their happiness is tainted with the sadness of their devastation, and their sadness is strengthened by their past accomplishments and hope for the future.

As Golda Meir once said, "Those who don't know how to weep with their whole heart don't know how to laugh either." The only bliss we can ever know as Jews is the bliss that has been challenged by suffering. Without knowing sadness, we would not appreciate the goodness. Zikaron and Atzmaut; bravery through tears.

ISRAEL

This Land is Your Land; That Land is My Land!

Mijal Bitton

Yeshiva University is an exceptional institution of higher education in America in which the flags of both the United States and Israel are displayed together in all ceremonies. It does not have school on Yom Haatzmaut, Israel's Independence Day, and it celebrates all of Israel's national holidays. Most of the student population at YU is undeniably pro-Israel, with its Israel Club as one of the biggest and most popular student-led organizations. However, although most of YU's students are proud supporters of Israel, they have different views on moving to Israel and making Aliyah. As Yom Haatzmaut approaches, different students and members of Yeshiva University share their thoughts and opinions on the subject of Aliyah.

Dianna Hany Washington, born in the Ukraine, made Aliyah with her family when she was five years old and lived there a couple of years past the completion of her army service. Now majoring in Finance in Sy Syms School of Business, Washington says she "left Israel because the guy that I wanted to be with was an American." Washington is not planning on staying in the United States for long, though. "I cannot raise my children over here, no way," she says vehemently. "I have a physical and mental need to be there."

"I think many Stern students want to make Aliyah but are not actively planning to do so in the near future," says Penina Weber, currently in Stern's Alumni Tanach Learning Program and a student at Azrieli Graduate School for Jewish Education and Administration. She ideally wants to make Aliyah, but is not practically planning for it yet. "Eretz Israel is a part of the Torah, a huge part, for sure," she says. "But Am Israel [the Nation of Israel] needs some people in the Diaspora to combat assimilation, through teaching Torah and instilling Jewish identity and pride. I feel it would be selfish of me to go right away and fulfill my dreams, without helping others achieve it as well."

A student who chooses to remain anonymous left Israel at the beginning of the Spring 2010 semester to attend Sy Syms. "Here in YU they offer things you don't have in Israel," she says, explaining why she made "yeridah" and left Israel. "If you're in Israel, even if in Bar Ilan or Hebrew University, you're not so concentrated on what's going on outside."

"I left Israel because I was sick of Israel, but then I realized I was stupid and wanted to go back," she continues with a smile. "It might not be because of Israel that I left, but because of the kind of life I had there. I needed to get out and see something else." The student explains that she still feels Israel is home for her.

"Even though it drives me crazy when I'm there I still love Israel. I love all the crazy things," she says with a smile. "I knew when I left that I wanted to go back...eventually," she adds, after a pause.

Berel Bronshteyn, a Yeshiva College student majoring in Psychology, plans to make Aliyah as soon as he is finished with graduate school. "In my mind, there is no 'yes or no,' but only 'when,'" says Bronshteyn. "Israel is the Jewish homeland, and even though it doesn't offer the same luxuries as many other countries, this is the only place I could see myself living and raising my children." Bronshteyn believes that YU is "the most conducive of any college in America and possibly the world to make Aliyah." He adds, however, that "very often a mentality of complacency tends to form as a result of the massive emphasis on success and wealth at YU" and which hinders students from wanting to make Aliyah.

As the Yeshiva College president of the Israel Club and a Campus Aliyah Fellow for the Jewish Agency, Max Saltzman is passionately committed to the idea of Aliyah. "Israel is the homeland of the Jewish people, and if we as Jews are not safe in Israel, then we are not safe anywhere," he says. Saltzman mentions the Holocaust as a national tragedy that made him realize how important it is to move to Israel. "While living in America is undoubtedly easier than living in Israel, life isn't about living easy," he states. Saltzman plans to make Aliyah this summer and will be an adviser in Reishit, a post-high school program in Bet Shemesh while learning in Ulpan until he is drafted into the IDF. "I am pre-emptively following my own kids to Israel," he says smiling. "It's easier this way."

Saltzman is one of the heads of the NY chapter of the Garin Aliyah, a support and networking group designed to help students in their Aliyah process. "There are about 80 undergraduate students in Yeshiva University who are planning on making Aliyah within the next five years," he states. Saltzman finds YU as an institution neutral in terms of the way it views Aliyah but that individuals in YU are on average supportive and encouraging of Aliyah. "I think that if any student can envision themselves living in Israel, then they should go for it!"

Diana Benmergui, the Associate registrar at Stern College, often works with students who need to figure out different academic issues when they try to make Aliyah. "I think that in general YU is very supportive of students making Aliyah," she says. "They've made great strides in accommodating students." Benmergui mentions that YU hosts Shabbatonim for

alumni who've made Aliyah, as well as various other events. "At one point, President Joel even had to speak with Israel's interior ministry and educational programs in Israel, because there used to be a problem that they wouldn't accept our degrees," she says. "As far as I am aware, the problem's gone."

Benmergui suggests that it may be a nice idea if alumni living in Israel tried to set up an organization to help out YU students who want to make Aliyah. "I hope to make Aliyah at one point in life too," she says smiling. "It is a dream of mine and I hope to have it fulfilled."

As a student at Yeshiva College majoring in Biology, Avigdor Lalehzaradeh is still unsure about whether he wants to make Aliyah. "My friends and roommates influence me to think about it," he says. He thinks, though, that the majority of the students in YU don't want to move to Israel. "In order to make Aliyah you have to be very passionate about it; if you're not passionate it will be very difficult," he says.

"I grew up in a materialistic lifestyle and I don't want to lose it," an anonymous student from Sy Syms says vehemently. "If I want to go to Duane Reade at 3 AM I can't go to Israel."

Different students expressed their opinions about the role of the Israel Club in terms of promoting Aliyah. "The Israel Club is very supportive of people interested in making Aliyah, they provide many services to make it easier," says Alisa Ungar-Sargon, a Stern College student, editor and board member of the Stern College Dramatic Society.

"Every single one of the students and fliers that I see from the Israel Club makes me feel guilty about not wanting to make Aliyah," says an anonymous student in Stern College. "It's like they're saying, 'You don't want to make Aliyah?! You're not a Frum Jew!'"

Rachel Nemzer, the Stern Col-

lege Campus Aliyah Fellow for the Jewish Agency, and the Aliyah Coordinator for the Israel club, does not think the fellowship or the Israel Club try to guilt students into making Aliyah. "We don't push Aliyah, but we help those students who are interested," she says.

Nemzer finds, however, that many YU students say they are interested in making Aliyah but do not plan for it concretely. "Many YU students come back from Israel and Seminary and say they want to make Aliyah, but as the years go on, their motivation slowly dwindles," she states. "In other colleges, people who are serious enough to say they want to make Aliyah, actually do it."

Nemzer shrugs and says, "Its haval [a shame] that people don't take more advantage of the Aliyah fellows; we're here to help people out."

"Honestly, I don't think making Aliyah was ever really a question for me," says Shira Schwartzman, a junior at Stern College majoring in Education. Schwartzman sees Aliyah as a religious ideal, saying that she "wants to have a front row seat for Bayit Shlishi, the third Temple, and face Torah as a matter of defining who I am rather than a means of survival in a culture that is totally unreflective of what I believe in."

"To continue here is like a slap

in the face to generations of Jews who would have given everything to be in our generation," says Schwartzman passionately. "My wanting to make Aliyah isn't just wanting to live up to my place in our history—it's to live up to my place in our future. I simply cannot imagine raising my children anywhere else."

"I don't think Hashem wants me to live in Israel right now," says an anonymous Stern College student majoring in Psychology. "I'd love to live there, but after exploring the different communities in Israel I haven't found one that I would fit into," she states. "I feel like the education system there's too black and white and raising my children that way will impose on them certain religious standards that I don't want."

"Plus, I'd really miss my family too much," she adds as an afterthought.

Aviah Saltzman intends to follow her brother Max and make Aliyah when she graduates from Stern College. As a junior majoring in Education, Saltzman says she "plans to go to graduate school in Israel and get a teacher's certificate." Why does she want to make Aliyah? Saltzman shakes her head as if it's obvious and says, "That's where we belong."

The Odd Verser

Anna Nimus

Hatikva [The Hope] is a beautiful little lyric. In a few poignant lines, it vividly depicts both the heartfelt longing Jews have for the land they lost over 2000 years ago and their unwavering hope and faith that they will return to it someday as a free nation. It's hard to think of a better choice to serve as the anthem of anything, but the country founded by Jews on that very land over 60 years ago, and counting.

No, it can't be helped: I love Israel and I love Hatikva but the two together simply do not work. Israel needs a new anthem; Hatikva needs a new home. I didn't have to look very far to find another venerable Jewish institution that could use a hopeful anthem. It only required a little tweaking.

English Translation

הוקתה, The Hope

As long as in pure Lakewood,

YU edition

The "YU Jew" is reviled,

כל עוד בלייקווד תמימה

While among the Ivy League of the East

נפש "YU" די בזויה

His college is not numbered,

ובליגת הקיסוס קדימה

אין מכללתנו מניה

Still, we have not given up our hope,

The hope to change these conceptions,

עוד לא אבדה תקותנו

To be likewise esteemed—oh, this is our desire,

התקווה לשנות השיטה

By the measure of "Yeshiva" and "University".

רצוננו להיות גם חשוב, הא!

Anna N., writes the odd verse from time to time.

בערך ישיבה ואוניברסיטה

SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Zionist Scientists: A New Internship Program at Bar Ilan

Rivkah Rogawski

Most undergraduate science students, from aspiring pre-meds to pre-engineering candidates, spend at least one summer laboring over Bunsen burners and micro-pipets in research laboratories. Positions can be competitive and difficult to secure, especially in choice locations such as foreign countries or obscure hometowns. Therefore, the new Bar Ilan-YU initiative that aims to find YU students internships in Bar Ilan's Faculty of Exact Sciences will come as a welcome and valuable opportunity for science students. Professor of Chemistry and Chair of Nanoscience at Bar Ilan, Chaim Sukenik, addressed YC and SCW undergraduates about the novel program, which will begin accepting applicants next academic year for the summer of 2011.

Professor Sukenik, a YC graduate with a Ph.D. in chemistry from CalTech, explained that the rationale for the program was to offer a "new kind of Israel experience." For students whose only previous exposure to Israeli culture was through a year-long seminary or yeshiva experience, a summer spent in an academic research environment would provide an alternate perspective on Israeli life. The unspoken hope being that, once exposed to this Israeli higher edu-

cation, American students would then choose to develop a scientific career on Israel soil.

Appealing to an audience that voluntarily chose to spend their post-high school years with an intensive Judaic Studies requirement, Professor Sukenik drew parallels between the values and lifestyles propounded by Yeshiva University and Bar Ilan, both of whom function within a religious framework. Bar Ilan also has a minimum Judaic Studies requirement and boasts a machon gavoha l'Torah (advanced Torah institute). If summer students were interested, he added, part of the internship program could involve a havruta (paired learning) with one of the graduate students at the machon gavoha l'Torah, a unique opportunity certainly not present in most summer experiences.

Professor Sukenik described the Bar Ilan science departments as currently being in a "unique growth period," having recently opened Bar Ilan Institute of Nanotechnology and Advanced Materials (BINA), the center in which he himself conducts research. Focused on interdisciplinary collaboration between six departments—materials, medicine, energy, magnetism, photonics, and cleantech—BINA has 39 laboratories staffed with over 300 re-

searchers. Interestingly, each faculty member is required to do part of their post-graduate education outside of Israel, a requisite based on belief in the value of broad scientific exposure. Researchers work on projects ranging from complex nanomaterials to solar energy harvesting and conversion. Presumably, involvement in the expanding BINA would be an exciting opportunity for a summer student.

The summer program, whose application process would begin after Sukkoth next fall, would be open to third year students in biology, pre-engineering, chemistry, physics or pre-medical studies. Previous research experience is not necessary, although exposure to lab coursework would be a prerequisite. Students would research laboratories in the Faculty of Exact Sciences and BINA and then sub-

mit a checklist of labs they are interested in, rather than choosing a single area or two of interest to them. Professor Sukenik explained that this is to encourage diversity of choices—the main point is to be exposed to research, and the program aims to find a precise fit between student and lab. The program hopes to then notify students of their acceptance by mid-May 2011.

Once in Israel, each student would be paired with a Ph.D. student and be required to work 40 hours per week, Sunday through Thursday. YU credit would be granted for the undergraduate program, and Bar Ilan would cover housing and a small subsistence stipend, although students would have to arrange their own transportation to Israel. Extracurricular programming and cultural events

would be made available as well. Professor Sukenik added that Hebrew language skills would not be an issue, since English is the scientific language even in Israel and lab meetings are held in English.

For students either graduating before next summer, or interested in working at Bar Ilan this summer, Professor Sukenik has offered to help individuals find internships at Bar Ilan. Interested individuals should research laboratories online and email Professor Sukenik, who will act as a go-between and contact the laboratory. Hopefully, those students who participate in the program will find the experience eye opening, in terms of both the scientific exposure and a newfound appreciation of scientific careers in Israel.

"The Science in Science Fiction": Predictions for the Future

Helen Ayala Unger

This month's featured science book, "The Science in Science Fiction" by Robert Bly, aims to dispel common myths surrounding popular science fiction concepts while analyzing their realistic potential for the future. A sampling of the concepts covered in the book includes antigravity, ESP, antimatter and artificial intelligence. In short chapters and concise language, Bly discusses the history of each idea, its occurrence in science fiction and its practical applications for both current and future times.

Take, for example, the liquid metal that is central to the plots of the "Terminator" films. While any metal can become liquid if heated past its melting point, the metal shown in the films is unique in that it is a nontoxic liquid at room temperature. Bly discusses two cutting-edge modern technologies that may soon allow us to experience liquid metal in real life: shape memory alloys and magnetorheological fluids. In addition, Bly notes that a substance already in existence, called "metallic glass,"

is quite similar to liquid metal, and is already being used in some industries, as it is three times stronger than steel (178).

While its subject matter is quite intriguing, "The Science in Science Fiction" makes for a dry read. It would help to have at least a basic understanding of chemistry and physics before picking it up, and Bly's writing style isn't quite as compelling as the reader would expect. If you are an avid fan of science fiction, though, it can be a great guide to the mysteries behind your favorite stories. Just don't be surprised when the science behind your favorite novel or movie isn't all it's cracked up to be; although "Star Wars" might be a riveting film, the technical points of Obi-Wan Kenobi's hologram aren't necessarily as interesting.

Helen Ayala Unger is a freshman at SCW from Cleveland, Ohio, majoring in Biochemistry. She enjoys rides in flying cars and deep space exploration. Go Cavs!

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