



The Yeshiva University

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YU Hosts Panel on Iranian Nuclear Program

Hannah L. Golden

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad lambasted the United Nations (UN) on Monday, May 3 for criticizing Iran's nuclear energy program and allowing Israel to produce nuclear weapons. "... Numerous resolution are adopted against non-nuclear weapon states, under pressure by the same states which use false pretexts with the clear intention of denying other member states their recognized legal rights to develop peaceful nuclear energy," he said pointedly to the assembled UN. "...The prevailing sense that it is alright to use double standards. Although for example the Zionist regime stockpiles hundreds of nuclear warheads, wages numerous wars in the Middle East region, and continues to threaten people...it enjoys the unconditional support of the United States government and its allies..."

A few hours later, and a couple blocks south, 250 people listened to physicist David Albright question Ahmadinejad's protestations. "It's hard to believe that Iran is *not* seeking nuclear weapons, but it's extremely hard to prove that Iran is seeking nuclear weapons," Albright told the group gathered at Stern College for Women's Schottenstein Cultural Center. "You can't help but think that hidden inside the civilian program is a nuclear weapons program." Albright, along with Washington Post foreign correspondent Robin Wright and Elliott Abrams - former foreign policy advisor to President Bush - discussed the issues surrounding Iran's nuclear program and the world's response to it.

"Every country in the world wants to see Iran's nuclear program blocked," declared Wright, gazing over the floodlights into the audience. She detailed why Iran, more than other countries in the Middle East, is intent on developing nuclear facilities: "In terms of religion they are Shiites and that religion is minority...they feel they are surrounded on that account." Wright added that "Iran has not invaded a country in 200 years, but they have been invaded [by Iraq and Russia]."

"Iran doesn't believe that the West is really serious, and Iran actually does need nuclear energy," explained Wright, who has reported from Iran on many occasions since the 1970s. "Iran might run out of oil by 2025, or even sooner.

Iran thinks that this is about more than weapons issues, that this is the West trying to quash Iran."

Fellow panelist Elliott Abrams agreed that Iran would not be deterred from its current program unless they were coerced. "If, if you could get crippling sanctions," argued Abrams - the ayatollahs know as we do there is discontent in Iran - you stop Iran from exporting oil and you stop Iran from importing gasoline... ayatollahs would slow down the nuclear weapons program." He argued that the UN statements today, such as Secretary General Ban Ki-

Moon's plea that Iran provide evidence that its nuclear program is solely for peaceful purposes, are pointless. "I will tell you that what will come out the Security Council are sanctions that nibble, not any sanctions that have an impact on the ayatollahs," Abrams said to an agreeing crowd.

Abrams negated previous Security Council resolutions as weak: "Thanks to the Russians and Chinese [who profit from trade with Iran] it won't be the kind of pow - the kind of pow in the mouth - that the ayatollah's would see and take seriously." He suggested in-

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Yeshiva University

Israel's Ambassador to the United States, Michael B. Oren, will deliver the keynote address at Yeshiva University's 79th commencement ceremony this month. Disrespected at University of California Irvine and disputed at Brandeis (where he will also deliver the keynote address), Oren is likely to encounter a far more receptive audience in the land of Torah U'Madda and staunch Israel support. Over 2,000 students will be receiving their degrees at the ceremony.

Giving a Face to Mental Illness

Yaelle Frohlich

On Monday, May 10, Yeshiva University's Active Minds chapter will host an event titled "Giving a Face to Mental Illness," where a panel of current YU students will discuss their experiences of living with mental illness. The event will take place at 8:30 PM in Furst Hall, room 501.

There are many types of mental illness - well-known ones include depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and seasonal affective disorder - whose exact symptoms vary from person to person, and which often respond to treatment, the type of which depends on the particulars of the case. Some people may respond to therapy alone, some to a combination of therapy and medication, etc.

On Shabbat afternoon of 1 May, during the Psychology Club Shabbaton, about 20 students gathered in Stanton Hall to discuss destigmatizing mental illness. The group discussed a variety of social concerns relating to the way the Orthodox community--and general society--deals with psychological disorders. Despite the tremendous amount of research and increasing awareness about this complex issue, and despite the possibility of treatment for many variations of mental illness that allow individuals to maintain successful families and careers, people with mental illness can still be subject to stigma.

Among the issues brought up at the meeting was how people who suffer from mental illness may be written off for shidduchim, or, equally problematic, might conceal the illness from his or her partner prior to marriage or engagement. Perhaps an even more disturbing attitude discussed: there are still some people who do not believe that mental illness is even a legitimate disease; several incredulous members of the group reported hearing comments from peers that

denied the biological and physiological severity of illnesses like depression.

Another topic brought up was how individuals can relate to and help - rather than recoil from - friends who may be suffering from a mental illness. That's what "Giving a Face to Mental Illness" is all about.

Active Minds hosted the same event (with different panelists) last year, with a turnout of over 200 people. The Active Minds board, which includes President Chaim Stobetzki and Vice-President Rachael Goldberg, hope that this year's panel will be equally successful. Recruiting panelists isn't easy, as the subject matter is personal and sensitive for qualified speakers. Last year, Active Minds recruited panelists by first advertising the event via email, then waiting for students to respond to the email - which they did - by volunteering to speak.

Active Minds at YU, a student-run organization, was established in 2007 and is one of 80 college chapters in the country. Active Minds on Campus, according to the group's homepage (active-mindsatyu.wordpress.com), "is the only peer-to-peer organization dedicated to mental health awareness among college students...The group is designed to utilize peer outreach to increase students' awareness of mental health issues and symptoms of mental illness, provide information about available resources, encourage students to seek help as soon as help is needed, and to serve as a liaison between students and the mental health community. By promoting awareness and education, the group aims to remove the stigma that surrounds mental illness and to create an open environment for discussion of mental health issues."

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THOUGHTS OF STUDENT LEADERS

Wrap-Up

Yaelle Frohlich, Editor-in-Chief



I've never been good at goodbyes. As a nine-year-old, I used to go to Girl Scout camp and fight back tears after two days of arts and crafts came to a close. When relatives or friends from distant lands stayed at my house for a week, I would wander around their empty rooms, red-eyed and sniffing, after they departed.

The culmination of my undergraduate experience and year of editorship will herald my most monumental farewell yet. So why am I not walking around in a drunken-like haze of nostalgia or carrying around a satchel of comfort food? Well, apart from still being really busy with final assignments, I have realized increasingly that many of our experiences and interactions here will have longer lasting effects than are first apparent.

Yeshiva University is one of those places your spirit doesn't have to leave, even when you do. For example, by impacting different student organizations, writing to make a difference in one of the student publications or simply having a friendly conversation with a lower classman, your influence can become a living spark that is passed on year-to-year, helping the bright-eyed kiddos who fill your shoes and living on in the hearts of no-longer bewildered first-time-on-campus students. At YU, of course, this sense of interconnectedness is ameliorated by an institutional awareness of being part of a larger legacy of transmitting Jewish tradition to future generations.

With female rabbis, homosexuality, the Iranian nuclear threat, grade inflation and a possible polarization of the right- and left-wing Modern Orthodox community (Purim Chagiga location change, anyone?) among the set of questions comprising our current reality, it's an exciting—if daunting—time to be a Jewish student. (Honestly, when has it not been?) It's incredibly special to be able to explore these issues in an environment conducive to critical, Orthodox Jewish thinking. In between trips to the Registrar, Academic Advisement and the Career Development Center, we would all do well not to forget that.

The YU Observer too, like the university and its students, will continue to evolve. It has been an honor to serve as editor-in-chief this year, and I wish incoming editor-in-chief Estie Neff the utmost success in taking over the *The Observer's* mantle of leadership this

fall. I would like to extend the humblest thanks to my unflinchingly hardworking staff, many of whom—throughout the year—went above and beyond the call of duty, staying up late nights, meeting impossible deadlines and helping me when I needed it, all for the sake of putting this publication together. I cannot end the year without paying individual homage to the women of the masthead:

Hannah Golden mass copy-edited (most of this issue, in fact), speed-wrote and basically served as my reliable undergraduate News watchdog all year.

Tamara edited and often shouldered last-minute assignments when the News kept flowing and the pool of writers dried up.

Yaira consistently got Features together—splendidly—against all odds, while serving as Vice President of Student Council.

Chaya, queen of punctuality and locating the most diverse opinions on campus, made my life that much easier, and Opinions was always the first section sent to layout.

Alisa—where to begin?—managed Arts and Culture, copy-edited, previewed my editorials on more than one late night and set healthy limits on the amount of time I was permitted to talk about *The Observer*.

Lauren made Israel shine, copy-edited last-minute and once even left her dorm late at night to print

a PDF of the newspaper file on the school computers when *The Observer's* office printer was down.

Rivkah totally revamped Science with her creativity, also often writing articles that needed to be written. I can't wait to see her influence in next year's run.

Talia made Style spectacular with her unique wit and creative edginess. Her "Frumshaniesta" article got thousands of online hits, and, more importantly, got people talking.

Hannah Robinow wrote, wrote some more and handled the website as if she weren't as busy as she really was.

Dina Horowitz gave us her gorgeous, professional-quality photographs.

Avital Pessar and Gila Mandelcorn made *The Observer's* financial wheels turn as the newspaper started paying half its own print costs (yep, we're semi-independent now). Their conscientiousness, punctuality and important suggestions have been highly appreciated and relied upon.

Sarah—ah, words are insufficient—dealt with my eleventh-hour emails, trained and coordinated new layout staff, sacrificed portions of her youth to InDesign and got every final product of *The Observer* finished so beautifully.

Additional thanks goes to the copy-editors and layout staff not named on the masthead. You know who you are, and you have been amazing.

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a journalist
to come as
close as
possible to
the heart
of the
world."

—Henry R. Luce

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NEWS

Do You Dig It? YU's Summer Archeology Trip

Suzanne Mazel

The question of summer vacation plans taunts students beginning in about January. Typically, one looks for something fun but also good for a resume and school. A difficult task, Yeshiva University made it a little easier with the option of a summer archaeological dig in Israel, set to take place July 4-23 this summer.

Dr. Jill Katz, an adjunct lecturer at YU, runs the program. She first conceived the idea when she thought students at YU would want a similar experience to the one she had during her college summers. The three-week course will take students to the Tell es-Safi/Gath Archaeological Project directed by Aren Maier of Bar Ilan University. This site is believed to be the same site mentioned in the Bible as the hometown of Goliath, of "David and Goliath" fame. Dr. Katz serves as supervisor while on the dig, noting all the finds the students make.

"Archaeology is fundamentally destructive so we have to record where everything comes from so that later on we can reconstruct the history of the site," said Dr. Katz.

While on the dig, students will work in Area A, in which layers from Iron I (1200-1000 BCE) and Iron II (1000-800 BCE) periods are being excavated. YU students will be working with a team from Bar Ilan University during the day, and will also have field trips and lectures. They become adept in archeological tools and recording finds.

Ayala Raice (SCW '11) expressed amazement at what she found on a previous dig. "Every day going up to our little square of dirt, and finding pieces of pottery, that were used by people 3,000 years ago; entirely intact vessels reborn from the dirt, held in my own hands," she said, was part of the trip's uniqueness.

The most captivating part for Raice was connection between her work and the Bible. "The most fascinating part," she explained, "was how the city of Gat that we were excavating correlates with passages in the bible. Not only that but the history of the Philistines who lived in Gat, played a major role in the history of the land of Israel. By learning about these other ancient people, I really learned about my own past, my own history."

Though she did not find her life's passion that summer, she did

gain more valuable insight.

"It opened my mind to a whole new method of thought" said Raice, "of an approach to history that will be helpful in whatever I may choose."

Dr. Katz said one of her favorite parts of the dig is getting to know her students outside the classroom. "The camaraderie that develops is really special and I often keep in contact with them long afterwards," she said. "I've even been invited to two weddings of former dig students."

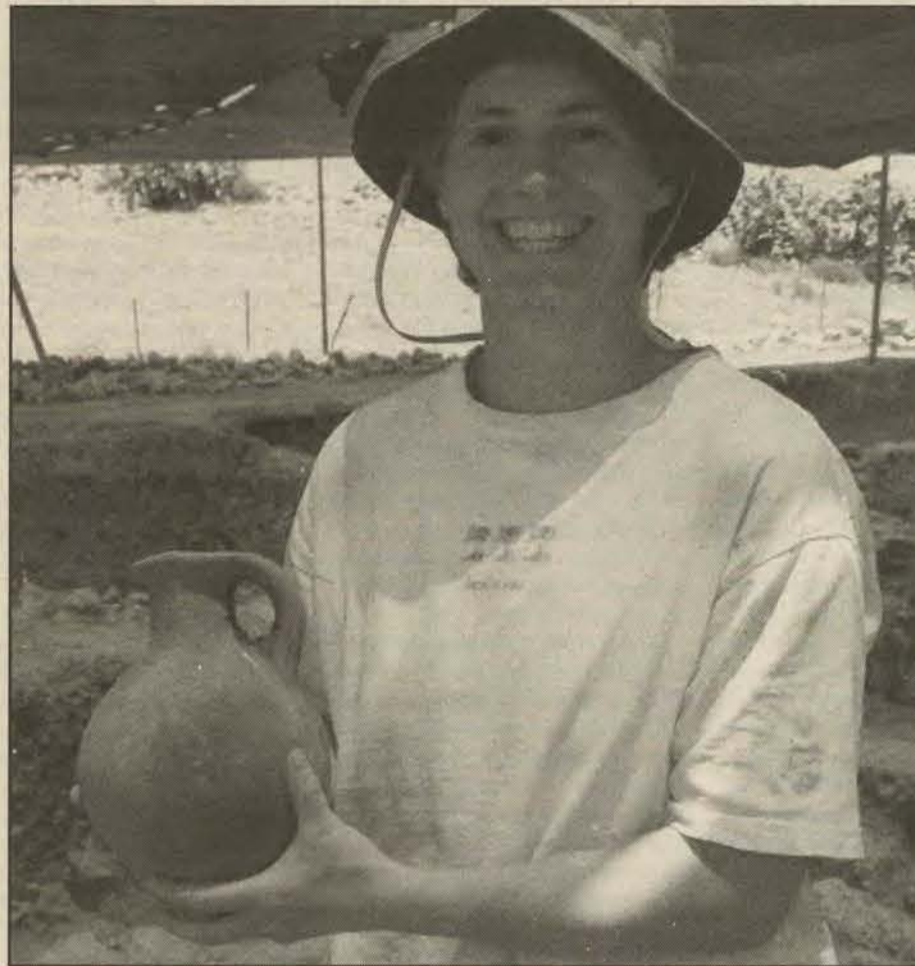
Raice had similar feelings. "I loved meeting different students, getting to know people my age, interested in things I am interested in, but from an entirely different culture," she said. "We all shared a common experience."

However Raice and Dr. Katz differed about their least favorite parts of the trip. Raice disliked the port-a-potties that required a long walk down to a "smelly, stuffy bathroom," then the same walk back up. The early start of the digging day is what Dr. Katz finds most difficult--it begins at 4:45 AM. However, Dr. Katz said that no one gives in to the urge to sleep in. "The dig runs like the army," stated Dr. Katz. "If you are late they leave without you - so no one is late."

"The thing about archaeology is that when you start, you never know what you are going to find," added Dr. Katz. "You dig and dig, and then your trowel scrapes something; you brush carefully and the shape of a pot emerges. There is nothing quite like that feeling. In the course of my excavations, I have found many bowls, jars, jugs, juglets, chalices, and flint knives. It never gets old."

Raice commented that the dig expanded her view of Israel. "It's hard to think of Israel as simply a place of politics and problems when you're in the scorching sun, with a small brush in one hand, a trowel in the other and your sitting in a pile of dirt," she described. "But the beauty of Israel is the various feelings of love and compassion different people have for it. My love has expanded."

After the dig, the students are not permitted to take their finds back to the United States. "The finds all remain in Israel," said Dr. Katz. "We are able to borrow them, and I hope to bring some next year as part of a YU Museum exhibit on the Philistines."



Adjunct YU lecturer Dr. Jill Katz, who heads YU's summer archaeological dig in Israel, holds an unearthened jug.

So You Want to Be Club President?

Meirah Shedlo

So You Think Stern Can Dance. Earth Day Mole Hunt. Math Fight. Each event is coordinated by a club president in charge of organizing activities, officially representing the club, and arranging and presiding over board meetings.

When a club head at Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women or Sy Syms School of Business graduates, a successor must be selected to continue and invigorate the club. The diversity of the clubs is reflected in the way each identifies its new president.

Many clubs on campus involve applications to identify a suitable new leader. Miriam Gofine, outgoing head of the YU Tolerance Club (YUTC), "sent out students and put a notice on the YUTC Facebook group wall to announce the search for involvement for next year." Student emails not only notified students of the search for new board members, but also included an application form for interested candidates to complete.

Kaylee Kampf, the incoming president of SCW Sharsheret, a support organization for breast cancer survivors, achieved her position by filling out the application designed by departing president Barbara Laniado. Kampf was identified through an email application process, in which students and club members described their interest in and what they could contribute to the club.

The Psychology Club involves a more rigorous application process. Chana Scholl, co-president of the Psychology Club along with Lauren Burstein, stated: "This year we defined a new policy for the Stern Psych Club voting process. Specifically, club heads are chosen for the Psychology Club by popular vote of students in attendance for the Psych Club elections who have attained eligibility as Psych Club members by attending at least two Psych Club events (YC or Stern) during their time at Stern."

Alexandra Michalowski became the Psychology Club president when elections were held Wednesday, April 28th. She was elected by Psychology Club members who arrived on time and remained until the end of the candidates' speeches. Juniors and seniors were eligible to run, and each candidate gave a five minute statement detailing her vision for the club and her personal qualifications for the position.

Not all club presidents ascend to the position when their predecessor steps down: enterprising students can take the lead by establishing a new club. The Pharmacology Club was founded in 2007 by Lorie Solodokin, who felt there was a need to inform students of the myriad opportunities available in the pharmaceutical profession as a vital component of the medical field. Students are not limited to "working behind a Duane Reade

counter," Solodokin says; rather, pharmacists are employed by large pharmaceutical corporations and perform research in drug development among other career opportunities. To launch the club, Solodokin provided a mission statement and a list of student signatures in support of the initiative to the Student Council board. All clubs are under the direction of the SCW Student Council or the Torah Activities Council.

A more recent innovation is the History Club: "We thought there was a need for it on campus," explained Tamar Veres, co-president of the History Club along with Laura Levin-Dando and Aliza Schulman. "There are not many history majors on campus," she added, "so we thought it would be a good idea to generate interest in the department and also to have various events with a broad appeal to many people."

While starting a club is relatively simple, running one can be difficult. Gofine remembers the difficulty and "steep learning curve" when she began in the position as a co-president of the Tolerance Club with Avi Kopstick of Yeshiva College. The "transition was difficult", Gofine remarked, "but I just pushed myself to do the best that I could do." She recalled the new challenge of balancing schoolwork with the time commitment, ensuring club member involvement, and organizing program-

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NEWS

Students Voice Complaints about Campus Life Directly to President Joel at Town Hall Meeting

Tamara Freiden

A Town Hall meeting was held in Yagoda Commons on April 14, the day before Student Council elections addressed students' still-rampant discontent over issues like the Purim *Chagiga* [party] held at Cardozo, the lack of an adequate library at Stern, Beren Campus closure for Rosh Hashanah and finals planned during the Israeli Day Parade.

Before addressing the students' concerns, Yeshiva University President Richard Joel took the floor, noting the success of the joint Beren Campus Shabbaton honoring Rabbi Lord Jonathon Sacks. President Joel then followed with a list of statistics attesting to the ever-increasing success of the university. *US News and World Report* ranked YU as sixth most popular university with a 69 percent attendance rate of accepted applicants. Carodozo Law School moved from 18th to 4th in an evaluation of part-time programs. Finally, YU has a 92% rate of graduated students who are either employed or attending law school.

President Joel announced that a search for a Vice Provost in underway to assist Provost Dr. Morton Lowengrub. Congratulations were granted to Jane Kitaevitch and Ari

Lamm, YU's first Carnegie Scholar and Fulbright Scholar, respectively. Both had been Kressel Fellows previously at YU.

Though YU raised 100 million dollars this year, the university still suffers a 20 million dollar deficit, "and it could only be a few more years that we can have a 20 million deficit before we really have to scale back," warns President Joel. He asks the students to do their part in programs like Students Helping Students and becoming Student Ambassadors, liaisons between YU and the students' communities.

The meeting then changed gears as students were given the last fifteen minutes to have their own concerns directly answered.

Deena Klein (SCW '10) remarked about the somewhat contradictory message YU was sending by planning finals at the same time as the Israel Day Parade. President Joel mentioned that there was no knowledge of the parade when finals were scheduled, however they are working on changing it. Sure enough, the exams have been moved to accommodate the parade since then.

Tirtza Spiegel (SCW '11) and Ilana Gadish (SCW '11) both had con-

cerns about campus life at Stern College. Spiegel, while appreciative of the community at Stern College, still knows that there is room for improvement. She asked why Beren Campus closes on Rosh Hashanah even though classes still run around that time. To further her argument, she mentioned that our university counterparts were able to remain on Wilf Campus throughout the holidays, while SCW women from out of the area were forced into uncomfortable situations finding a place to eat and seats for the services.

Gadish addressed a comment that President Joel made in the last Town Hall meeting. "In response to a question about improving the Stern library, while there are deficits, [you said] we should really feel like the uptown library is really our own library, and uptown's campus," she reminded him. "But in light of Purim, I was wondering if you could address the student morale, in feeling that we really are not as much a part of the YC [Yeshiva College] Campus."

President Joel emphasized social and security factors in the decision. "I think it's a put down to women to lock men and women in two rooms right next to each other," said President Joel, emphasizing the added security on the Wilf Campus during Purim, as well as the complexity of balancing both Yeshiva and University. "... It's a time of drinking, both in costume, I don't think its *hashkafically* [from a philosophic viewpoint] right to be celebrating together."

Knowing that he has a tendency to micromanage, President Joel mentioned plans for a "council of deans to be more of your partners in calendar and community life so its student empowerment and not abandonment." In terms of creating a better campus at Stern, the 5th and 6th floors of the Sys Syms building have been bought, and plans are underway. As for Stern's library? "I'm committed to it but it's not going to happen tomorrow," said President Joel.

Though many students were heard, many left unsatisfied as hurried to their next classes.

So You Want to Be Club President?

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ming that would interest the student body. To achieve these goals, Gofine "worked with my other club head; brought in people I had met and thought were interesting; and worked with other club heads." Gofine has run the club with Vice President Faige Seligman and her board since her co-president graduated in January.

While beginning presidents may experience a challenging adjustment, there are many benefits in becoming a student leader. Club presidents gain leadership skills, raise awareness about important issues on campus, and spark student interest in their cause or discipline. Scholl enjoys using the broad range of psychology application to bring fascinating programs to SCW students. She noted, "the presentation on 'Understanding Motives for Anti-Israel Sentiment on College Campuses' explored cognitive dissonance to some ex-

tent but certainly isn't textbook psychology, yet because we felt it was an important subject to discuss on the YU campus, we were able to bring it to Stern."

Kampf summed up the benefits of club leadership: "I think the best part of being a president of such an important club like Sharsheret, breast cancer awareness, or any club on campus, is the fact that you have a direct say and impact on the student body as a whole. Being head of the club is a great way to interact with fellow students and provide something long lasting for the campus at large."

Ruthie Braffman, president of Torah Activities Council, added: "Being a passionate and competent club head is perhaps just as important as being a Student Council board member. It takes such passion, creativity, and organization, and I encourage everyone to at least think about it - the opportunities are endless."

Parting Ways with the Plaza

Decreasing number of students on campus takes a toll on the Independent Housing Program (IHP)

Estie Neff

Lexington Plaza, an Independent Housing Program (IHP) residence located at 184 Lexington Avenue, will not be available for student housing next semester, as of a March 18th decision made by the Student Affairs and Facilities Management committees.

The decision to downsize on the IHP -which provides additional housing for students on campus -was due to financial considerations, said Rachel Kraut, director of Residence Life. The eight apartments in Lexington Plaza are rented, not owned, by Yeshiva University, and the number of empty beds in the regular dormitories placed the rent's continuation under scrutiny. On the afternoon Lexington Plaza was voted out of the IHP, Kraut sent an email out to the Stern College student body

notifying them of the fact.

Lexington Plaza was the first IHP building YU purchased, followed by Windsor Court, located at 155 East 31st Street. "[IHP] started because we needed housing space," says Dean of Student Affairs Zeldra Braun, "and it grew as our need grew."

Last year Windsor Court was not offered as an IHP possibility. After this year, the only IHP residence will be the building at 251 Lexington Avenue, home to the Center for the Jewish Future (CJF) office and adjacent to Stanton Hall.

Students who live in IHP buildings have security services at the door and must follow the housing rules that apply to regular dorms. Their apartments have a typical dorm-room setup.

What began 20 years ago as an effort to make additional space for students outside the dorms has become an increasingly obsolete initiative as more students choose to reside off campus. There is no conclusive explanation for this trend.

Abbie Wasserman (SCW '10), a "super senior" at Stern College from Columbus, OH, currently lives in Lexington Plaza and is in favor of its removal from the IHP. "I think it's great," she wrote in an email. "The whole point of dorming is to provide a way for students to live together."

YU Graduate School of Jewish Studies Expands Community, Publishing Activity

Yaelle Frohlich

Yeshiva University's Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies has continued its community-building activity this semester.

The same week that the TAC/SOY Shabbaton took place on the Beren Campus, April 16-17, around 40 current Revel students and faculty gathered in different homes on and around the Wilf Campus, where Revel is located, to celebrate the first organized Shabbaton of their own. The event featured an *oneg* [Friday evening *kumbaya*], a communal Shabbat lunch in YU's Morgenstern Lounge and lectures by Revel's Associate Dean, Dr. Mordechai Cohen.

On April 25, Revel hosted its

second *Yom Iyun* (day of study) on "Bridging Academic Jewish Scholarship and Torah Learning."

Meanwhile, Revel also just published its first journal of scholarly, student-written articles. The publication can be downloaded at yu.edu/revel.

There are five fields of study at Revel: Bible, Jewish Philosophy, Medieval Jewish History, Modern Jewish History and Talmudic Studies. The school offers M.A. and PhD programs, as well as a joint-M.A./B.A. program, in which Revel courses double as both graduate and undergraduate credits for Yeshiva University undergraduates looking to pursue a Master's at Revel.

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stead that the US show support for the Iranian Green Movement, which tried to take down the government in June 2009. "Policy [in the Soviet Union and Brazil] changed when their dictatorships ended and other governments replaced them," Abrams warned. He added that nipping the nuclear program in the bud would be the only way to solve this problem. "If," he said, "[Iran] gets nuclear weapons after the whole world, including the US, has said this is unacceptable - will it be quieter or bolder? I think it will be bolder."

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FEATURES

55 East 34th Street

Leah Avner

I am a suburb girl. The neighborhood in which I grew up has a Quiet Law in effect every night after nightfall. Lawns are green and perfectly mowed and streets are always plowed before the snow finishes falling. Cars are parked in garages and at the frame of every house's front door are two lights serving as an invitation to a passing guest. I would wave at my nine year old neighbor as he shot the ball into the hoop fixed above his garage. I would smile at the Korean War veteran who lived across the street as he emptied out his mailbox. Where I lived, I knew about my neighbors' lives because they told me about them. In New York City, it doesn't exactly work like that.

It has been ten months since I first moved to East 34th Street. In the beginning I had trouble sleeping. I was constantly woken up by incessant hammering of construction across the street. The building already stood much taller than the building I lived in, but apparently it was not tall enough yet. Its presence is not overpowering like the block-long Macy's, and its front door does not have 27 steps leading up to it like the New York

Public Library. It's a simple building that would not catch the eye of a passerby. But every morning it catches me.

The majority of the apartments are still vacant, they are easy to spot: the shades are drawn and the white lamp in the corner doesn't glow. But a dozen are occupied and maybe since I miss my neighbors from home, I've decided to get to know them better.

I hold this impromptu meet-and-greet from the comfort of my own bed and with the use of my own imagination. Two weeks ago I noticed 14 Right Corner; he goes by 14rc for short because that is the type of guy he is, quick and convenient. He likes jeans and t-shirts and spends a Sunday lounging around on the couch watching television with his girlfriend.

Floor Eight is a no-messing-around guy. He's strict with himself, works out often and follows a firm 10:30 lights-out schedule to feel well rested for the next day of work. He works hard, and rewards himself appropriately. He watches television with his laptop beside him so he can multitask, and is expecting his iPad to arrive in the

mail within the next two weeks. He's young, successful and single. I've given him my number a couple of times, but he hasn't called me yet. Maybe he doesn't have time for distractions during his climb to corporate stardom.

Down the hall and five flights up is The Chef. She is thin, 35 years old and lives with her 3-year-old son. She is often in the kitchen standing over the stove, sautéing organic vegetables for dinner. Recently, a lean, 50-year-old man has been joining her. They met at a bike-a-thon a couple months ago. She's been nervous to introduce him to her son, but he has proven himself and is now being welcomed into the small family.

The Chef's son is friends with the All American Family's kids. They live on the tenth floor; the father and mother are financial analysts. They love their jobs, but love their family more and always make sure to be home on time so they can have a family dinner. Sunday is family day in their two-bedroom apartment. If the weather is nice, they'll walk to Bryant Park. If the weather is cold, everyone stays in pajamas and the mother reads on

the couch while the father builds train tracks for the boys to race their trains around.

When I wake up, my five windows face their five windows. I look inside the apartments and see if anyone else is getting up along with me. Are they brushing their teeth now too? Do they also think it looks like rain? Is The All American Family having cereal for breakfast? Maybe I'll have cereal too.

In March, the circus came to New York and the elephants paraded down 34th. My side of the street was crowded, so I crossed the street in order to get a better view and found myself standing next to the inhabitants of 55 East 34th Street. I scanned their faces, looking for 14rc or The Chef, but I couldn't recognize anyone. The people I knew so well seemed like total strangers. I didn't introduce myself to them; I didn't even smile in their direction. I just ignored them.

After much convincing from my friends, I did approach two men standing under the awning of the building in attempts to shield themselves from the pouring rain. They told me they were from Hollywood and were involved in show business, a fact I assumed was a lie, but the hand-rolled joint they passed back and forth added support to their claim. After our brief conversation, I returned back to my friends, eager to report the information I had just discovered and the friendship I was sure would soon form with my new

neighbors. But when I realized the men and I had never exchanged names, an essential ingredient to a friendship, I began to question the alleged relationship.

In New York, I know about my neighbors' lives because I can see them, not because they tell me. Of course if they opted to close their shades, my information source would dry out quicker than the skin of the women down in Florida, but lucky for me the enticement of the sunshine is too great for my neighbors and their shades always remain open. But my imagination can only take me so far. My new neighbors will never be like the ones I had in suburbia. I doubt that The All American Family will ever come over for tea, and the likelihood that I'll ever borrow a cup of sugar from Floor Eight seems slim.

I do know Candice Olson lives in the building; she is an interior decorator and has a program on the Home and Garden station called Divine Design. The two men I met that night were cameramen for her show. Apparently, she is working in Manhattan for a season and 55 East 34th street is serving as a temporary living space for the crewmembers. While she was perfectly polite when I met her, I have a feeling the motive for her manners was her reputation, rather than the genuine desire to be my friend. But the fault is not only her own. It is not as if I brought her an apple pie as a house warming gift. Let's face it; in New York City, it's just not like that.

Lessons I Uncovered Beneath the Haitian Rubble

Mushki Boteach

Like millions of people around the world, I had been following the tragedy in Haiti since the earthquake jolted the country in February. Although the media portrays a great deal of the devastation that has been visited on this poorest of Western nations, it wasn't until the week of February 9, when I traveled to Haiti on a humanitarian relief mission, that I truly understood just how severe the crisis really was.

The Thursday night after the tragedy my father asked me if I wanted to join him on a visit to Haiti to donate relief supplies to an orphanage in Port-Au-Prince and to generally help in writing and broadcasting about Haiti's devastation. We would leave Sunday night and return Wednesday morning. The idea sounded preposterous. How could we possibly go to a country that is in a state of emergency? A country where all hell had broken loose. The offers sounded somewhat irrational, but I knew it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. If I thought about it, I would probably decide against it. So I quickly agreed.

About 48 hours later I found myself sitting in the Santo Domingo airport, sleep deprived and cranky, trying to figure out if this whole thing was still a good idea. We met up with our friend Glenn Megill, founder of Rock of Africa, an organization

that feeds families in Zambia and Zimbabwe, along with his daughter and a photographer named Peter. After much haggling and miscommunication with a Dominican representative at Avis, we were finally able to rent our minivan and start our journey to Haiti. After driving nine hours on a windy gravel road, we finally reached the border. It was there that we got our first taste of the deprivation left by the earthquake. Thousands of people were waiting in the baking sun to try and get into the country with supplies. We waited our turn until we were finally permitted to enter. Two hours later we reached the Haitian capital.

Words cannot describe what we witnessed. Picture Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the atomic detonation, or Hamburg and Dresden after the devastating carpet-bomb raids delivered by the allied forces. Picture the monstrous mounds of rubble, and the jagged edges of half-torn buildings marking every street with a sullen sign of death and destruction. Only this time the ineffable picture was not drawn from any conflict or war, but came about through the sudden crush of nature alone.

Hundreds of thousands of people wandered the litter-strewn roads like zombies, their homes destroyed,

many of their family members dead. Perhaps the most devastating factor was that these people were so helpless. Haiti, already a poverty-stricken country, was now also in shambles. These people didn't even have the means to get back on their feet if they wanted to. As we drove through downtown Port-Au-Prince, my heart grew heavier. I could not understand how G-d could have allowed such a calamity to take place. Why were so many innocent citizens lying in their graves beneath the rubble on the street, as people stumbled over them to find their way? Is the value of a life really that worthless? Did these humans really live in vain? The smell of death permeated the entire city, making us gag. Relief workers informed us that dogs had been coming during the night and consuming the decaying bodies, leaving behind piles of bones in the rubble. In all honesty, I felt as if this G-d-forsaken country had been doomed for all eternity, without any hope of salvation.

But in the midst of darkness there is always a beacon of light that shines through. My hope was restored the next day when we paid a visit to an orphanage called Child Hope, an organization run by a Christian family who left their home in California six years ago to devote their lives

to rescuing suffering and abandoned children in Haiti. They have many volunteers who travel from US for months at a time to help in any way they can. Their love for and devotion to these children was incredible. They treated the orphans as if they were their own children and gave them opportunities that they could never receive growing up on the streets, as most orphans in Haiti do. I sat with some of the Haitian girls who live there, laughing and talking about school and our favorite nail polish colors. They were a pleasure and their company inspired me. They were bright young women who didn't wallow in any form of self-pity. Rather, they exhibited a zest for life and knowledge. They told me how they wanted to be doctors when they grow up.

We also went to the UN Base where we saw hundreds of doctors from all over the world united together in Haiti, all with the common goal of healing victims of the earthquake. You could hear every language spoken as doctors ran back and forth from tent to tent tending to the sick. I was especially

proud of all the American volunteers both from the military as well as random individuals who felt it was their duty to assist their Haitian brothers and sisters in this disaster. One American volunteer introduced us to a three year old Haitian boy whose mother and sister had perished in the earthquake. The father was forced to amputate his own son's hand in order to save him from the same terrible fate that his mother and sister had met. His father then walked ten miles, carrying him to the only hospital in the city hospital to get help. This American volunteer felt a connection with the boy and treated him almost like a younger brother, bringing him gifts and paying him visits daily.

Catastrophes such as the earthquake in Haiti are some of the darkest forces in nature. However, these same calamities also bring out the brightest qualities in humans who feel it is their duty to help others when they are needed.

You can't go to Haiti and return the

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FEATURES

YU Personalities: Hallie (Chaya Sorah) Canter

Ilana Hostyk

Dedicated to her field of work, professional no matter the hour, Hallie Canter has been working at Stern College since 1995. This snazzy acquisitions worker gave us a glimpse into her life.

Observer: Can you describe your childhood for us?

Canter: I'm from Los Angeles originally. My parents were transplant New Yorkers who patronized the arts. Working in the library brings back a lot of childhood memories—my family loved to read. They loved culture, and were pretty typical New York bagel-and-lox Jews. My father was a doctor who treated those in the entertainment industry. He would get free concert tickets, and passes to shows. He treated people like George Harrison, the rest of the Beatles, Beth Midler. I got to meet them sometimes.

Observer: Do you have siblings?

Canter: I had. There are four of us. After my mother died, my dad remarried, and I have a half sister. Unfortunately, my sister died of a brain tumor years ago. My older brother died six months ago, at work. We [remaining siblings] keep in touch—they live in California.

Observer: Did you travel a lot?

Canter: My family did. My father loved to travel. My favorite place was around northern California, it's very hippy dippy, but it's beautiful.

Observer: I want to go to a place that's hippy dippy!

Canter: Go to Big Sur.

Observer: Where were you for college?

Canter: I went to UCLA and majored in French Literature. I love languages. If I had the chance to do it again, I might have picked journalism, for practicality sake, but my actual major really opened up a genre of world literature. We took after my mother, maybe would have been better if I had taken after my father, in the sciences [laughs].

Observer: And after?

Canter: I worked in Ad agency right after college, but then got exposed to media production. I really developed an eye for the visual. I work with a great crew here, and it was in my first job after college where I really learned teamwork.

Observer: What brought you to New York?

Canter: Working in the outside world, although stimulating, was somewhat empty. Eventually, I had my own renaissance. I originally thought that you had to be born into Orthodoxy—they seemed like another species. I finally became religious through Lubavitch. I moved into a frum area, and explored all different sects of Judaism. The whole spectrum of orthodoxy is so interesting. I realized there were so many ways to discover Hashem. Moving here was the

chance to learn more, people told me to go to Israel, but I felt that New York would be more of a fit for me. Machon Hannah was the school I attended when I moved there. I needed a more sophisticated Torah atmosphere that they were able to provide. I went to school for a little over two years. People were really nice—Crown Heights is like a microcosm of all types.

Observer: Did you ever meet the rebbe?

Canter: Oh yah. I have a few rebbe dollars. I met him quite a few times, and write letters to the rebbe.

Observer: So what's your opinion on hasidut (Hasidism)?

Canter: I think that you need hasidut to stay frum nowadays. Musser [introspection/self-betterment] has its place, but the real specialness of being a Jew—the more I study the Tanya, the more I realize the uniqueness of being a Jew. Not even just the Torah, a Jew has a special connection to the wisdom of God. You have to know how to navigate the world, while holding on to your Jewish essence. Hasidut helps you with that.

It's nice that there is a Chabad club here. It's nice to see people connecting. And Rabbi Metzger's a gem.

Observer: So rumor on the street is that you've published a few books—how did you enter the publishing industry?

Canter: I met Mayer Bendet, my first boss and introduction to publishing, through a friend. He had a little publishing house in Manhattan and rented office space from a socialist Yiddish paper. He asked me to help write his books. He put the ideas on a type recorder, and I would help develop and embellish the plot for "Double Identity" and the sequel, "True Identity." For the different magazines we published, I wrote under many different pen names—I was the first woman rabbi [laughs]. I wore many different hats there—I was the editor, the writer, the typesetter.

Observer: What's one of your pet peeves?

Canter: Sensitive people.

Observer: Do you believe in love at first sight?

Canter: Not really.

Observer: Back to business. How did you end up at Stern?

Canter: Basically by going broke. You don't make a lot of money in Jewish publishing, and I realized I had to supplement my income. An acquisitions position opened up, and that's full time, so now I do editing and writing on the side.

Observer: As an Acquisitions worker, how do you decide what books to pick?



Hallie, age 2.

Courtesy of Hallie Canter



Hallie Canter today.

Ilana Hostyk

Canter: I get recommendations from other librarians and students.

Observer: How do you deal with censorship at YU?

Canter: We are an open library. There are no real taboo topics; it's more a selective process. For example, we have books about Christianity, but not devotional literature.

Observer: Do you like working here?

Canter: Definitely, it's the best of both worlds. We share the same values and lifestyles, but still a taste of the outside world.

Observer: Is there anything you want to change?

Canter: I wish we had more space, and would love a bigger library. We keep on getting new books, thousand of new books, and I don't know where we are going to put them.

Observer: As a person who has worked in publishing, what do you feel about the Ipad and Kindle?

Canter: It's scary for us! I don't think it will replace libraries, but I do think that computers in general are affecting the culture of reading. People won't read as deeply. Many things require deeper reading, not just a quick headline glance. Thank G-d for Shabbos! We Jews are going to be the bastions of old style knowledge.

Observer: Let's move into a bit more personal territory—what's your music taste like?

Canter: My taste is probably dated. I grew up in the 70s—I love The Who, and "Whose Next." I can't really list Torah pop as a favorite. I love Carol King—she was actually one of my dad's patients. I also love classical music.

Observer: I'm so curious for your

favorite book.

Canter: Jane Austen, of course. Who doesn't love Jane Austen? But my taste is generally eclectic; I enjoy all types of books. Really, anything well written. I'm not too happy with some of the new fiction right now. I used to like early novels of Stephen King. I like fantasy the novel, Dune. Flowers for Algernon was fantastic, and Marjorie Morningstar was really influential. Oscar Wilde. I have decadent taste [laughs].

Observer: Pets?

Canter: No. I can't, allergies. I love animals, and grew up with them though. Plus, I'm away a lot.

Observer: If you had one wish, what would it be?

Canter: That's hard. I guess, for mashiach [the messiah]. [Grins] The Lubavitcher in me.

Observer: Is there anything that you wish Stern Students would know?

Canter: Sometimes people come in with skewed perceptions of the outside world, and maybe want to leave Orthodoxy. I want to tell them, I've been there. I envy those born into religion; I had to fight so hard for my values. Really appreciate what you were given, because the most precious thing we have is our Yiddishkeit [Judaism]. It's nice to see the idealism here. I feel like working here keeps me young.

I can't say I had an adventurous life, or a glamorous life. But I made a lot of progress. I've been very grateful for the things that have come my way.

Lessons I Uncovered Beneath the Haitian Rubble

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same person. You come back a little sadder, but a lot more inspired. You discover that even in the darkest of times, when one cannot understand the meaning of terrible calamities, one can still make a difference with their own actions. We can't understand why bad things happen to so many good people. However, our personal decisions can make all the difference in improving their lot. Witnessing the effects of the earthquake in Haiti firsthand has made me so much more sensitive toward those in need.

Mushki Boteach is an undergraduate at Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women where she is majoring in public relations. She resides in Englewood, New Jersey.

FEATURES

Stepping Out of the Mold: Independent Shidduch Navigation in the Chabad Community

Devorah Isenberg

Names in this article were changed to protect confidentiality.

"Matchmaker, matchmaker, make me a match...because playing with matches a girl can get burned," sing Tevye's three daughters in one of the classic songs of Fiddler on the Roof. But today, in the Hasidic Chabad community, despite the community's outward resemblance to the shtetl of yesteryear, this reliance on the all-knowing community shadchan [matchmaker] is dwindling. Young Orthodox men and women seem just as likely these days to turn to friends, family, or themselves in the search for a soul mate. In an op-ed in the Jerusalem Post in November of last year, rabbi and author Shmuley Boteach criticized the Orthodox dating system, saying that dating through a professional matchmaker "disempowers men and women from meeting directly and creates a dependency on those who are not principals in the dating. Professional matchmakers often treat their occupation as an impersonal job and take no real interest in their clients. Very often these introductions are done arbitrarily and almost randomly." The article caused a flurry of strong reactions, both positive and negative, in the Orthodox community, but what many people failed to recognize was that many Orthodox singles have figured this out on their own, and are empowering themselves to get out and meet their soul mates—without a matchmaker's help.

Joelle Klein, 22, was not raised in a religious home, but she was attracted to the religious lifestyle from a young age and has been a practicing Orthodox Jew for two years. Not having a huge network of friends and relatives, she relies on matchmakers to help her find prospective dates. Even when a potential match is suggested by a friend, Klein prefers to turn to a professional matchmaker for guidance. "I've always reported back to someone," says Klein, an elegant and composed young woman wearing a cardigan sweater and diamond earrings. "Even though not every shadchan is helpful, it still helps to speak to people who understand where you're coming from and can help you deal with issues as they come up." She stresses the importance of creating a personal relationship with your matchmaker. "Some people say there's a stigma about shadchans," Klein acknowledges, "but I think you should swallow your pride a little. Just because they aren't always helpful, they might really know the guy, and you have to take a good idea from wherever it comes." Although she

is still single, and admits that she would rather not be, Joelle remains genuinely confident in her prospects. "There is a lot of anxiety surrounding dating," she admits, adding with a smile, "but also just as much excitement."

Klein's friend Yitzy Levinson, a 24-year-old law student who grew up in an Orthodox home, has been dating for several years and has never met anyone who interested him through a matchmaker. After a date with a shy girl who wouldn't even make eye contact with him, he gave up on meeting his bashert [soul mate] through a matchmaker. He explains that although traditional matchmakers may work well for traditional singles, neither he nor many of his friends fit that description. "Shadchanim are still operating under the illusion that we're getting married just because we're supposed to, and we'll marry whoever we date," Levinson complains. "They think we don't know what we want. These days, our perception of what a marriage needs to be is drastically different. For some people, even now, marriage is a kind of partnership—one person raises the kids, the other has a job, and it's not about fun and romance." Although he is strictly Orthodox and Chabad, Levinson wears faded jeans and a casual t-shirt, is pursuing a career in corporate law, and would rather meet a girl at a party than through a formal matchmaker.

For some couples, meeting with a shadchan just never entered the equation. Chaya and Akiva Eisen have been married for only three months, and their wide-eyed newlywed energy radiates. They sit comfortably close together, his arm resting on her shoulder. When he teases her, she bats at him playfully; her fire-engine red nails call attention to the brand-new diamond on her finger. "I invited his family to my house for a holiday meal, because I'm friends with his sister," Chaya, 21, explains of her first encounter with her husband. "We didn't talk to each other, but Akiva spotted me, and said, I like that girl." Having been on only one matchmaker-arranged date, which she described as "traumatic," Chaya had not dated for two years, and was flattered, but wary, when a boy she didn't know wanted to go out with her on the basis of one shared dinner. After discussing the idea of dating Chaya with his sister, Akiva asked his mother to get involved. A mutual friend of the two families was enlisted to serve as matchmaker, although, as Chaya explains, "she was just a middleman to set things up. We didn't call her after dates to discuss it." In the traditional shidduch, or arranged date, the matchmaker

would discuss each date with both the man and woman afterwards, and relay messages between the two parties if necessary.

Despite their children's pessimistic view, many parents of singles still rely on professional matchmakers to help them determine if a proposed boy or girl is a suitable match for their child. Shoshana Eisen, Akiva's mother, spoke highly of most of the matchmakers she has worked with in the course of setting up her four children of marriageable age. "My kids always say friends do a better job [at suggesting potential dates], but those friends need to be aware, and thinking of it," she says. "A shadchan is a professional—assuming you're honest about what your kid is looking for, they have the tools and the network to find the right person." She notes that the stigma associated with going to a matchmaker has made all of her children reluctant to sit down and get to know the shadchan, which of course hampers the shadchan's ability to suggest accurate matches. "There's only so much you can write in a profile," Eisen says, "there's no substitute for face-to-face interaction."

Like their famous movie predecessor, Yente the Matchmaker, many professional shadchanim are not ready to give up and become obsolete, even if more and more singles are opting to be set up by friends or meet people on their own. Professional matchmaker Hinda Adelman has been in the business of making matches for over fifteen years, and although she acknowledges that some singles are becoming more reluctant to rely on her suggestions, she stresses the importance of involving a shadchan even in a friend-suggested match. "It's true that a shadchan doesn't know you as well as your friends do, but we also know a lot more people than your friends do," says Adelman, defending the seemingly-outdated role of the matchmaker even in the twenty-first century. Citing examples of couples who met through unorthodox means, like the Eisens, Adelman points out that many choose to employ a matchmaker to serve as an intermediary in the early stages of dating. "It's important that they can both report back to a neutral party with their concerns," she cautions. "A matchmaker can subtly relay messages that the girl or boy might not know how to say themselves." After fifteen years of counseling shy boys, anxious girls, and over-protective parents, Adelman claims to have seen it all, including people like Levinson who are quick to dismiss her as having old-fashioned priorities. "He may have a point,"

Investigating Cancer Research

Tirtza Spiegel

The 101st annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research occurred in Washington DC, from April 17-21. There were approximately 18,000 participants from across the world, including scientists, physicians, public health administrators, professors, and students. All had diverse backgrounds and different fields of expertise, but the same goal: to help those afflicted with cancer, on the basic, translational, clinical, and psycho-social levels.

There was a plethora of diverse opportunities at the conference. Each day, there were multiple symposia discussing topics ranging from two-drug regimens to the epigenetic regulation of cancer. The plenary speakers included scientists at the forefront of cancer research, such as Dr. Nahum Sonnenberg (McGill University) and Dr. John Condeelis (Albert Einstein College of Medicine).

There were multiple Professional Advancement Seminars that were geared toward each level of the cancer research pathway, from undergraduate up to laboratory principle investigators. There was a Women in Science career mentoring session, led by Drs. Elizabeth Blackburn and Carol Greider (Medicine Nobel Laureates 2010), who discussed the different challenges faced by women in research and academia. Mini-seminars included Grant Writing, Balancing Work and Family Life, Careers in Industry, Choosing a Postdoctoral Position, and Oral Presentations. There were also poster sessions, where scientists discussed their current research. There were many opportunities to meet leading researchers, such as during the Meet the Expert sessions at 7 am each morning. Faige Seligman, a participating Stern student, especially appreciated the Professional Advancement Seminar entitled "Navigating the Murky Waters of the Physician-Scientist Pathway."

"Women who aspire to become MD-PhDs," said Seligman, "receive so many mixed messages: 'You can

do it, you can't do it, you can do it but you won't be a good physician and a good scientist'—it was heartening and inspiring to have a panel of MD-PhDs up there, telling me that I can do it and that I can be good at both of my disciplines."

Dr. Holz, Biology professor at Stern College for Women, presented a poster about the S6Kinase1/Estrogen receptor interactions downstream of the mammalian Target of Rapamycin (mTOR). Faige Seligman and I were sponsored by the S. Daniel Abraham Honors Program to attend the conference and assist Dr. Holz with her presentation, as well as to enhance our senior theses. Most students at the conference were at the post-doctoral level, and therefore this was an exceptional experience for students at the undergraduate level. "To be at a conference where the majority of people had years of experience in cancer research and I was one of the few real novices was truly an honor," said Seligman.

The conference was a fantastic opportunity to experience academia in its prime. The dedication of so many scientists to cancer research was inspirational. To see 10,000 like-minded yet diverse individuals, all with the same goal, ignited a desire to devote even more time to cancer research. Seligman, who has not yet decided on a field, admitted that the conference inspired her to consider cancer research even more seriously that she previously had as a potential career. The conference was humbling yet empowering; there is so much information that is unknown, yet the tools for discovery are being taught, and they will be utilized fully. As Dr. Tyler Jacks, AACR president, said, "You will undoubtedly be inspired by the exciting work being done by your colleagues....No matter what your specialty, the AACR Annual Meeting is our time to come together, discuss our data, and make further progress in the goal of saving lives from cancer."

she admits, "but don't forget that we were young once too. We know what a roller coaster dating is, and we're just here to help smooth things along."

It sounds innocent enough, but for some young Orthodox men and women, the roller coaster ride seems more fun than frightening, and they would rather try playing with matches, and risking the burns, than relying on the wisdom and experience of a professional. It seems that the age of Ikea furniture and Facebook is also the age of the D.I.Y. shidduch.

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OPINIONS

The Problem With Grade Deflation

Anna Socher

Last year, the *New York Times* reported that college students assumed that showing up to class and doing all the required work for a course would earn them the grade of a "B." This came as a shock to people who lead their college careers in the 1950s and '60s. My grandmother remembers working hard to keep a scholarship at UC Berkeley for which she had to keep up a GPA of 3.2.

This year, the *New York Times* reported that the main cause for unhappiness at Princeton University was grade deflation. Many universities are trying to deflate grades and return to previous standards. Yeshiva University has been trying to deflate grades over the past few years. The average GPA at Stern College is a 3.33, which means that the average student is a B+ student. That means that even with a 4.0 GPA, it is hard for a Stern College student to distinguish herself as exceptional.

There used to be a concept on college campuses of the "Gentleman's C." It originated in the Ivy League. The general idea of a Gentleman's C is that a tuition-paying student wants to pass his or her classes with a reasonable grade while still living the ultimate life of a college student. In 1909, Judge Robert Grant (Harvard University Class of 1873), wrote a poem for the Harvard Magazine that memorialized the Gentleman's C. It reads as follows:

The able-bodied C man!
He sails swimmingly along.
His philosophy is rosy as

a skylark's mating song.
The light of his ambition
is respectably to pass,
And to hold a firm position
in the middle of his class.

Judge Grant plays wonderfully with words to let his readers know that it is more than fine to be the person that receives the C. Raktaprachit Aab of Bangkok (Harvard University class of 1913), wrote this ditty about the Gentleman's C:

"A skillful choice of studies
makes one's afternoons all free/
the chief merit of electives
to the man who aims at C."

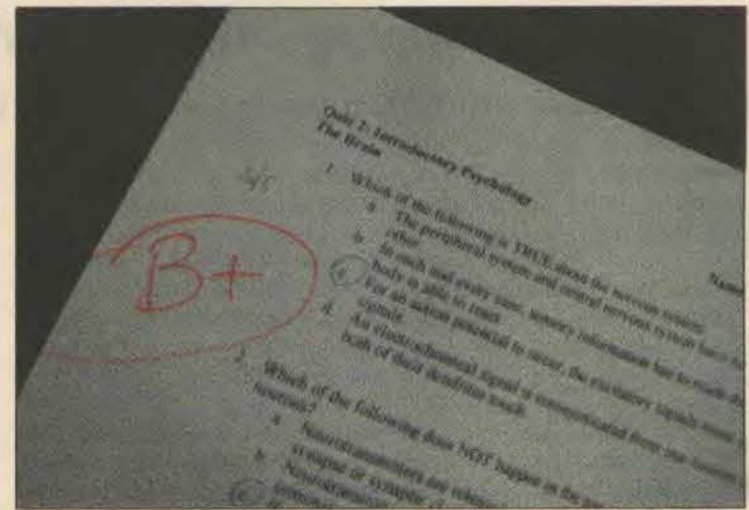
Both of these Harvard students gleefully accepted Cs. Today, at Yeshiva University, we do no such thing. Cs are unheard of. One receives a C, if one does no work, bombs the midterm, and does not show up for class. If one does anything more, one receives a higher grade than a C. This is not what we just expect; it is what we know is true.

The women at Stern College who are most similar to the students parodied in the above poems are the ones who ask everyone in the Caf who the easiest professors are. I have even gotten calls from people asking if the professors in my major are easy. I customarily answer, "No!" with a triumphant grin. Why would I take a class simply for it to be easy? The person on the other end of the line usually responds with silence. How can I be so gleeful about taking a difficult course? Yet, somehow these students who look for the easy classes are not getting Cs. These

women are the students who get B grades while sailing "swimmingly along."

Many people in the world of higher education see this as a problem. It is a problem in many ways, but the way to fix it is not to try to retract the past 40 years of higher education. As a student now, I get upset when I feel that I have received a lower grade than I would have last year just because of the crusade against grade inflation. In *The Observer* article "Inflated GPAs Finally Tackled," reporter Tziona Rosenzweig quotes Dean Bacon's view on what Stern College is doing about grade inflation: "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."

Although I admit that I find it completely frustrating that some students take easier classes to get better grades, I completely disagree with the above statement. If a student is trying her best in a course, her effort should definitely be taken into account. For instance, I happen to be horrible at counting. Math is the hardest subject I have ever had to study. Yet, I am taking a course in math and sometimes find myself enjoying the challenge. My professor knows that I have hired tutors, study with my classmates, have weekly meetings with Dr. Gumora, and take advantage of the professor's office hours. I do not deserve an A. My grades have barely reached that of a C. I, as do many other students, deserve to



Is B+ the new C?

Alisa Ungar-Sargon

have effort taken into some kind of account. I realize that this is a slippery slope. Trying hard should certainly not raise me or any other student an entire letter grade. Signs of improvement and indications of a more sophisticated knowledge of the subject should be taken into account, however.

From a student's point of view, the main problem with grade inflation is the easy professors. I have heard professors complain about students who harangue them into raising grades. This is unacceptable, and, although I understand the annoyance it brings, a professor should never agree to raising a grade simply because he or she has been nagged enough into doing so.

The key to deflating grades is to have challenging, demanding, and exhilarating courses. Because students here take so many classes at one time, the professors at Yeshiva University tend to assign less work than do those at other universities.

I believe that this fact should not be taken into account. We should take fewer courses a semester, and our courses should be hard. This would deflate grades, because, if the work assigned were extremely challenging, then students would not receive more than a C+ for doing mediocre work. Above average performance would earn a B grade. The Honors Program then, could lower its required GPA from a 3.6 to a 3.3.

From the Gentleman's C to the Stern College woman's B, we should allow the students who want to "respectably pass [...] in the middle of the class" do so. The Gentleman's—or Gentlewoman's—C of Stern College would return (was it ever here?), and those who want to work hard would be able to distinguish themselves from those who do not want to do so. We should tackle grade inflation not by lowering grades, but by raising academic standards.

If You're Not in the Freezer, Why Aren't You on the Market? The Semiotics of Shidduchim

Chana Scholl

I'll start by declaring that I wholeheartedly believe in the *shidduch* system and that my critique is not of the system itself, but of the language employed by many of its facilitators and participants. With that disclaimer out of the way, here goes. This semester, I am taking an English Literature class on semiotics, which, specifically in the context of language, is the examination of what words signify. Semiotics studies what the mental associations signified by a particular word say about the meaning of the word, its context, and the culture that shapes it. To the latter point, what a word signifies is defined by the general culture. For example, the word "progressive" will signify different things for different people. However, each person's interpretation rests within a culturally assigned structure that is based on widely held conceptions of what a word signifies.

This Lit class sensitized me to language—specifically to what

words signify and to what that says about the culture that defines their meaning. Therefore, as a participant/aspiring facilitator of the *shidduch* system, I started attending more closely to the language used by my contemporaries. The verdict is in: the language used in the *shidduch* system is appalling! Furthermore, what it says about our community, which shapes and gives meaning to these ubiquitous phrases, is even more troubling.

At its mildest, the vernacular of *shidduchim* is insensitive, and, at its harshest, it is downright dehumanizing. The worst phrases used in this system are immature: "on the market," "out of the freezer," "fresh crop," and "penguin" to name a few. Of course, it is totally understandable that people have developed a jargon specific to the *shidduch* subculture. Who isn't in favor of reducing verbosity with effective monosyllabic substitutes? However, the cultural choice the community has made in adopting these specific phrases indicates a serious problem in its perception of the system, because

the community assigns the connotations that these phrases have. In other words, we are the ones who have legitimized the use of "on the market" to signify "dating" by making this callous association ourselves, subconsciously or otherwise.

Though difficult to pinpoint, this misperception is insidious and has extended into far more mainstream terminology. While I have discerned an undercurrent of self-mockery and jocularity when people use any of the "worst case" examples in their repartee, there appears to be no equivalent admission of adopting such silly and one-dimensional lingo when people say: "what are you looking for" (rather than what sort of person), "learner," "earner," "learner-earner," "earner-learner," "straight off the plane," "flipped out," and my personal pet peeve, the "resume." (I honestly haven't the faintest clue how that last term ever penetrated so far; the job interview parallels are shameful, and I am personally appealing to any sympathetic readers to join the anti-resume,

pro-profile movement.) Even something so simple as asking about whether a girl (since guys never seem obligated to meet this criterion) does *chessed* is phrased in a way that misses the point. Instead of inquiring as to whether a girl is a kind and generous person, people ask how many hours per week she does *chessed* and for which organizations. Basically, it misses the forest for the trees, and it misses the point.

It is evident that there is a serious problem when the vernacular that is used in a system that is purposefully designed to be as sensitive as possible to both parties is itself so ineffably insensitive. Specifically, in the *shidduch* system, there is such respect and sensitivity towards the feelings of both parties that people do not even directly end the relationship (or whatever it is they share). Additionally, there is such respect for the individual's potential to build a *bayis ne-eman bi-Yisrael*, such sensitivity toward an individual's impressionability and resulting emotional and intellectual bag-

gage, that the system bends over backwards to minimize what it considers to be distracting and nonproductive interaction between the sexes.

Given this, it is truly ironic that the jargon the system employs is so dehumanizing, objectifying, and demeaning. As part of the community that shapes this vernacular, this is our problem, too. Likewise, the lack of sensitive phraseology employed in the *shidduch* system perpetuates error in the highly significant task of developing a conception of what people are looking for. It accomplishes this by unhealthily influencing our assessment of others so that we reduce people to lists of bite-sized, one dimensional, utterly un-nuanced criteria. The participants and facilitators of the *shidduch* system need to understand that they undercut the beauty of the system they aim to promulgate by using this language. All involved must make a concerted effort to be more careful about their phraseology in this context.

OPINIONS

The Luxury of Learning Torah

Michelle Rosen

Pre-Pesach preparations would not be complete without a visit to my great-grandmother. While sitting in a worn-out chair in her Brooklyn apartment, my eyes scanned the numerous black and white photographs from a bygone era. A number of family members still remain nameless to me, their faces looking back at me from those black and white stills, all appearing blurred. I gingerly picked up my favorite picture: an old black and white photograph of my grandmother from when she was twenty-one years old. It is hard to believe that I am now the same age as she was when the photograph was taken. Just like my grandmother, I too attend Stern College for Women. I guess the apple does not fall far from the tree! However, unlike my grandmother, I have been blessed to grow up feeling safe and free.

Like most of my peers' grandparents, my grandparents suffered terribly during the Holocaust. After an arduous journey to America, my great-grandparents rebuilt their lives with their seven-year-old daughter in tow. The family subsisted from paycheck to paycheck each week, and my grandmother grew up without the many luxuries and comforts that most people take for granted today. Since my grandparents arrived in America soon after World War II, they always opened up their home to their family and friends who needed help getting on their feet.

While attending Stern, my grandmother would constantly bring friends home for Shabbat. She did so happily, even though she lived in a one-bedroom apartment that she shared with my great-grandparents. While I too bring my friends from Stern home for Shabbat, the similarities seem to end there. Thank G-d, I live in a house that can comfortably host many of my friends. Many of the Jewish people that put down roots in America after the war have flourished; Hashem has showered us with opportunity and blessing.

The blessings that I refer to are not iPods or designer handbags. Rather, we are blessed with the freedom to learn Torah in a safe and comfortable environment. During the counting of the *Omer*, the 49 days between Passover and Shavuot, it is the custom of many Jewish people to abstain from listening to music. For young Jewish iPod owners out there, this can be very difficult. Although music deprivation during the beginning of the *Omer* reminds us of the physical luxuries with which we are blessed, it is not till we reach the 33rd day that we learn what true *bracha* (blessing) is. The 33rd day, otherwise known as *Lag bi-Omer*, is the *yarhtzeit* (anniversary of the day of death) of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

For years, I wondered why we celebrate *Lag bi-Omer* at all. During the Roman occupation of Israel, the study of Torah was strictly

prohibited. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai refused to let this decree affect his learning, and he continued to learn, risking his life in the process. When the Roman emperor found out, he put out a warrant for Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's life. This forced Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai to flee with his son to northern Israel, where they found refuge in a cave. For thirteen years, they studied Torah in the cave, and Hashem made a river flow and a Carob tree grow to sustain them. We celebrate Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's *yarhtzeit* to commemorate his great personal sacrifice in order to learn Torah and illuminate it for future generations.

Learning about Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's sacrifice for Torah makes me appreciate my life and how blessed I am. The day-to-day problems my peers and I tackle seem trivial in comparison with those that the Jewish people suffered in previous generations. The sacrifice that my grandparents went through to retain their *yiddishkeit* and to do *mitzvot* fills me with a sense of pride for what it means to be part of such a great nation. More than pride, though, I feel appreciation. I appreciate the life I am blessed with, which allows me to keep *mitzvot* to their fullest and to relish learning Torah. With this feeling of immense *bracha* and privilege, I hope to celebrate Shavuot by learning Torah with a greater sense of appreciation and understanding.

Reality Check

Joshua Wiesenfeld

War isn't pretty. Conflict never is. Examples are sprinkled liberally throughout history. The Athenian navy slew every man on the island of Melos and sold every woman and child into slavery. Genghis Khan built pyramids out of the skulls of his enemies. The United States dropped atomic bombs on major Japanese cities.

International, and even intra-national conflict, has been an inevitable part of the human experience. However, while conflict remains impossible to avoid, its glorification remains unreasonable in the face of the ugliness of battle. War has traditionally been viewed as an opportunity for armies to display their military might and for rulers to boost the national ego. Ramesses II laid waste to Canaan in a demonstration of his newfound power. The Crusades were fought under the banner of "God, Gold, and Glory." World War I recruiting posters read, "Daddy, what did *you* do during the Great War?"

Imagine a country, though, that did not approach war with such a bloodthirsty mindset. Imagine a country that did everything in its power to avoid war, even when it had military advantage. Imagine a nation that only resorted to war after sustaining years of attacks on its civilians and years of attempts at diplomatic solutions. Imagine a country that resorted to war only after it gave away massive tracts of land in attempts at peace. A country that wants nothing more than to live in harmony with its neighbors and grow old in tranquility.

Imagine this country, when forcibly drawn into battle, only advanced after exerting itself to unwarranted extremes to avoid loss of civilian life. Imagine this country dropped over a million leaflets warning inhabitants to flee, even though these leaflets contained valuable strategic information. Imagine this nation expended the lives of its own soldiers to ensure the absolute minimum number of

civilian casualties, even while its opposition used the same civilians as human shields.

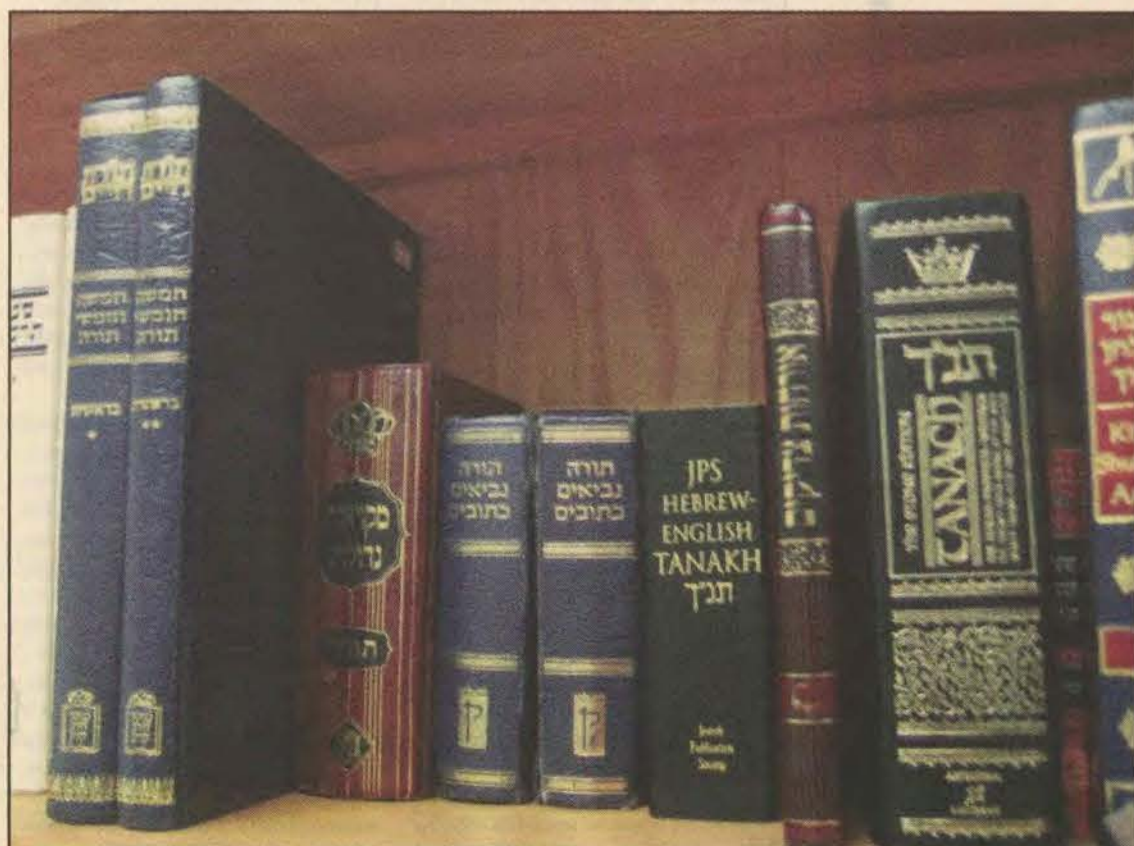
Now imagine, after the battle was finally won, this country sent in millions of dollars in aid and medical care and worked tirelessly to rebuild the enemy that worked so hard towards its destruction. Imagine a selfless nation that provides electricity and water power to its mortal foe.

Imagine that this nation, instead of being lauded, is vilified on the podium of world opinion. Imagine its people labeled as Nazis, despite their benevolent actions, and their kindnesses compared to the South African apartheid. Imagine educated, rational, and progressive citizens the world over screaming for this country's downfall and destruction at the top of their lungs.

"Preposterous!" you would say. "Absurd! No such country exists, and even if such a country did exist, it would be praised, not maligned. It would be held up by the industrialized world as the paradigm of merit and piety. Good people and worthy leaders would strive to follow in its footsteps."

I tell you, though, that such a nation does exist. It is a nation that you hear about on the news every day, whose name is always on our leaders' lips. A tiny country surrounded by foes, nestled against the Mediterranean Sea. This country is the State of Israel.

Israel, whose population is a mere eight million people, a fraction of that of neighboring lands. Israel, who has managed to flourish in the sciences and the arts, despite the perpetual state of fear and bombardment it faces. Israel, whose virtuousness in battle has never been equaled in the history of mankind. This country sets a stellar example to be followed; yet, it is scorned. This country is slandered day in and day out, in conference after conference, in speech after speech, by our leaders, by our fellow citizens, and even by ourselves, and we should all be ashamed.



Alisa Ungar-Sargon

The ability to study Torah in safety and security is a privilege that wasn't always available to previous generations.

The YU Observer wishes the students of Yeshiva University good luck with finals and a wonderful summer.

OPINIONS

A Lesson Learned from LEGO

Hannah Robinow

When I was five, I decided that I was going to accomplish what no five-year old in human history had ever accomplished before: build a tower out of every single LEGO brick in the house. After two hours of careful construction, a slight nudge at a weak brick sent the entire contraption tumbling to the floor. Of course, I dissolved into tears right when my mother crossed into the room. She picked me up and wiped my tears away, then looked into my disconsolate face and said, "You want to know what makes this better? Build it again!" This time, we worked together, rebuilding the tower slowly and deliberately. Three hours later, we beheld our brand-new, three-foot high (when you're under four feet, three feet seems very high) tower. The effort had not been pretty or quick, but we achieved it by developing a long-

term strategy and then working hard to see it through.

Even though achieving peace in the Middle East is not nearly as easy as building a tower out of LEGOs, it, too, is a constructive process that involves a great deal of patience and fortitude. However, a recent controversy between Prime Minister Netanyahu's government and the Obama administration has derailed the carefully constructed peace negotiations that were set to begin between Israelis and Palestinians. Now, many policymakers, politicians, and constituents from all parties involved are asking the hardest six words to answer in the English language: "Where do we go from here?"

To many observers, the ongoing peace process appears to be completely stagnant, both in terms of U.S.-Israeli relations and Israeli-Palestinian relations. In April, Ne-

tanyahu declined to attend a nuclear security summit in Washington, another blow to the long-standing relationship between Israel and America. Also, the peace negotiations have devolved to proximity talks between the Israelis and the Palestinian Authority that are to be mediated by special U.S. envoy George Mitchell. This essentially means that talks are further obstructed by lack of direct contact between the parties involved.

Indeed, how can we further peace in the Middle East? The simple answer does not differ much from the example of the LEGOs: we keep on building. By passing the health care bill, President Obama has established that he has the political prowess and intellectual fortitude to achieve his policy agenda. Now, he must use that along with a keen eye for long-term progress, rather than focus on short-term gains

that would be easy to report to voters in a 2012 re-election campaign.

There are many issues that must be resolved for a solid peace agreement to be enacted. These include border security, the status of Palestinian refugees, and a final-status agreement for Jerusalem. However, none of these items can even be discussed unless the Israelis and Palestinians can engage in direct talks. Prime Minister Netanyahu has repeatedly reached out to President Mah-

moud Abbas to sit down together and negotiate, only to be rebuffed. Therefore, it is time for President Obama to use his clout on the international stage to increase pressure on the Palestinians to "reset" negotiations through direct talks, with both sides open to hearing credible proposals for a final-status agreement. After all, laying down the first foundation in the building process doesn't just work for LEGOs, but for achieving peace in the Middle East, as well.

An American Disease

Benjamin Kadish

In a recent public opinion poll conducted by the Pew Research Center, 23% of respondents opposed "allowing the sale and use of marijuana for medical purposes if it is prescribed by a doctor." Do we really have so much faith in ourselves that we, or almost a quarter of us, are willing to reject a treatment prescribed by people with upwards of twenty years of education, almost ten of which were in the medical profession? Or perhaps do we not believe other people at all? Have we become so used to lying politicians and Internet scams that we no longer trust what strangers, even well qualified strangers, say? I realize some people at this point might say, "It's not so bad. Only a small number of people actually think this way" or "Nobody would actually not listen to a doctor." I must stress, however, that there is cause to be alarmed. The fact that one-fifth of this country trusts propaganda over medical professionals is a problem.

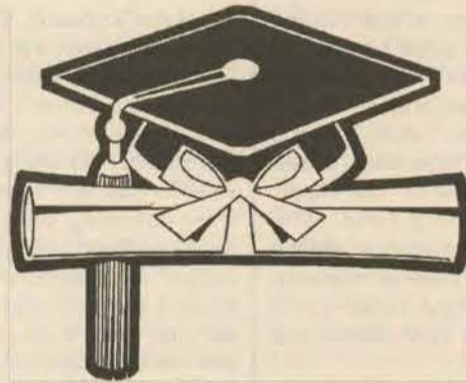
The problem is that we, as Americans, arrogantly assume ourselves to be experts on any and every subject. Leading up to the Iraq war, over half the country held one of the following three misconceptions: Iraq is strongly linked to al Qaeda, weapons of mass destruction have been found in Iraq, and the world backs America's push for war. Public opinion polls showed that these misconceptions lead to popular support for the war. Supposing for a moment that our government actually had honest reasons for invading Iraq, it was still self-destructive for Washington to manipulate the public by disseminating this information in vague sight-bites and to believe that no harm would come to our nation because of it. Sure, not everyone was the soldier with two kids who was not able to be with them for years at a time, and not everyone was the citizen whose home was bombed while he was trying to sleep, but the war still affected every American's life due to the means used to convince the American people of the war's necessity. On the road to war,

the government unwittingly in-seminated in all of us the misconception that we can understand complicated situations merely by watching a thirty-second ad on television or by listening to the radio for fifteen seconds.

Imagine that instead of going to college, students would gain an undergraduate education by listening to the radio or watching television and every so often obtaining information about psychology, biology or whatever else they chose to study. Now they might know something about the subject, but why would anyone ever let them do anything important based solely on that information? The same is true for any other subject. Yet, we do not at all mind acting like experts because of what we heard some guy say on the radio last night.

Many people absolutely refuse to perform even the simplest investigation of things they hear from politicians. Remember when Sarah Palin claimed that the new health care bill would institute "Death Panels"? It is amazing how many people perpetuated this rumor without even reading the bill. Imagine a room full of people staring at a completely non-threatening box. One person claims that there is a fire in the box, but instead of checking to see if there is indeed a fire, everyone just assumes that there is one and behaves accordingly.

So how do we stop running around with blindfolds when trying to decide how to run a country? A tad of humility would help. We cannot continue to pretend that we have opinions about things we just know nothing about. We have to admit to ourselves that we are not following our own carefully examined research, but are just mindlessly following someone else's rhetoric. Eventually, we have to do something we have been taught for years not to do. We have to stand up and say that we do not have an opinion on every subject. We must stop jumping to conclusions in arguments we know nothing about, and we must stop being swayed by politicians with totally different interests.



COMMENCEMENT
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IN ORDER TO RECEIVE YOUR TICKETS AND CAP AND GOWN, WE WOULD APPRECIATE IF YOU WOULD FILE FOR GRADUATION WITH THE REGISTRAR ON YOUR CAMPUS. PLEASE FILE ASAP SO THAT YOU ARE ELIGIBLE TO ATTEND AND MARCH IN YOUR GRADUATION CEREMONY.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Onstage with the Judge and Jury

Ester Stiefel

Did you ever want to be in a Stern College Dramatics Society production but never had the spare time to attend rehearsals? Well, on March 14th and 15th you could have been in the play, on stage, without going to a single one. This spring, SCDS (notably, director Reuven Russell, stage manager Yael Schick and SCDS president Tiferet Weiss) put on Jack Neary's "Sandbag, Stage Left or, One Dead Dolly" in the Schottenstein Cultural Center. Audience volunteers got to play the most important role. As the jury in a murder trial, they determined the defendant's fate after each of the lawyers presented their case. The conclusion of play changed based on their verdict of 'guilty' or 'not guilty.' A fun sense of spontaneity accompanied this decision-making, and the cast's ad-libbing added to the wonderful hilarity of the performance.

Even if you were a regular audience member not on stage, you still played an important role in its progression. As spectators in the 'galley' of the courtroom, the audience was called upon to alternately gasp 'shockingly' and laugh at the appropriate times, in order to add to the atmosphere of the court scene. The entire cast did a



Alisa Ungar-Sargon
Tovah Silverman (right) interrogates Lauren Burstein while Esty Rollhaus looks on in the SCDS spring production of "Sandbag, Stage Left."

wonderful job making everyone feel as if they are a participant and not merely a viewer. As "Law & Order" music started the play off, you knew right away that it was going to be a real rollercoaster of a court case, full of mystery, passion, intrigue, and revelation.

The story plot follows the murder trial case of Mr. Meddle (Tova Flatbaum). He is accused of murdering his wife Mrs. Meddle, who

was the main actress in the community theaters production of "Hello, Dolly!" Just at the climax of her solo performance, a sandbag from stage left fell on top of her and caused her untimely death. The common wealth prosecutor, Ms. Cling (Laura Mitzner), tries to prove to the jury that without a doubt Mr. Meddle killed his wife, and creates a strong - albeit absurd - case against Mr. Meddle.

The defense lawyer, Ms. Static (Tovah Silbermann), only succeeds in making her client seem more and more guilty with every cross examination, until Meddle himself gets fed up and decides to defend himself. He is slowly able to salvage his innocence by questioning his own witnesses and discovers, along with the audience, that his wife was possibly not the intended target and that Penelope Pacemaker (Lauren Burstein), the director of the community center play, might be the perpetrator who tried to kill her ex-lover Byron Shelley (Leah Gutstein), but failed and accidentally killed Mrs. Meddle instead. Meddle pleads with the audience jury, who have been quietly and attentively sitting on the stage throughout the entire 'trial,' to see his side of the story. In the end his verdict is in their hands, rendering his appeal not just mere performance, but an act of persuasion, too, for his fate is literally in their control. As the play comes to a close, the jury is asked to make a decision and vote on note-cards if, based on the evidence presented, they believe that Mr. Meddle is guilty or not guilty.

In addition to the judge's (Esty Rollhaus) direct orders to the au-

dience, we also felt a part of the performance through the many YU-related lines slipped into the dialogue. For instance, the jury was asked to be fair and non-partial despite the high ticket prices. There were also a few lines about YUConnects and education in YU. These lines drew the audience in and made it personal and relatable.

Another very humorous element was the eclectic group of witnesses who were called to the stand, ranging from the bizarre (Sarah Lazaros) to the insane (Pessy Liebowitz) and bringing much of the comedic element to the stage (Shlomit Friedman). There was also a YU representative (Mollie Sharfman), a lovelorn stalker (Deborah Wiseman), a Jewish mother (Michal Schick), a ditz (Rachel Weiss), a Queens girl (Tiferet Weiss), and a peanut gallery (Dina Wecker). Above all this presided the heavy drinking, ill tempered, impatient, and hysterical Judge Bean (rhyming with 'pin' not 'pean') (Rollhaus). This production was truly a joint effort between cast, crew, and audience - each playing their essential role and adding to the overall success of a very delightful and humorous performance.

On Remaking and Translating "Culture"

Alisa Ungar-Sargon

Most American remakes reach final production because someone hypothesized that the original could be improved. The latest "Alice in Wonderland" (2010) is a good example of that, where both Disney and its audience thought Tim Burton could give the tale a truer, more sinister reading. (Boy, were we disappointed.) Chris Nolan's "Batman Begins" (2005), though, successfully introduced a darker and more human interpretation of the comic book hero. The "Freaky Friday" (2003) remake with Lindsay Lohan was also warranted, since the dynamics between a mother and child switching bodies would be something that changes over the course of thirty years.

Sometimes, though, films and TV shows are remade into different languages so that different cultures can enjoy the plotline with their own references and in-jokes. The Mexican "Yo soy Betty, la fea" (1999-2001) became "Ugly Betty" (2006-2010), and Ricky Gervais's "The Office" (2001-2003) was translated into an American-speak version starring Steve Carell.

The most recent remake on the market combines is more the latter, a translation of an original into a film Americans can ostensibly appreciate better, rather than a strict remake. The predecessor to Neil LaBute's "Death at a Funeral" (2010), Frank Oz's film of the same name, was made a mere three years ago. LaBute's version takes the original and gives it an American

makeover, replacing British white dudes with American black dudes. The day of his father's funeral in Los Angeles, Aaron (Chris Rock) has to deal with his cocky brother (Martin Lawrence) swooping in from the East Coast, his cousin's accidentally high boyfriend (James Marsden) stripping and threatening to jump off the roof, and the deceased's former gay lover dwarf (Peter Dinklage, reprising his role) demanding a share of the will. Along the way are a plethora of personalities, each of them finding the most inappropriate way to attend the funeral.

The plot is exactly the same as the original, each character a replica of its antecedent. While the script is verbatim in certain areas, most of the time Dean Craig - writer and translator extraordinaire - embellishes each line to its limit. The characters exaggerate every British subtlety with details and excessive timing. The relationships are more defined, the banter is more personal, and the wandering midget is significantly creepier. More than once, a character bursts into awkward, solitary singing.

Unfortunately, the American version loses some of the luster that comes with a British ensemble cast. Though the original has a slow build-up, it is worth the wait because the payoff is phenomenal. The remake, on the other hand, hits the ground running and doesn't let up for a second. Whether it's the

overdone banter or the manic progression of events, the new version lacks the chemistry that makes the original so enjoyable to watch. The actors are all going about their business independently of one another, focusing on their own roles and rather than their interactions with each other.

While the concept of Let's-dumb-things-down-for-the-stupid-Americans is nothing new - the real Harry Potter has never heard of a Sorcerer's Stone - I find it hard to believe that that is the only reason why the new "Death at a Funeral" beats people over the head with a hatchet. After all, we Americans can be intelligent when we so choose - just look at how viewers rated this film. So why do we keep making remake after remake, telling the same story over and over again, when we know the ending?

For me, there sometimes comes a point in most movies, remakes or otherwise, when I know that the plot can go one of two ways: it can go the way I think it will, or it can surprise me. Once in a while, it'll steal my breath away and I'll be properly ashamed for doubting. Most of the time, though, I can predict the general vicinity of the outcome. In those instances, what becomes important is the execution rather than the conclusion - the journey versus the destination. When I know a movie has a happy ending (see: romantic comedies and Jane Austen films), I'm not

going to sit and judge the ending. I'm going to judge how the plot arrives at its ending. This is both the advantage and the pitfall of remakes, since they not only need to get to the same ending as the original, they also have to get there in a different enough way to hold our interest.

And so this is my request to any directors, producers, or commer-

cialized indie culture manufacturers: If you insist on remaking a film, TV show, book, pop star, or what-have-you for the American public, don't redo what the original did. Reinterpret the material and present it to your audience with respect. Have the decency to do more than just elaborate the script, and always remember: we're smarter than you think.

Letter to the Editor: Grade Deflation

Sarah Gross, SCW '12

A few weeks ago, I handed in a paper that I felt was my best work; I spent a significant amount of time on it. Was it objective? Check. Was it grammatically correct? Check. Was it politically correct? Check, check, check. I was so excited.

A few weeks later I got my paper back, and on it was a big fat B+. Let me just make this clear: B+ is not a bad grade by any means. However, it didn't make sense; I got all positive comments and zero corrections! When I approached the teacher to find out what I did wrong, I was told, "Stern doesn't give out A plusses. If A plus existed you would get an A, but I can't give everyone A's." This is ludicrous. I do not understand; if someone deserves an A, they deserve an A. Teachers should give grades that are deserved according to their personal grading rubric, not made aware at every staff meeting that they should be

giving out fewer A's, as some are reporting.

The point is that teachers should not be grading people based on their performance relative to someone else's. Teachers should have a strict grading rubric that they consult while grading each student's report. If a student's work meets all the criteria listed, then they should receive an A regardless of whether or not someone else handed in better work. In addition, Yeshiva University is a small environment where teachers take attendance and it is not rare for them to lower a student's final grade if they do not show up to class. Therefore, it would be hypocritical to say that all they care about is the final product. If teachers only care about the final product and there is no reward for putting in an effort and trying hard, then no one should be forced to show up to class.

ISRAEL

Hebrew Language Conference Comes to Stern

Lauren Burstein

This July 6-8, the National Association of Professors of Hebrew (NAPH), will commence for its annual conference on Hebrew Language, Literature and Culture at Stern College for Women. The conference, to be held in Stanton Hall, is co-sponsored by SCW and the Center of Israel Studies of Yeshiva University. Dr. Zafrira Lidovsky-Cohen, professor of Hebrew Language and Literature and department chair at SCW, discussed the conference with *The Observer* and encourages students to attend.

Observer: Can you describe how the NAPH was formed and how it functions?

Lidovsky-Cohen: The National Association of Professors of Hebrew (NAPH) was founded in 1955 to serve the professional needs of scholars working in all areas and periods of Hebrew language, literature and culture. The Association began its work by convening sessions on Hebrew Studies at the annual meeting of the Society for Biblical Literature and providing its members with abstracts of scholarly papers and articles in the field. Early NAPH membership initially consisted primarily of biblical and rabbinic scholars.

The growth of Modern Hebrew programs in American colleges and universities during the 1960s and 1970s brought an influx of new members from the area of Modern Hebrew. During that period the annual collection of *Hebrew Abstracts* was transformed into a full-fledged scholarly journal titled *Hebrew Studies*, which is internationally recognized as the leading English language journal in the field and is now in its 50th year of publication. In 1982 NAPH established the annual Conference on Hebrew Language, Literature and Culture, which provides a forum for the exchange of knowl-

edge and information in all areas of Hebrew Studies and has become the most significant annual event in the intellectual and professional life of the field.

Observer: What are the objectives of the upcoming conference?

Lidovsky-Cohen: The objective of the upcoming conference as it has been for each of the preceding ones - exchange of ideas. It is an academic event. All presentations are carefully selected from a pool of applications (in the form of abstracts). All presentations are newly developed scholarly papers that are delivered in a public forum for the first time. In time, many of these presentations will evolve into published articles in notable periodicals and magazines in the US and Israel.

Observer: For how many years has the conference taken place?

Lidovsky-Cohen: This one will be number 28.

Observer: Where has it previously been located?

Lidovsky-Cohen: Each year the conference is hosted by a different academic institution. Past conferences have been hosted by such notable institutions as NYU, UCLA, the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, The University of Texas, Brandies University, Emory University, The University of California at Berkeley, Stanford University, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, The University of Sydney, McGill University, and many others. The 2009 NAPH conference was held at University College London. In year 2011 the conference will be hosted by the University of Maryland.

Observer: What are the advantages to hosting the conference at Stern?

Lidovsky-Cohen: It's generally considered a great honor for any academic institution to host a



Dr. Zafrira Lidovsky-Cohen

Courtesy of Dr. Lidovsky-Cohen

conference of this scale. It signifies affiliation and results in international recognition. Many academic institutions who may have little or no knowledge of who we are, where we are, and what we do will now know us intimately and will recognize our academic prowess. From our guest's standpoint, obviously Stern's location in the heart of Manhattan is a huge advantage and attraction.

Observer: Who, outside of Yeshiva University, will be coming to the conference?

Lidovsky-Cohen: Most of the presenters are from outside YU. They're mainly from USA and Israel. There are a few Europeans (London, Milan...)

Observer: Is the conference open for students to attend or observe?

Lidovsky-Cohen: Absolutely! However, as you can learn from the program, many of the presentations are in Hebrew. In fact, this is one of the outstanding features

of this conference: It is the one and only conference in the U.S. that allows for presentations in Hebrew! On the other hand, there are enough lectures in English too. I'd particularly like to encourage Stern students to attend Prof. Steiner's plenary which will be open to the entire community, will be conducted in English, and chaired by our own Rabbi Kanarfogel. This event is where I hope to see the YU community participate in full force.

Observer: How can students attain more information about the NAPH and the upcoming conference?

Lidovsky-Cohen: They can visit the website: <http://vanhise.lss.wisc.edu/naph/?q=node/25> All the professors will be presenting their papers within assigned panels of 3-4 presenters. (See gray inset box)

In addition, there will be 2 plenary presentations by 2 distinguished YU professors:

1. A keynote speech during the opening festivities of the conference the first night on "Hebrew Manuscripts and the Art of Liberation" featuring Prof. Jacob Wisse of SCW Art Department and the director of YU museum. 2. A plenary session on the second day of the conference featuring Revel's distinguished Professor Prof. Richard Steiner on "Linguistic Ambiguity in the Bible from the Viewpoint of the Sages and the Medieval Exegetes."

In addition to current Stern and YU faculty members, a SCW graduate, Wendy Zierler (SCW, '88), a brilliant scholar who has earned her PhD in comparative literature at Princeton University and is now Associate Professor of Modern Jewish Literature and Feminist Studies at Hebrew Union College in NY, will present her research entitled "Yoman / Roman: The literary diaries of Hava Shapiro and David Vogel."

Hebrew Conference Presenters and Lecture Topics:

- Bishko, Osnat (Stern College for Women/Yeshiva University): *Rhetorical Argumentative Features in the Mishnaic Text*
- Weiner, Rivka (Stern College for Women/Yeshiva University): *The Teaching of Hebrew in a Technology-Enhanced Environment: Features in the Mishnaic Text*
- Grunhaus, Naomi (Stern College for Women/Yeshiva University): *The Polarized Construct in David Kimhi's Biblical Exegesis*
- Levine, Michelle (Stern College for Women/Yeshiva University): *Intertextuality in Nahmanides' Biblical Commentary: Making connections between texts*
- Hidary, Richard (Yeshiva University, Stern College for Women): *Rhetorical Suspense in the Babylonian Talmud*

There are a number of presenters from other YU schools as well:

- Cohen, Mordechai (Yeshiva University): *Maimonides' Arabic Term ta'wil and its Medieval and Modern Hebrew Translations*
- Koller, Aaron (Yeshiva College, Yeshiva University): *Participles and Stative Verbs, Diachronic Syntactic Change, and Midrash*
- Orlian, J. Mitchell (Yeshiva University): *Melzer's haMagrefa: background and sources*

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SCIENCE AND HEALTH

I Left My Science Poster in San Francisco: Students at Science Conferences

Becky Weiss, Tsipora Huisman, and Rivkah Rogawski

Drawn to science by the excitement of discovery, many undergraduate science majors find the coursework and accompanying research experiences to be more routine than exhilarating. The thrill of cutting-edge techniques or fascinating tidbits of knowledge quickly dissipates when faced with pages of organic reactions or physics equations. Therefore, the experience of attending a scientific conference, a rare treat for the undergraduate, presents another facet of the scientific field that can serve to reignite waning scientific curiosity.

For professional scientists, conferences present a chance to compare research and garner ideas; for students, conferences are an excellent opportunity to gain exposure to a particular field and to learn about potential areas of interest. This year, four students from the chemistry and biology departments at Stern College for Women (SCW) were given the opportunity to attend two distinguished conferences. Tsipora Huisman, Becky Weiss, and Emily Liebling traveled to San Francisco, California to attend the 239th American Chemical Society (ACS) National Meeting and Exposition this past March. In February, Rivkah Rogawski attended the 54th Annual Meeting of the Biophysical Society.

Huisman, Weiss and Liebling, winners of the Stern Science Poster Competition, represented SCW at the ACS meeting, traveling to present biology research projects that each had conducted individually over the summer at Yeshiva University's Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Arriving Sunday morning after a harrowing travel experience, they spent the morning walking through scenic San Francisco, visiting Pier 31, riding the cable car, and visiting Lombard Street, which Huisman described as "the most crooked street I ever saw." That evening, Weiss accepted an honorable mention award at the ACS Student Chapter Awards Ceremony on behalf of the SCW Chemistry Club.

The students spent Monday morning sampling activities at the ACS. They sat in on a technical symposium entitled "Everything You Want to Know About Chocolate." Aside from being a mouth-watering presentation, they learned about the history of chocolate and its chemical secrets. Apparently, chocolate can be healthy and beneficial to one's diet - although, of course, added Huisman, "the downside is that this only applies to pure chocolate." They also visited the exposition floor, where they witnessed firsthand all that

the chemical industry has to offer. This ranged from new technologies to molecular modeling sets to catalogs of commercially available compounds and solutions. Marveling at the wealth of products available, Weiss commented that "there is really so much more out there than what can be found in college laboratories."

Monday afternoon, all three students presented individual posters at the ACS student poster competition. Over 900 students from across the United State and Puerto Rico were in attendance to represent their universities and display their research. Each student stood alongside his or her poster, which was displayed on a large poster wall. Students, professors and scientists walked up and down rows of posters admiring and inquiring about the work. Weiss described the poster session as "a truly educational experience in which we were both student and teacher at once," explaining that "we not only were able to teach others about our research but also to learn from others about what sorts of applications our findings might have for the future of science."

"We met a lot of people at the poster session, students and scientists alike," added Weiss. "The

one thing we all had in common was a love of chemistry." In describing her own experience presenting, Huisman "enjoyed sharing my knowledge and opinions" as well as meeting many different people.

Rogawski attended the Biophysical Society Meeting through the SCW Honors Program. Her mentor, Dr. Evan Mintzer of the SCW Chemistry and Biochemistry Department, presented a poster on research that Rogawski is working on for her honors thesis. Arriving on a Saturday night, she spent the first four days of the conference visiting poster session and symposia before presenting her poster on Wednesday. "I was incredibly intimidated," she stated. "Everybody looked like they belonged there, while I was just an undergraduate. It took me until the last day to realize that many of the other official-looking attendees were students as well and knew almost as little as I did. Unfortunately, I spent the first few days trying to be as unobtrusive as possible."

Despite her hesitation, Rogawski was still able to learn a tremendous amount from what amounted to "a 9-9 schedule of symposia attendance, interspersed with trips to the exposition floor." She at-

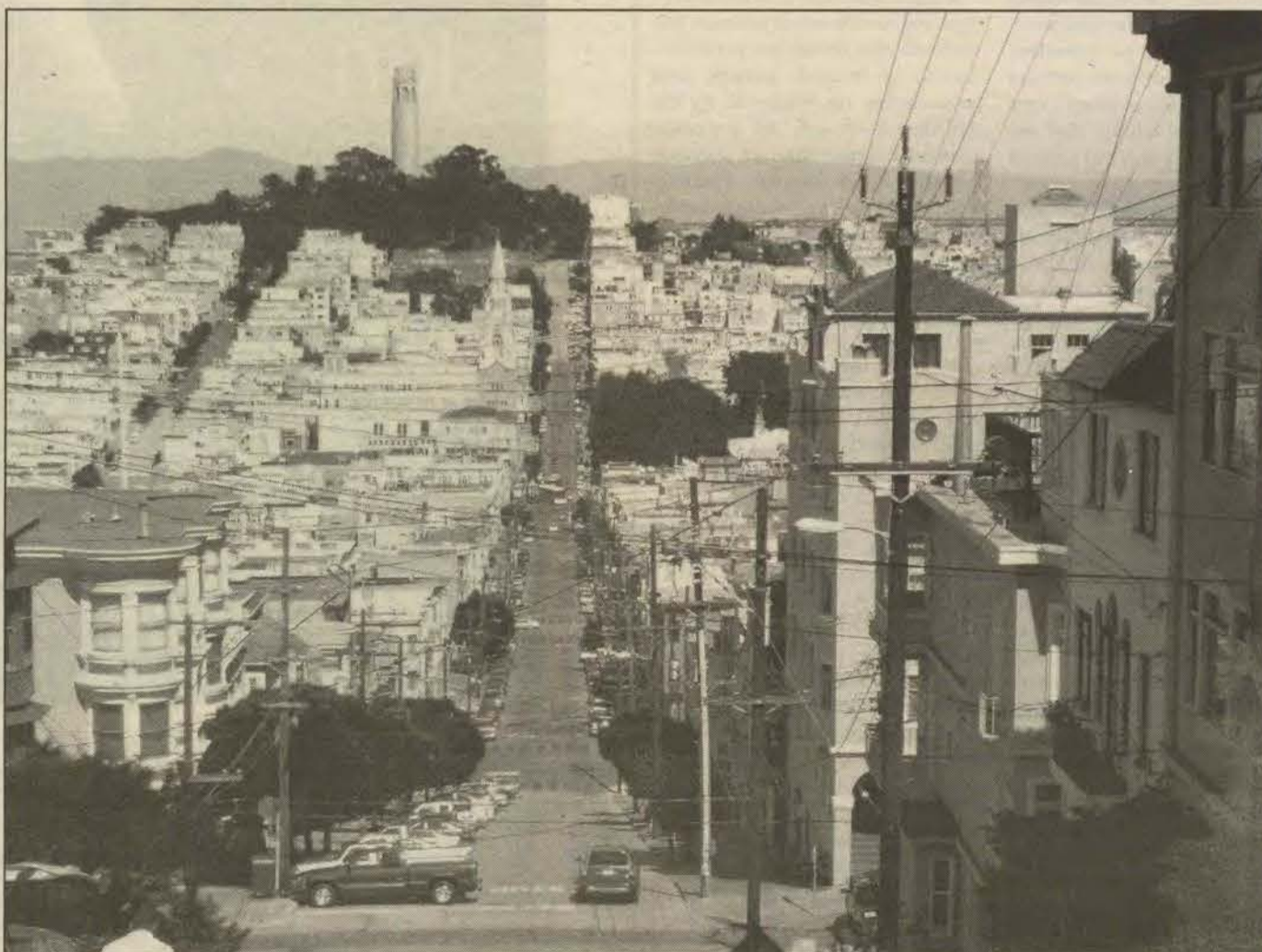
tended symposia on topics as varied as lipid membrane techniques and medicinal chemistry, stating that her personal favorites were "presentations that showcased a really exciting new technique, like a method for making liposomes with non-symmetric membranes that can truly mimic cellular membranes." The conference also held lectures for students new to the field of biophysics on topics such as fluorescence and molecular motors.

Rogawski found helping Dr. Mintzer to present his poster was an "empowering experience, which showed me that I actually do know something. It also helped me clarify my ideas." Even more importantly, Heiko Heerklotz, an expert in the field of isothermal titration calorimetry, the technique that Rogawski uses in her research, was present to "advise us on our experiments and help us with our instrument parameters. His advice was incredibly helpful in subsequent experimentation." Conferences often afford students the opportunity to consult with and gain guidance from real experts in the field.

Overall, Rogawski, Weiss and Huisman found their experiences to be positive. Looking back, Weiss

felt that nothing could have prepared her for the scale of the conference, stating that "I learned that there is so much left to explore in the world of chemistry - there are so many avenues of expression when it comes to chemistry that the possibilities are endless. However, the Stern professors have prepared me well in establishing a strong science foundation such that I was able to understand and appreciate much of what was presented at the conference."

Huisman expressed reservations about the topic of the conference; she is not planning on going into chemistry and explained that "the next conference I would like to go to will be one more geared to the career field I have chosen," namely medicine. On the other hand, Rogawski credits the experience as providing the last push towards a career in research, explaining that "the Biophysical Meeting helped me decide to pursue a Ph.D. in biophysical chemistry." These disparate reactions are exactly what scientific conferences are meant to inspire: discussion and thought that contributes productively to the student's future career.



Four SCW students had the opportunity to attend world-class scientific conferences in San Francisco this semester.

SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Dean of Einstein Admissions Advises YU Undergrads

Hadassa Klerman

As summer begins and the end of the semester fast approaches, students' thoughts turn to what lies beyond the seemingly interminable final stretch. The minds of goal oriented pre-medical students at Stern College for Women fill with summer plans, including summer courses, biomedical research, MCAT preparation, interesting extracurricular activities and, for some, application essays. It is therefore appropriate that the Pre-Med Club at Stern chose this particular juncture to host Noreen Kerrigan, Assistant Dean of Admissions at Yeshiva University's Albert Einstein College of Medicine (AECOM). On the evening of April 13th, Dean Kerrigan offered an informal presentation on the medical school admissions process to a room packed full with interested students.

Jenny Deluty, co-president of the Pre-Med Club and a senior at Stern College, explained that "The Pre-Med Club took the initiative of inviting [Dean Kerrigan] because of the increasing interest in AECOM," adding that "It is very important to have open communication between both schools."

Dean Kerrigan opened her address on a similar note, declaring that the staff at Einstein feel like close relatives of the Yeshiva College and Stern College undergraduates, and that she understands the feeling to be reciprocated. Tsippora Huisman, co-president of the Pre-Med club, later pointed out that this announcement "that she considers us family, that we are important to her, really relaxed a lot of people."

Dean Kerrigan's session was informal and informative; her own presentation was intermingled with both general questions from the audience and even specific questions about individual students' profiles. She began with a list of pet peeves from the admissions committee, chanting maxims such as "No to a year of learning, yes to a year of doing," to describe appropriate activities for those taking a gap year between college and medical school, a popular option for SCW students pressured to finish their pre-med requirements in three years. She encouraged students to use this time follow their passion, whether it be science related, health related, or otherwise.

Dean Kerrigan noted that "not enough of the YU students at Einstein have availed themselves of global health fellowships," and extolled the merits of such opportunities. She praised the CJF missions that YU students have taken to Central America and India and encouraged the audience to participate more in global health

programs offered by YU and other institutions, citing the value of the experience and the exposure. In her view, the students involved in such opportunities gain as much as they give. In addition to helping to provide medical and general care to under-served populations, participants return with an awareness of how much they can help others, as well as a greater appreciation for the resources available to them but inaccessible to those living in third world countries.

In her list of "Top 10 Rules", she stressed quality and "sustained commitment" as the key factors in the requisite clinical volunteer experience, rather than a specific number of hours. She also recommended certain advanced science courses, including molecular genetics, cell biology and, most importantly, biochemistry. She cautioned that "you should never repeat a course unless you got a D or F," and recommended instead taking advanced courses to boost GPA and demonstrate competence in that subject. She also cautioned against taking summer school courses, especially in the sciences. For those who would still take summer courses, despite her strong reservations, she insisted that they choose a college of a similar academic level, rather than a community or junior college.

While it was clear that Dean Kerrigan enjoyed her visit to Stern, the students also found her presentation to be helpful, realistic, and encouraging. As evidenced by the attendance of over 40 students, a turnout larger than in previous Pre-Med Club events, students were interested in the opportunity to meet Dean Kerrigan. Students asked questions throughout the presentation and lined up afterward for additional clarification and personal discussion. Student questions included appropriate dates for MCAT testing, advice and procedures for foreign-born students, and importance of non-health related community service in addition to clinical experience.

Dean Kerrigan concluded her presentation by praising Stern students overall as a strong pool of applicants that keeps getting stronger. She noted that many people believe Einstein will only accept a limited number of Yeshiva University undergraduates, no matter how qualified those applicants are, and pronounced this "common knowledge" as nothing more than myth. She insisted that there is no quota for Yeshiva University undergraduates and declaring that "we want as many of you as we can get." Judging from the large and engaged audience, it seems that those sentiments are reciprocated by Stern students.

The Skinny on Skin

Helen Ayala Unger

"Our skin mediates the most important transactions of our lives," writes Nina Jablonski in this month's featured science read. According to its author, "Skin: A Natural History," was written solely to provide the reader with information about the development, composition, and uniqueness of the largest organ in the human body. This well-researched book, however, goes above and beyond its stated purpose, presenting the reader not only with a wealth of information about the dermatological field but with new insights as well.

Jablonski begins her book with a biological overview of skin, explaining its layered structure and various functions. She then

discusses the evolution of skin throughout the millennia, supplemented with archeological findings of the epidermis. She follows this fascinating historical analysis with an elucidation of the mechanisms of sweat and sensation, as well as the means by which skin repairs itself after being damaged. In addition to her biological treatment of skin, Jablonski discusses skin's significance in psychology, sociology, and global culture. She highlights tribal piercing and tattoo practices, as well as experiments that have established the need for skin-to-skin contact in both humans and animals. The book ends with an overview of future prospects in dermatology, such as the creation of an artificial

sensory covering for robots.

"Skin: A Natural History" is a smooth read; Jablonski's diction is precise and understandable, even to those with no prior background in biology. She effectively utilizes photos and diagrams to illustrate her points, and delivers information in an organized manner. The reader feels engaged throughout the book, marveling at the complexity and rich history of his or her skin. Beauty, as the adage maintains, may only be skin-deep—but the science and intricacy of the skin are much deeper.

Helen Ayala Unger is a freshman at SCW from Cleveland, OH, majoring in Biology. She enjoys synthesizing vitamin D and avoiding sunburns. Go Cavs!



Nina Jablonski's "Skin: A Natural History" explores the science and psychology of skin.

Amazon.com

Please send comments and letters to the editor to

scwobserver@gmail.com

STYLE

The Hill: The Top Beauty Spots In Manhattans Hottest Up and Coming Area

Talia Kaufman

In the fastest-paced city in the world, there is a secret sanctuary of residential life, a refuge from the Madness of Manhattan. It's worlds away from the camera totting tourists of Times, the vegans in The Village, the snobs of the East Side yet in the center of it all.

Somewhere between train passengers traveling to and from Grand Central Station and some place far less fabulous than those absorbing the exotic aromas and indigestion of Curry Hill lies Murray Hill. We are quite an eclectic community full of international ambassadors, partying young post-grads, and, of course, the ladies of Stern College for Women. In this up and coming area, the businesses are thriving and the many hot spots are alive every Manhattan Minute.

But living in the City that never sleeps on Sy Syms sushi and Berry Wild Fro Yo (any true resident of the Hill favors Berry over Red Mango any day; so worth the walk) can take a toll on anyone's appearance, health and soul. Thankfully, there are a select few elite beauty oases that provide an array of services that keep us in The Hills rejuvenated, radiant and ready to take on The City. In addition to these treat-yourself treatments, each salon offers a 10% discount with a student ID: pampering at its prime.

Uni K Wax

Every New York Girl knows that the Spring Sun shines on our City's Streets is the sky's signal to ditch both your outwear and your body hair. A good waxing separates more than just the unibrow. It divides the polished face from the primates. Any Cosmopolitan woman knows that the hunt for a worthy waxing is like the search for a good man; it can get hairy, sticky and often unbelievably painful.

Fortunately for us Murray Hillers, the City's top waxing salon is right here on Third Avenue. Uni K Wax is a Family Franchise that has expanded from 23 locations over Florida and has now begun to remove the fuzz from places it shouldn't be, here in New York City.

The celebrities, wanabes and everyone in between all leave with an upper-lip-fur-free smile raving, "I have never experienced anything like this!" This is because Uni K is truly unique. The Salon was made to give customers the feel of exclusive treatment. Because of the wild popularity, Uni K is able to keep prices affordable and schedules flexible.

At Uni K waxing is a passion, an art and a science. Waxers are all of the highest caliber, having been educated in the highly specialized Uni K training method. The system holds the waxers to the highest

standards in waxing technique as well as customer service. In their training time, waxers are also instructed in many of the services unique to Uni K. The most popular is the Celebrity Eye Brow Waxing.

In this exclusive service, customers not only receive the treatment of the stars, but their eyebrows do as well. Clients pick a celebrity brow to inspire their new look. This wildly popular VIP treatment includes a unique gel and powder that truly enhances the clients natural brow beauty. "A good eyebrow waxing can have a more rejuvenating effect that a face lift," says Uni K Celebrity Brow Specialist, Lana.

What truly separates Uni K from any other salon is the wax. Uni K manufactures its own unique, all-natural wax that creates for the most comfortable, even enjoyable waxing experience. Uni K Wax is created from safe, natural ingredients including pine sap beeswax as well as an aloe vera base that nourishes the skin while gently removing hair, making the wax a perfect alternative to those with sensitive skin. Unlike skin damaging "hard waxes" and painful paper strips, Uni K wax removes hair from the roots without the pain of pulling. This special wax is warm and soothing on the skin and never exceeds one degree above normal body temperature, making for a unique Uni K experience.

Jade Spa

Jade Spa opened only a month ago, perfectly placed between Stanton Hall and the Sy Syms buildings. Behind the unassuming storefront are the regal Asian temple inspired reds and golds softened by the reflections of the hundreds of rose-hued polish bottles. Owner Zhongmei Li is a true embodiment of the exotic grace that is Jade Spa. The former ballerina has danced her way to America to prouette with the top companies as Alvin Alley, Martha Graham, as well as her own wildly popular Zhongmei Li Dance Company.

Even through sold out shows, she knew that the life of a dancer was taking a toll of her family life, as well as her feet. Upon her retirement, her sister and former manager announced that she would find a job in a local Korean nail salon. Jei asked, "Why don't we open our own?" And so Jade Spa was born. Her first Broadway location was wildly popular because of the high quality services and friendly atmosphere. "We never advertise. We create our own little family." Mothers drop off their daughters, to be both babysat and pampered, metro-sexual boyfriends indulge their special ones with spa dates, and groups or girlfriends of all ages celebrate Bridal showers, summer and birthdays with pri-

vate mani-pedi parties.

Unlike a certain unnamed salon making quite a mint off us Stern students, the staff at Jade is puts an emphasis on customer service. Every customer is greeted with a smile and treated to the ultimate pampering experience. The fast-paced city hasn't affected Jade's dedication to relaxation. Customers are encouraged to appreciate the full spa experience and are indulged rather than rushed. Each visit includes free complementary homemade seasonal Asian teas, a complementary massage and as well as full skin exfoliation.

However, what truly makes Jade stand out is their high quality facials. Jade has combined the highest quality American skin care with the ancient Chinese healing methods and natural, homemade creams to create a cutting edge holistic experience. The well-trained estheticians work to create a personal facial experience according to the needs of the customer. After a thorough facial examination, the appropriate treatment is recommended to ensure the personal Jade touch.

Chill Spa

Walking into Chill Spa is walking off the hectic streets of New York into an international vacation. The

pedicures are done in a full Tiki hut, the hair removal treatments in the under-the-sea themed Atlantis room, and the massages in the bamboo forest sanctuary. The décor is truly encompassing of chill's approach to incorporate international wellness techniques with the cutting edge beauty treatments. Although Chill may seem worlds away, it is very much a home-based business.

Howard Kohnlenberg inherited the knack for everything beautiful from his father's long time experience in the business. And the passion and personal care remain the strong in the family's second generation: the expert employees work hard not only to provide the highest quality services for their clients, but to enhance their lifestyle of beauty and relaxation. Whether it is the free Tai Yoga massages or the tips on skincare and body maintenance, Chill employees take the time to care for their customers.

The services offered by Chill offer a trendy, cutting-edge beauty experience. The ice cream bath chill pedicure is a calorie-free way to melt the stress away. Chill is also the first on the East Coast to offer the luxuriating 25 Carrot Gold facial. However, the most popular service for girls on the go

is the Chill Quickie half hour massage. In between class, on a lunch break or on a whim, customers can receive the full experience of a luxury massage in a New York minute.

Ben David Salon

Upon passing Ben David Salon on this side one *sefir*, one may catch a glimpse of Stern students primping for a date, a girl's night or simply for pleasure. But it's not only we who enjoy our appointments. "Everyone is here because they truly love what they do," explains manager Issac Buskila. "When I came over from Israel, I didn't care about the money; it's about making the clients happy. The smile when they get out of the chair, that's what it's all about."

Ben David employees work to build chemistry with their clients, from the mini massage shampooing sessions to the practically magical blowouts, every Ben David service is of the highest quality. "We work hard to create a great environment and chemistry with our clients," states Buskila. "We use the hottest products for the best prices. The Brazilian relaxing treatment, the hair market's trend of the moment, is offered for only \$220, less than half of the competitor's price."



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