



The Yeshiva University

## OBSERVER

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## Students Protest to Get the Get

## Observer Staff

Dozens of students protested outside the Midtown Manhattan office of Mr. Larry Wohl, who has repeatedly refused to appear before a *beit din* to settle a halachic divorce with his wife, Mrs. Denise Wohl.

The rally, which took place on August 30, was organized by the Organization for the Resolution of Agunot (ORA) in conjunction with Stern College for Women (SCW)'s Social Justice Society.

"Larry has stated unabashedly that he is withholding a *get* (Jewish divorce document) until Denise accepts his divorce settlement offer," Rabbi Jeremy Stern, director of ORA, remarked at the protest rally. "He was using the *get* as leverage in an attempt to pressure Denise to accept a low monetary settlement. Larry was cruelly manipulating Jewish law for financial gain," said Rabbi Stern.

Even with a civil divorce settlement, Mrs. Wohl needs a *get* to halachically divorce her current husband. Until then, she is classified as an *agunah* and cannot remarry.

Mr. Wohl's refusal to appear before a *beit din* effected a *seruv* (order of contempt) against him from the Beth Din of America in May 2010.

"I want to get the civil divorce

[settled] as quickly and as easily as possible," Mr. Wohl, president of Joseph P. Day Realty Corp., stated in an interview. He claimed that Mrs. Wohl was demanding a *get* to stall the civil divorce settlement, "so I can keep on paying for her maintenance," he said.

Three rallies were scheduled to protest Mr. Wohl's actions. Over 50 SCW students attended the first rally, chanting outside of exclusive office buildings owned by Mr. Wohl on 40<sup>th</sup> Street between Madison and Park Avenues. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Wohl agreed to appear before a *beit din*. The other two rallies were subsequently canceled.

After this initial success, however, Mr. Wohl continued to delay the process and did not appear before a *beit din*. "ORA will restart protest if he continues to delay unnecessarily," said Rabbi Stern at the time.

Mr. Wohl has since reneged on his commitment to appear before a *beit din*. ORA is in the midst of planning a second rally against him if he still refuses to cooperate by October 25.

ORA, a nonprofit social service agency that helps Jewish couples resolve contested divorces, was founded by Yeshiva University students and consults with RI-ETS Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Hershel

Schachter as their main *poseik* (halachic advisor).

"We take on cases in any situation where the *beit din* process, for whatever reason, has stalled or has failed to procure a *get* in the end of the day," explained Rabbi Stern in an interview, noting that cases come from Jews across the spectrum of observance. "With halachic permission from Rav Schachter, we apply all legal remedies available to us to convince the recalcitrant party to be forthcoming in issuing the *get*."

ORA employs communal, social, legal or financial pressure to procure a *get*. "We always try to resolve things amicably at first," Rabbi Stern pointed out. "We use pressure only as a last resort."

The rally, which attracted much attention from the residents and workers inside Mr. Wohl's building as well as from passing pedestrians, was a form of communal pressure.

Engaged couples are sometimes counseled to sign a prenuptial agreement, commonly known as prenups - a legal document that



Orah

Rabbi Jeremy Stern leads students in a protest rally against Mr. Larry Wohl, who refuses to give his wife, Denise, a *get*.

contains provisions for division of property and spousal support in the event of divorce. However, couples are often hesitant to sign such a document when they are about to begin their lives together.

The topic of prenups was discussed in an article in The Jewish Star after a protest rally ORA organized in early August.

"The message a newlywed may take from it, especially in our times, sadly, is that marriage is

like any business agreement," said Rabbi Avi Shafran, director of public affairs for the Agudath Israel of America, quoted in the article. "Clauses in a contract establishing a legal partnership would understandably deal with the event of the partnership's dissolution. But a joining of two people into one is qualitatively different, and incomparably important. So, to begin the

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## Dean's Scholarship Upgraded with MacBook Offering

## Yael Roberts

Twenty-five students at Stern College for Women (SCW) and Yeshiva University (YU) received brand new white 13-inch Apple MacBooks, the latest addition to the dean's scholarship as of the fall 2010 semester.

"The decision to add a laptop was motivated by the Stern administration's constant effort to keep abreast of what is going on in the rest of the world," said Dean Bacon, the Dr. Monique C. Katz Dean of SCW, in an interview. "This is the first year that it has been added as one of the incentives in the program for students to really excel academically," she added.

The laptop was presented to eligible students during orientation week after a reception for dean's scholars. The students were asked to sign a contract that gave YU ownership rights to the laptop until the students' graduation, requiring them to bring the laptop in for a yearly check-up. Students also have access to YU's technical

assistance for any computer issues.

The new laptop incentive is not given to every dean scholar; there are different gradations of the scholarship and some only offer financial support. The Office of Admissions was responsible for choosing students who would receive laptops.

"Since most awardees, like the rest of our students, first go to Israel, the majority of the awardees have not yet enrolled on campus and therefore have not received their laptops," noted Murray Sragow, associate director of undergraduate admissions.

Recipients of the scholarship indicated that the laptop offering encouraged them to attend SCW over other colleges.

Channah Esan, a sophomore at SCW majoring in biology from Rochester, NY, remarked that the laptop "wasn't a deciding factor over SUNY Binghamton, but it definitely swayed my decision." Malia

Weiss, a freshman at SCW, agreed that the laptop was an "added incentive in choosing Stern College."

Other academic scholarships offered at SCW are the S. Daniel Abraham Honors Program and scholarships for specific majors, such as the Jewish Educators Project for students pursuing a career in Jewish education. The dean's scholarship rewarded students with \$5,000 to \$7,500 per year toward tuition, and now will offer a laptop as an additional component.

When dean's scholars open their new laptops, the YU logo is displayed across the desktop background. "A computer is almost a necessity for functioning in a university - or actually, for functioning in the world," noted Dean Bacon.

Malkie Krieger, a sophomore at SCW from Monroe, NY, described her new computer as "beautiful, new and clean." Krieger also appreciated that Microsoft Word,

Excel, iTunes and other software programs were already uploaded onto her computer. Esan added that the computer "has improved my organization...I am able to work much faster and multitask like never before."

The new laptop component was not publicized to the student body at large. Instead, eligible students were notified in a letter congratulating them upon becoming a dean's scholar that they would receive a laptop.

"Throughout my years in high school, when I was putting in so

much time and effort to achieve the marks that eventually earned me my status as a dean's scholar, I never expected to receive any recognition for it," commented Hannah Rozenblat, a freshman at SCW majoring in English. "I simply did what I felt I had to do by putting all my energy into my schoolwork, and the laptop was a pleasant surprise."

"A Mac is as good as it looks," Apple, Inc., advertises for their computers. So far, a select group of students at SCW seem to agree.

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## FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITORS

### Just Like a Wavin' Flag

Estie Neff, Editor-in-Chief

YouTube videos and wacky Jewish singers. Where would we be without them?

This past summer, Chai Life-line's Camp Simcha organized a major event. All their male campers and counselors, wearing Camp Simcha shirts and holding Camp Simcha flags, gathered in Times Square to sing their theme song, "Wavin' Flag."

As thousands of New Yorkers watched, the young cancer victims sang proudly at the top of their lungs. A video of the performance was posted on YouTube. Counselors told their friends and family about it, and soon the song became ubiquitous within the Jewish community.

Though I heard about the "Wavin' Flag" phenomenon, I did not know the extent of its impact until I attended a concert over chol hamoed Sukkos featuring Dedi Groucher and Lipa Schmeltzer.

Lipa and Dedi are both known to be entertaining, and that night they met their match in a bunch of rowdy yeshiva boys sitting five rows behind me. The boisterous group kept up a steady stream of cheering, yelling, and their idea of musical accompaniment throughout the concert. The audience rolled their eyes and ignored them; the performers tried to coax them to silence.

The give-and-take between the yeshiva boys and the performers was painful at times, but the con-

cert went on. Dedi impressed us with his vocal range, then gave the stage to Lipa. Lipa sang a number of popular songs and reached "Abi Meleibt" (It will be okay), one of his signature tunes. He sang the chorus, and the yeshiva boys simultaneously added their own noise as expected, breaking out in Camp Simcha's "Wavin' Flag." Some people in the audience chuckled, some people groaned, but Lipa - surrounded by loud instruments and intense percussion - did not hear them.

As Lipa neared the chorus of "Abi Meleibt" the second time, he turned the microphone to the crowd. The band quieted down in anticipation of our cooperation. Instead, a resounding recital of "Wavin' Flag" filled the cavernous room from the yeshiva boys in the back, who overpowered us.

Lipa did not miss a beat. "Oh! That's nice! Sing it again!" he said, encouraging the yeshiva boys. They sang again, exuberantly, and this time Lipa sang with them. Next, the band chimed in with their thunderous instruments. Finally, the entire audience was singing the chorus of "Wavin' Flag" together with the yeshiva boys, the band and Lipa.

Sitting in the concert hall, it struck me that two concepts were harmonizing together, in the form of music, at this spontaneous moment. Camp Simcha's song about the lives and struggles of youth

with cancer, and Lipa's song about relinquishing control to life's twists and turns, became one.

The haphazard melding of these musical messages was surprisingly appropriate. As mere human beings, we cannot control many things in life, like a person's health - or a person's livelihood, or when a person finds their *bashert*. But given a situation, we can react in the proper way by realizing that "it will be okay" - everything is God's will and what He decrees is ultimately for the best.

The timing was perfect as well. During Sukkos, God commands us to eat and sleep in makeshift huts for seven days. Non-Jews think we're crazy. It's impossible to survive harsh weather conditions with only a palm branch roof and thin wooden walls! Sturdy houses provide ample protection from the environment - it would be a miracle if people lived in sukkahs as they do all year round.

However, living in a sturdy house is *just as miraculous* as living in a wooden hut! If God willed it, we would live in sukkahs all year and be just as secure. The sukkah teaches us that our realities are always subject to the will of Hashem.

Like a "wavin' flag," whose every move is determined by the one who brandishes it, the minutia of daily life is determined by the will of our Creator; therefore, we can say "abi meleibt!"

### Our Greater Responsibility

Rivkah Rogawski, Managing Editor

One of the best parts of going home for the holidays - and I live out of town - is the opportunity to bake for my assorted friends and relations. This past Sukkot, my younger sister and I spent many floury hours producing two tarts (apple and peanut butter), six challahs, 32 cupcakes, numerous fudgy cookies, and homemade mini pizzas.

Besides for the gustatory pleasure, caring for others and participating in a wider communal goal was an experience that contrasted starkly with my life at Stern.

The college experience, especially at Yeshiva University (YU), is extremely insular. For most of its students, YU provides an academic, social and religious community. Students depend on YU for guidance in many areas of life, and this can sometimes constrict their worldview. As a wise friend of mine, who graduated Stern College for Women (SCW), said recently, "When you are in YU, you think that it is the world - then you

graduate and realize that there is a whole wonderful religious community out there that is great, even though they aren't affiliated with YU."

Of course, as students our job is to be narcissistic. We are supposed to focus narrowly on our careers and interpersonal relationships, building a microcosm of our future adult lives within the confines of our college environment. Most of us are free of familial and communal obligations and can afford the luxury of introspection. It helps that people living in the "real world" love giving free stuff to college students - note the multiple programs funded by the Center for the Jewish Future (CJF) that enrich our lives.

However, it is important for us to remember that college is a finite experience. As students, we need to think about our responsibility to the larger community, both in the religious and secular realms. We should ask ourselves if we are aware of the heterogeneity of the

Orthodox world at large. How do we see ourselves fitting into such a broad community, and how will the tools that we acquire help us contribute to others? While we are certainly privy to unique experiences that can be broadening, placing all of those experiences within the YU framework can have the opposite effect.

So, over the next semester, as the weather chills and my fellow SCW students hunker down over their library corrals, I will try to keep some perspective on it all. I will stop classifying my peers according to seminaries or high schools - in the grand scheme of things, whether someone went to Central or BYLA makes very little difference. I will try to volunteer for diverse chessed opportunities that expose me to needs in different communal sectors.

Hopefully, come May, I will be prepared to join the "real world" as a responsible citizen.

## The Yeshiva University OBSERVER

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# NEWS

## New Restaurant on the Beren Campus Block

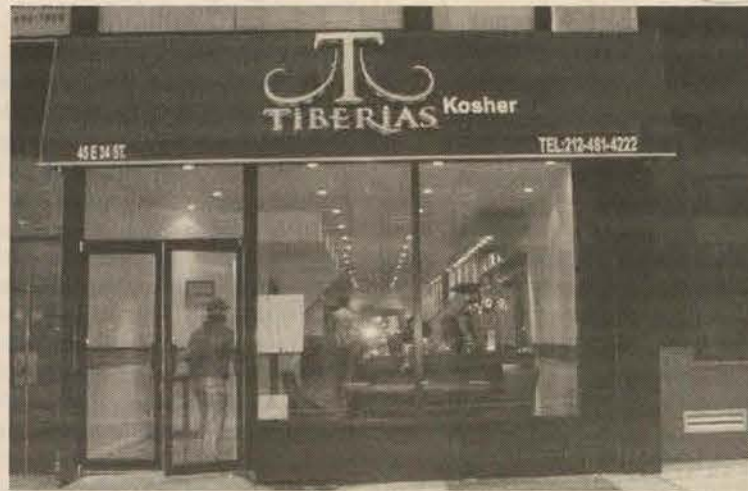
Elana Goldberg

A new eatery opened on July 1 at 45 East 34<sup>th</sup> Street between Madison and Park Avenues. Tiberias, an upscale kosher dairy restaurant, is the newest dining option for students at Stern College for Women (SCW), owned by brothers Eli and Uri Sternbach.

"At first, we didn't even realize that the building we had chosen was right in the middle of Stern," says Eli Sternbach. "We started to notice Orthodox girls walking around, and since school has begun the place has been packed with Stern students."

The Sternbach brothers, whose respective resumes boast past experiences at Wolf and Lamb and Café K, originally recognized their passion for food services by cooking for a Jerusalem yeshiva. They moved to New York to break into the food business of the city. After developing a plan to open their own restaurant, the Sternbachs purchased the future Manhattan home of Tiberias before the summer. Following three months of heavy construction conducted mainly by the Sternbach brothers themselves, Tiberias opened to the New York City public.

According to the Sternbachs, SCW women now comprise about 50 percent of their customers, mostly entering the restaurant af-



ter 9 pm. The most recent proof of Tiberias' popularity among the SCW community presented itself following the Fast of Gedalia on September 13, when Tiberias saw approximately 150 Stern students enter its doors seeking food within a mere two-hour period.

The name of the restaurant refers to the birthplace of the Israeli brothers, matching the homey atmosphere of the otherwise elegant eatery. The dark wooden tables and softer lighting contribute to an understated theme, lending Tiberias an aura perfect for late-night study sessions or first dates. The restaurant offers a similarly diverse and comprehensive menu,

taking the everyday diner from breakfast, through lunch and dinner, accented with specialized coffee and milkshake drinks sure to reenergize at any hour of the day.

"They make a really good Oreo milkshake," says Alex Grumet, a junior at SCW.

At present, the only drawback to Tiberias seems to be its minimal chef and wait staff. The restaurant employs only two chefs and two waitresses, and the strain on Tiberias employees to satisfy customers during the lunch and dinner rush hours is noticeable. "The food was good, but the service was really slow," says Esti Nussbaum, an SCW junior. "It might prevent me

from going back in the future."

The service complaints have reached the ears of the Sternbachs, who plan to enlarge their staff after the holidays in order to comply with their expanding clientele. "We know the staff is too small," admits Sternbach, "but we are just getting started. We plan to add to our employees to accommodate the bigger crowds we have been receiving."

Other pending improvements to the fledgling restaurant include the addition of a constant grill in order to serve breakfast favorites such as omelets and French toast throughout the day, as opposed to only in the morning, and vari-

ous promotions and sales aimed directly at SCW women, whose patronage is widely acknowledged and appreciated by the Sternbach brothers.

"The staff really likes the Stern girls who come in," says Eli Sternbach. "And," he adds with a smile, "they tip really well."

*Tiberias welcomes requests, comments, or complaints from Stern students, and can be contacted at 212-481-4222 or by e-mail at [tiberiasny@gmail.com](mailto:tiberiasny@gmail.com).*



## Clothes for Dinner

Marganit Rauch

The beginning of the fall semester marked changes to the usual goods sold in both the Beren and Wilf campus cafeterias. In addition to the regular stock of food, students are now able to purchase various items of Yeshiva University (YU) merchandise, such as T-shirts, sweaters, hats, license plate covers and stickers.

"These are locations with a great deal of visibility," says Bruce Jacobs, director of dining services at YU, "and there was pre-existing space where the merchandise could be sold."

With the onset of the cold season, winter merchandise, such as sweatshirts, will be added to the glass cabinets. Students will not be able to buy these items using their "caf" card, which is strictly for purchasing food.

YU, along with many other universities, used to purchase university paraphernalia from a company called Awards.com. This online business carried a constant inventory of university items in all different sizes. If a university were to call up and ask for a specific item, the company provided it right away.

Awards.com recently went out of business and had leftover uni-

versity merchandise. They informed their respective clients that they had an obligation to take the leftover paraphernalia. As such, YU, along with Awards.com's other customers, found itself in possession of a surplus of university souvenirs. To solve the

surplus issue, YU decided to sell the merchandise in the cafeterias and campus stores.

Jacobs says the merchandise has not been selling as well as they hoped it would; on the contrary, business is slow.

"The idea appeals to me," says

Timi Wildman, a junior at Stern College for Women (SCW), "however, I never carry cash on me when going to the cafeteria as it has never been necessary. I am sure that if we could buy it on the caf card more students would be purchasing it."

Dining Services might consider displaying the merchandise in school lobbies to improve sales.

## What's New in the Caf

<p><b>PLASTIC UTENSILS</b></p>	<p><b>WHAT'S NEW</b></p> <p>Nifty dispensers instead of open compartments</p>	<p><b>WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more nightmares about how many people touched the fork you used for lunch today</li> <li>"Hey...I could stand here and push this lever ALL DAY!"</li> </ul>
<p><b>COFFEE MACHINES</b></p>	<p><b>WHAT'S NEW</b></p> <p>20 oz. and 12 oz. instead of large and regular</p>	<p><b>WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A chance to prove your logic skills: Last year, large was medium and regular was small. This year, medium is 20 oz. and small is 12 oz. What does that mean for next year, including the possibility of explanatory labels? (The caf staff will give a year's supply of pizza bites to anyone who can solve the word problem above.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>PASTRY SHELVES IN SY SYMS CAF</b></p>	<p><b>WHAT'S NEW</b></p> <p>Take that back. It's a shirt, not a muffin.</p>	<p><b>WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time to rethink your priorities: Why didn't Food Services decide to sell clothes from the salad bar? Hmmm?</li> </ul>



## NEWS

## New Academic Advisers for Pre-Health and Pre-Law

Rachel Schultz

Mr. Jeff Mollin and Dr. John Fousek are the newest additions to Stern College for Women (SCW)'s Academic Advisement Center as of the fall 2010 semester. Mollin has been named advisor for students interested in the fields of nursing, physical therapy (PT) and physician's assistant (PA), while Fousek will serve as the pre-law adviser.

Over the summer, Dr. Monique C. Katz Dean Karen Bacon and Associate Dean Ethel Orlian approached Mollin, a full-time biology faculty member who has taught at SCW since 1999, to take on a new role as academic adviser. At that time, Ms. Debbie Solomon, the previous adviser for nursing, informed the dean's office that she would no longer be available.

Dr. Brenda Loewy, in charge of overall pre-health advisement, previously advised those interested in PT and PA. Now, with the addition of Mollin to the advising staff, she will have more time to focus on the large number of pre-dental and pre-medical students.

According to Deans Bacon and Orlian, Mollin was selected for the position because he "oversees a number of the advanced biology labs among which is anatomy, a required course for most nursing, PT and many PA programs" and because he "is familiar with the students, their work and has the opportunity to establish relationships with them."

Mollin is able to coordinate his advising schedule with his teaching schedule. "[The position] didn't add or take away any hours from my teaching schedule," he noted in an interview.

Prior to his selection as academic adviser, Mollin was familiar with the requirements and prerequisites for nursing, PT and PA from unofficial meetings with students going into those fields. He had written "at least 40...maybe more" recommendation letters a year for pre-health students.

So far, Mollin's schedule as an adviser has been pretty busy. He believes this is due to the fact that "nursing is a very popular field" in SCW - "all the health sciences are popular." He speculates that 15 to 25 students apply to nursing school each year, about five or so apply to PT school, and between three to five students apply to PA school. Altogether, this is a large number given the average size of an SCW graduating class.

The strong apparent interest of SCW students in nursing was an impetus for the deans' offices to pursue a joint nursing program with New York University (NYU). A preliminary meeting with the executive vice president for health at NYU already took place, and a meeting with the dean of the NYU College of Nursing occurred on

September 20 to discuss the nature and details of this potential program.

Understanding that applying to nursing, PT, and PA schools can be confusing and stressful, Mollin enjoys the opportunity to facilitate the process for students. When asked what his favorite part of his new job is, Mollin responded that "it's just good to help the students and improve their chances of getting into the programs they want to."

Dr. John Fousek, appointed as the new pre-law adviser at SCW, previously served as program director of the Center for Ethics at Yeshiva University (YU) since November 2006. Prior to his coming to YU, he taught courses in history, global affairs and law at a variety of universities, including a seminar on genocide and crimes against humanity at Rutgers University.

Ms. Rani Lustiger had previously advised both Yeshiva College (YC) and SCW pre-law students, but Fousek's appointment now enables each campus to have their own full-time adviser. Fousek will collaborate with Lustiger to organize informational programs for students on both the Wilf and Ben campuses.

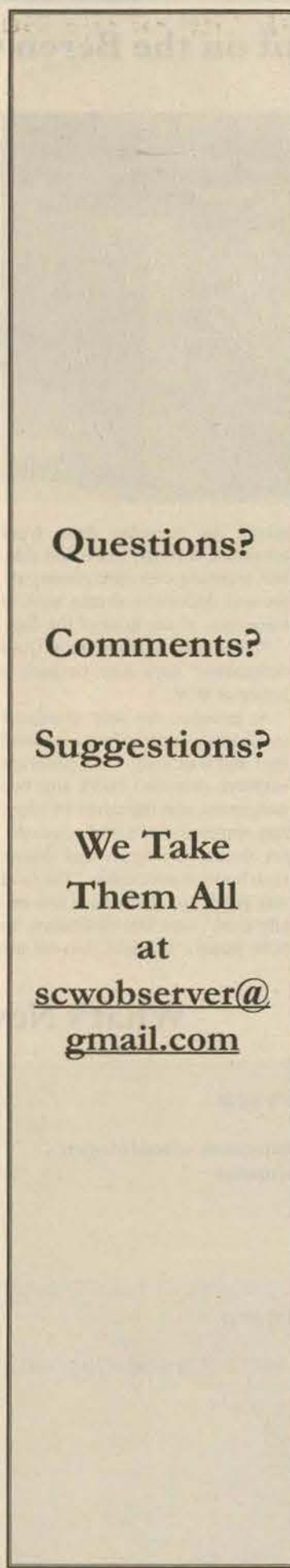
"The pre-law adviser [must] help students clarify their academic plans and develop their personal statements in support of their law school applications," noted Deans Bacon and Orlian. "Dr. John Fousek, who has a Ph.D. in history, is well qualified to fill these functions." Dean Bacon even asked Fousek to join her staff to assist in other academic affairs as well.

One of the most crucial roles of a pre-law adviser is to help students write personal statements for law school. Fousek, a published author with experience teaching expository writing, believes that "as an educator, helping people learn to express themselves effectively on the page is part of my calling."

Committed to responding to the needs of SCW students applying to law school, Fousek pledges to "provide our students with guidance concerning the law school application process, whether the student is just considering the idea or is already in the thick of it."

Appointments with Fousek can be made through the Office of Academic Advisement. Numerous students have already met with Fousek to discuss personal statements and general information about specific majors or recommended courses.

Fousek claims to have been a "fan of Stern College and its students for years" and has received positive feedback from those interested in law school. He looks forward to helping many more students in the near future and



Questions?

Comments?

Suggestions?

We Take  
Them All

at

[scwobserver@  
gmail.com](mailto:scwobserver@gmail.com)

hopes to "contribute the best academic advice [he] can provide to this remarkable student population."

"We are confident that both Mr. Mollin and Dr. Fousek bring valuable knowledge, skills, patience and caring to their respective positions," stated Deans Bacon and Orlian. "Their availability, experience and sincere desire to serve will no doubt greatly benefit the students of Stern College."

## YU Opens Doors on the Sixth Floor

Marganit Rauch

Yeshiva University (YU) will offer access to the sixth floor of the Sy Syms building at 215 Lexington Ave., reconstructing it to house offices of the deans, academic advisement, and other offices currently located on the 14<sup>th</sup> floor of 205 Lexington Ave., following the termination of the space's lease two years ago.

YU has always owned approximately half of the building at 215 Lexington Ave., including most of the lower floors and until the eighth floor. The fourth, fifth and sixth floors had long-term leases, making them unavailable for YU use. With the termination of the fourth floor lease in 2008, YU decided that rather than lending it out again, it would utilize the area for its own purposes. The fourth floor currently houses administrative offices and computer laboratories.

The fifth and sixth floors were previously leased to *Vibe* magazine - a magazine that provides coverage of urban music and fashion, cars and electronic gadgets. Less than two years ago, the lease on those floors ended as well. *Vibe* moved elsewhere in Manhattan, leaving room for YU to expand.

YU had intended to build on the fifth and sixth floors immediately, but the economic crisis and its ramifications rendered this virtually impossible. It was only until very recently that the Department of Finance gave the go-ahead to proceed with construction.

Jeffrey Rosengarten, vice president for administrative services, notes that the funds for the building plans did not come from a specific donor. However, "we would be pleased to name the floor if someone comes forward," he adds.

## Students Protest to Get the Get

PROTEST from page 1

challenging but holy enterprise of married life amid thoughts of what will transpire at a divorce is neither prudent nor proper," he concluded.

However, in an email conversation with the *Observer*, Rabbi Stern stated that prenuptial agreements need not be viewed as foreboding.

"Prenups are no less romantic than the beautiful *ketubot* which we put up on our walls: both compel a husband to fulfill his halachic obligations to his wife in the event of a divorce," writes Rabbi Stern. "Personally, I think it is a statement of love and devotion to say to your future spouse that you love that person so much that, even if things would not work out in the end, you would not want to do anything to hurt them."

Rabbi Stern noted that ORA

The fifth floor expansion will take place in the near future, though nothing has been finalized and YU has yet to decide what it will house.

The expansion currently taking place on the sixth floor is set to be completed before the end of 2010. "The easiest way to explain what will now be on the sixth floor," says Rosengarten "is that the bulk of what is currently on the 14<sup>th</sup> floor will be moved down there."

The 14<sup>th</sup> floor of 205 Lexington Ave., connected to the 12<sup>th</sup> floor of 215 Lexington Ave., houses offices of the deans of Stern College for Women (SCW), academic advisement, and offices of student aid and student accounts.

YU leases, rather than owns, the 14<sup>th</sup> floor. At the end of 2010 YU will terminate its lease with 205 Lexington and all the offices there will be transferred to the sixth floor of 215 Lexington Ave., in addition to a waiting room for students and a conference room.

The occasional appearance of construction men in the Sy Syms elevators or the sound of loud hammering in the stairwell is evidence that change is indeed on the horizon. The locale itself, not the classes or the professors, is undergoing a complete transformation in structure and setup.

"The renovation will certainly be appreciated, especially at those busy times when the elevators are in use and I have to run in to see a dean quickly," notes Sarah Lazarus, a junior and biology major at SCW. "Six flights are much easier to run up than fourteen."

strongly endorses the Rabbinical Council of America's prenuptial document. "Signing a prenup protects yourself from yourself," he added.

In a debriefing session after the rally, students heard from Mrs. Wohl about her experience as an *agunah*. She described the hardships involved and her rocky journey to obtain a *get*. The students who attended learned a lot from her speech and felt a sense of accomplishment from the rally itself.

"It was amazing seeing our women come out," said Ilana Hostyk, president of the Social Justice Society. "I was so proud to be a student at Stern at that very moment, joined by so many of my peers and friends, standing up for a fellow Jewish woman."



## NEWS

## Architects Think Out of the Box in Union Square

Jina Davidovich

Twelve distinguished sukkah designs were selected from hundreds of entrants to be displayed in Union Square on September 19 and 20 as part of Sukkah City, a world-wide competition that brought together architects and designers from all walks of life.

Sukkah City was a project that "reimagined and renewed" the way people conceived the traditional hut in which Jews are commanded to reside for the duration of the eight-day holiday of Sukkot.

It was the catalyst for the Yeshiva University Museum program, "Judaism and Sacred Space: Medi-

tations on Sukkah City," which took place on September 27 at the YU Museum. The event included a panel of renowned speakers who spoke about sacred space and how it relates to Sukkot, Jewish thought, narrative and law. The museum housed two of the sukkot from the exhibit - "Star Cocoon" and "In Tension" - throughout the holiday.

Henry Grossman and Babak Bryan, two architects from Long Island, NY, designed "Fractured Bubble," which was chosen by popular vote as the winner of the competition. It stayed standing in Union Square throughout the entirety of Sukkot.

The remaining sukkahs were auctioned off to private buyers and museums, most selling for around \$5,000.

The avant-garde interpretation of the sukkah rendered results that included a sukkah with a façade made of signs purchased from homeless individuals in

California, a sukkah that used a large log as a roof balanced on walls of glass, a sukkah made entirely from a single 5,400-foot thread of steel, and a sukkah whose exterior was made of an inflatable bubble.

The event was inspired by Joshua Foer, author and freelance writer, and Roger Bennett, founder of Reboot - a nonprofit organization that seeks to fund and publicize Jewish art and culture. Reboot, the main sponsor of the event, provided each team with \$10,000 to construct the aesthetically fascinating dwellings.

In addition, architects had to follow the strict halachot pertaining to the building of a sukkah. Dani Passow, rabbinical student at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah and graduate of Cooper Union, was hired to ensure that the sukkahs were up to the standard of halacha. An excited Passow scoured the event on Sunday and Monday to answer questions about whether or not the shocking sukkahs were actually kosher.

Listed on the Sukkah City website are some little-known halachot such as: "A whale may be used to make a sukkah's walls. Also an elephant," and "a sukkah may be built in a tree like a tree house. But it cannot be built under a tree or any overhanging surface."



Star Cocoon

YU Flickr



YU Flickr

In Tension

Although none of the contestants ventured a sukkah made of whale or a tree-house sukkah, each artist struggled to fit his design into the parameters of Jewish law; each delivered a product that engaged thousands of New Yorkers in dialogue about a ritual that many had never heard of, much less seen.

"We're all about bringing architecture back in front of people's eyes," said architect Marc Kushner to the participants. "What you guys have done is taken this ancient tradition and brought it into the contemporary context so that

people can reengage with it."

Sukkah City may provide those Jews who view the annual sukkah-building as routine with a chance to reexamine their relationship to it. "To us," remarked Grossman and Bryan, "a sukkah is a place where you take a moment to go inside a temporary structure, where you can look out and reflect on the world and the life outside with the people that you care about most."

Sukkah City hopes to continue growing. The event is set to spread to cities around the globe next year.

## Muslim Cultural Center in Lower Manhattan Sparks Heated Controversy

Renee Kestenbaum

On Sept. 11 2010, shortly after New York City's tenth annual memorial for victims of the Twin Towers attacks, twin rallies commenced in Lower Manhattan.

Supporters and protestors of the planned construction of Park51, a Muslim cultural center to be erected two blocks from Ground Zero, drew a crowd of approximately two thousand people, according to a *New York Times* report. The rallies were nonviolent and followed months of debate over the "Ground Zero Mosque," as the project has come to be known.

In May the Lower Manhattan neighborhood advisory board approved plans for the cultural center, garnering community opposition from roughly 100 protestors.

The project's organizers are Feisal Abdul Rauf, the imam of a mosque in the financial district, and Daisy Khan, Rauf's wife and a prominent supporter of women's activist groups and positive Muslim relations with Western countries.

Those opposed to the construction claim that the Muslim cultural center should not be built so close to Ground Zero out of sensitivity to those who lost loved ones in the Twin Towers and to those who have since come to regard Ground Zero as a sacred space. One surviving family member of 9/11 victims expressed his opposition to a reporter, saying that building the "Ground Zero Mosque" would be a sign of Muslim victory over the 9/11 attacks, and that it was inappropriate.

In a September 3 editorial, *The New York Times* found that 67 percent of New Yorkers polled thought the cultural center should be built someplace less controversial. There is also concern that the center would become a safe haven for terrorists.

Supporters of the cultural center believe that allowing construction to proceed demonstrates tolerance. The Park51 organization proposes that a Muslim cultural center based on tolerance would

help to eradicate extremism. Other supporters believe that Rauf has the right to build any religious structure under freedom of religion granted by the Constitution.

According to some reports, had Rauf foreseen this controversy he might have chosen another site for the cultural center; however, as of now there are no plans to relocate.

Debate only escalated over the summer while the center tackled more legal hurdles, like obtaining permission from the Landmarks Preservation Committee to demolish the original Burlington Coat Factory store at the site of the proposed center. Since August, the question of the "Ground Zero Mosque" has developed into a national controversy forcing Americans to confront their feelings toward Islam, religious tolerance and American ideals.

The cultural center has responded to the controversy by redefining its mission. Originally, the center was to be named Cordoba House after Cordoba, Spain, which

was under Muslim rule for approximately 500 years and where Muslims, Jews and Christians lived peacefully. However some protested that "Cordoba" contained negatives connotations of Muslim conquest.

The project's name was then changed to Park51, merely reflecting the address of the center, 51 Park Place. A Cordoba House will exist within the center as its "interfaith and religious component," according to Park51's website and blog. Rauf will be the spiritual leader of Cordoba House. Cordoba House will designate separate Muslim, Jewish and Christian prayer spaces.

Along with the prayer services, the proposed 15-story cultural center will house fitness facilities, a performing arts theater, restaurant and culinary school, and will offer various services to the community at large. The center was modeled after the 92nd Street Y.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg has been consistently vocal in his sup-

port of the Park51 project. An August 12 *New York Times* article attributed Bloomberg's support of the center to his personal experience with religious tolerance as a Jew in America.

Not all Jews share this position, however. Most notably, the Anti-Defamation League announced its opposition to Park51 in a statement released in July.

"The controversy which has emerged regarding the building of an Islamic Center at this location is counterproductive to the healing process," the statement declares. "Therefore, under these unique circumstances, we believe the City of New York would be better served if an alternative location could be found."



## FEATURES

## I've Got Peruvian Pictures on My Mind

Avital Pessar

*Click. Snap. Flash.*

The photographs I take convey a story, a story that others now can see and bear witness to. A camera is a powerful tool with the potential to present one story in very different ways. It simply depends on how the photographer chooses to capture an image; in those images, everyone sees a different story.

The story my camera lens witnessed happened in the Global South, where it captured the story of a community of 250 families living on the southern coast of Peru. It captured snapshots of the daily lives of the people in the town of Lurinchincha. Situated on the Pacific coast amidst mountainous terrain, Lurinchincha is an agricultural community with shades of green artichoke and white cotton fields beautifully painting the landscape. Googling Lurinchincha is not very informative; however, this community is anything but a forgotten place.

Exactly three years ago, the people of Lurinchincha didn't see vibrant green fields. Instead, the community was reduced to brown and black mottled landscapes. Lives had been turned upside down, as an earthquake ripped through the community, leaving piles of rubble in its wake, piles that were once called homes, community centers and lifelong dreams, and exposed that at the epicenter of this town was an unreliable government.

As Jews we believe that everyone is created in the image of God, and that our responsibility, which takes on global proportions, is to help people in need wherever they are - be it New York, Jerusalem, London, Kenya or Lurinchincha. This summer, along with fifteen other university students, I participated in a poignant, two-month experience filled with love, laughter and lessons in leadership. Under the auspices of American Jewish World Service (AJWS) and Asociacion Civil Pro Nino Intimo (ACPNI), a Peruvian non-government organization (NGO) we worked together to promote social change through education, recreation, and interpersonal communication. AJWS volunteer service programs focus on building collaborative relationships between Jewish volunteers and NGOs in developing countries, either through individual or group service experiences.

When we arrived in Lurinchincha, we received an extraordinarily warm welcome, complete with energetic children, barking dogs, and a delicious platter of rice, which we soon learned was a staple of every meal. The community members were fascinated to hear stories about our hometowns and our families, and were equally excited to teach us about their country and local customs.

The day after our arrival we visited the local school, and I was puzzled by the ages of the school

children. I had assumed the school was a K-12, but didn't see any teenagers. We quickly learned that one of the primary social and global issues plaguing Lurinchincha was a lack of education opportunities for teenagers. Beginning around age fifteen, many young men and women start working. The burning question for these families is whether they should continue their children's education or whether their children should start earning money to help out with financial burdens. Many teens work alongside their parents, in factories or in the fields, working fourteen-hour shifts, and leaving little time for studies.

Over the past few years the younger generation began to articulate a desire to balance work, educational and social opportunities. Working with ACPNI, our group began facilitating weekly English classes at night that allowed children, teens and adults to learn, have a good time, and interact with us and with each other on a personal level. We divided the community members into age-appropriate subgroups and taught English courses with topics ranging from basic conversation starters to names of animals and colors, learning about places in the world, and learning to name their emotions. The lively energy during these nightly sessions became the moments that impacted my experience the most in Lurinchincha.

During these sessions, I was able to bond with community members, ask them questions regarding personal struggles and accomplishments, and hear their stories of overcoming hardships. Through these discussions I found myself comparing their tales to the obstacles in my life, and how I approach hardships and challenges, and gained a perspective that I had previously been unable to comprehend.

The main summer project during my two month stay was the building of the "ludoteca," or community center, from the ground-up. Working with skilled Peruvian construction workers five days a week, our group helped transform a barren swath of land into a gorgeous community center. We were responsible for the entire process, a physical process that included leveling the ground with shovels, hauling dirt in wheel barrels, cementing the floor, putting up the wooden walls, laying a bamboo roof and sealing it to prevent rain from leaking in, painting the outside and inside, and finally, planting a beautiful garden with flowers in shades of pinks, reds, yellows and greens. When our stay in Lurinchincha came to an end, we hoped that the "ludoteca" would be a reminder to the community that their hopes and dreams of education were not burdens they had to carry alone. We encouraged them to continue

finding ways of promoting education for everyone, and promised that we would return to our communities and share their story.

In Lurinchincha, Peru, my camera lens captured the stories of a remarkable community. The pictures I see are not of poverty and illiteracy but of strength and hope. Our Jewish tradition teaches us that we cannot stand idly by while others are suffering, and therefore we must continue paving paths in order to help our friends in need. AJWS has been working for the past 25 years to alleviate poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease among the people of the developing worlds. Through generous donations, AJWS provides help to over 450 grassroots projects in 36 countries, making a significant and sustainable difference in the lives of tens of thousands of people throughout the world, everyday.

My photo album is filled with the life lessons and stories I learned from the people of Lurinchincha. Wherever I go, I carry with me the mental snapshots I collected this summer on the Pacific coast. I will take these snapshots out often and tell their stories over hundreds of times. Imagine how much more can be accomplished if we all work together and make generous contributions to worthwhile causes.

To contact Avital Pessar for additional information about Lurinchincha, please email [avital.pessar@gmail.com](mailto:avital.pessar@gmail.com)

## Metropolitan Experience: The Inside Scoop

Rivkah Rogawski

For the average student at Stern College for Women (SCW), exposure to cultural Manhattan is best portrayed by the adage "water, water everywhere - and not a drop to drink." Weighed down by academic and social concerns, few students can take full advantage of the cultural cornucopia amidst which they live. For the past ten years, however, SCW's Metropolitan Experience has offered students select opportunities to experience cultural events.

The program, jointly offered by the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) and the Office of Academic Affairs, chooses twelve events per semester and pairs each event with a faculty member. Students are chosen by a well-publicized lottery at the start of each semester. Approximately fifteen students accompany the faculty member to the concert, musical, play or eatery. Over the course of a semester, 200-odd students participate in Metropolitan Experience, thereby enriching their college experiences.

Metropolitan Experience began in the spring of 1999, inspired by a similar program at another university. Its originators envision the

program as having a two-fold goal: it introduces students to the wonders of New York while also giving students and faculty an opportunity to meet in an informal setting. In order to include as wide a range of faculty members as possible, two events per semester showcase dinners at high-end kosher eateries such as Abigail's and Va Bene. This makes participation possible for professors who, due to religious reasons, would be unable to attend an opera or a play.

Over the years, Metropolitan Experience has fostered the communal growth of SCW, connecting students with similar cultural interests. Student feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. One pair of students met at an opera, discovered their mutual passion for opera, and started going to operas together in their free time. In another case, a student met a faculty member she had never heard of, and ended up taking two classes with that professor as a result.

Transportation was eliminated from the program three years ago, due to both cost-cutting measures and the impracticality of battling Manhattan traffic at rush

hour. Students are now required to arrange their own transportation to and from events. In order to encourage student-student and student-professor mingling, Metropolitan Experience has students and faculty meet at Starbucks half an hour before the event to get to know each other.

One of the best-kept Metropolitan Experience secrets is the wait list in Betty Kam's office (on the seventh floor of Stanton Hall). After the official lottery drawing, students can sign up for wait lists for any of the semester's events. Tickets that are not picked up by 1:30 p.m. on the day of the event are given away to the first available student on the waitlist. In order to ensure that the same students are not picked off waitlists time and again in one semester, Joanna Kristall of OSA says that "we generally cross people off further waitlists once they have been picked already."

This semester is the first time that the Metropolitan Experience sign-up will be online. This allows students, who would otherwise miss sign-up at either Sy Syms or Stanton Hall, to remotely enter

themselves for the lottery. Interestingly, Kristall thinks that online sign up will provide another benefit. "It will throw everyone off because no one will see who else is registered for [a particular event]," she says, thereby eliminating peer pressure to sign up for the same events as one's friends.

This year's events range from old favorites like Abigail's and "Mary Poppins" to the eclectic, such as a concert from the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain and an Afro-Cuban jazz festival. OSA staff selects events at the start of the semester, sifting through promotional materials from different venues. For religious reasons, the more risqué side of Manhattan culture is usually not included - so no university-sponsored trips to "Avenue Q" or "Spring Awakening."

Beyond the community it builds, Metropolitan Experience whets the appetites of SCW students for further cultural exposure. For those interested, *The New Yorker's* column, "Goings On About Town," provides weekly cultural listings and can be accessed online. Additionally, many events offer "stu-

dent rush" tickets - discounted tickets for students that are sold within a couple of hours of the performance time. New York City Ballet offers student rush tickets for \$15.00, and orders can be placed online. The Metropolitan Experience can thereby provide a wonderful starting point for any student to turn her Stern experience into a cultural oasis.

**NEWSFLASH:**

Huge quantities of dihydrogen monoxide coat New York Monday night.



## FEATURES

## The Seminary Effect

Shira Goldstein

Kushner Café during lunch-time could easily be mistaken for a scene in "High School Musical." The room is scattered with tables occupied by groups of laughing, chatting girls (and, of course, the occasional boy). Even amongst the heaps of schoolbags and masses of Styrofoam meal cases, one can make out the distinct socialization patterns of the lunch goers. It might be the way they sit, or perhaps the way they seem to nod their heads in unison, but it is easy to discern groups of students from among the overcrowded tables.

Many factors contribute to the creation of a student's social circle in Stern College for Women (SCW). Shared interests, club membership and academic majors often form the basis of a group of friends. For many, however, their SCW social crowd was predetermined well before they stepped foot onto Beren Campus. A number of students find that their social circle is mostly affected by the seminary they attended in Israel.

Chaya Citrin, who graduated SCW in 2010, started as an early admissions freshman, attended seminary the following year and then returned to SCW to finish up her schooling. Chaya recalls that, "coming into Stern as an early admissions 'real' freshman was a great experience and I loved Stern; I didn't realize how much more I loved Stern when I came back from seminary." She found it easier to make friends in seminary because it is less academic and serious than college. She believes that, "having a group of friends makes Stern easier - I found that I did become friends with people who didn't go to my seminary, but I did that as a group."

Esti Feder, a senior at SCW, attended Darchei Binah in Israel prior to coming to SCW. "I became friends with the whole Michlalah clique and everyone assumes that I went to Michalalah also because of the fact that I am part of this group," she points out, debunking the assumption that a student's social circle reflects the seminary she attended. However, Feder adds, "I think that it would have been very difficult to come without knowing anybody at all and without having

introductions made."

Students who did not go to seminary at all faced the SCW social scene alone, without a posse from Israel. For the average young woman, this sounds like a nightmare; but everyone knows that SCW students are not just average young women. Raquel Amram, a senior at SCW, planned to go to seminary in Israel but joined the SCW freshman class instead when her visa fell through. Despite major disappointment on her part, Raquel decided to make the best of her first year at SCW.

"I joined the soccer team and met amazing people, I joined drama, I started the Sephardic Club, I ran for class president - I really do think that Stern can be whatever you make of it," she notes. Despite her positive attitude and great involvement in SCW, however, Amram admits that she experienced some social prejudice as a freshman. "The hardest part was that anybody that I would meet would say 'Where did you go in Israel,' and I felt that it was their way of sizing you up," says Amram. "It was their way of defining you, of making you fit into a box. The minute I would say 'I didn't go to Israel,' they would say 'oh', and it was so hurtful."

Another tactic for social survival is just to be friendly and outgoing. "I knew that I didn't know anyone going in, and I figured that everyone else was the same way, so you make friends by sitting down next to people and introducing yourself," says Ilana Hostyk, a junior at Stern who also did not go to seminary. Having a great personality does not always help, though; sometimes, a person still has to be "in the know" to really belong. "I felt like I had missed orientation or something," recalls Hostyk, who did not know much about the different seminaries girls came from. "I was missing basic knowledge about the social network at Yeshiva University."

Hostyk feels that after a few semesters at SCW, girls branched out more or less, and what seminary one attended no longer matters. "Some of my greater moments are when people try to guess what seminary I went to - it cracks me

up when I am uptown and guys try to guess where I went to seminary, because there is an unspoken understanding that you went to Israel," she adds.

For some, timing is key for a good social transition. Sam Feldman, who, like Citrin, attended Stern both before and after going to seminary, feels that her freshman year was bearable since she and her peers were at a similar point in their lives. "I did not find it hard to make friends, because when I went in, the entire freshman and first-year-on-campus was trying to make friends with each other," Feldman recalls. "Everyone was really nice...even though I hadn't gone to seminary, it wasn't like everyone knew each other." While she agrees that coming to SCW with seminary friends makes for a smoother transition, she maintains that "being involved in the musical and other extracurriculars is the best way to meet people."

Batya Herzberg, a recent SCW alumna, retains a different picture of SCW. "I don't even know what seminaries some friends went to!" Her experience has been that in SCW, "all sorts of girls from all sorts of places regularly hang out together." Batya also believes that "there is so much to gain from diverse friendships; so much to learn and grow as a person."

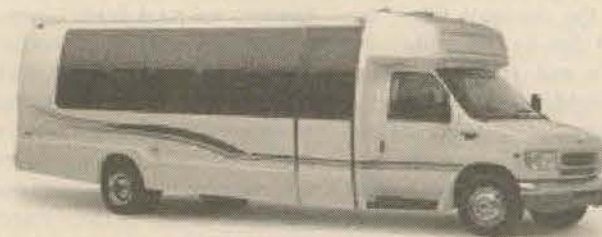
Rabbi Dovid Cohen, Mashgiach Ruchani of SCW, takes a similar position to Herzberg. "The beauty of Stern is that it is a melting pot," notes Rabbi Cohen. "The goal is to get people to move beyond that year - new relationships, new rabbeim - to go beyond the confines of seminary." He stresses that it is vital for girls to recognize the opportunities in Stern for continued growth and broadened horizons.

The "seminary effect" cannot be disregarded; for some, seminary relationships constitute the foundation of their SCW social life. However, heterogeneity abounds at SCW, and the multiplicity of its population cannot be denied. Though it seems that seminaries define the SCW experience, in reality, the students do.

Rivkah Rogawski contributed to this article.

## Shared on the Shuttle

Edited by Ariella Lipetz and Leah Peyman



"As a first-year-on-campus student, one of the first things I wanted was to get well acquainted with the Wilf campus. I made sure to call security promptly at 4:00 pm and order the first shuttle out of Stern. When the shuttle finally arrived, I eagerly ran to get a good seat. Apparently I was not fast enough, because when I got there the only seat that was left was the front. I hesitantly took the spot and looked back in despair at what I was missing - the gossip, the chumminess. Oh, how I longed to be sitting with everyone else!

"We were almost on Wilf campus when a silver minivan darted out of nowhere. The shuttle quickly swerved and stopped short to avoid collision. I heard a shout from the back and turned around to see a sea of brown - someone had left their iced coffee uncovered and it splashed all over the back seats, and all over the students sitting in them.

"The groans of the students over their damaged clothes still haunt my dreams at night. From then on I am a "front-seater girl" and I will fight anyone for that spot."

- Front Seater for Life

"After an exhausting night of cramming for my biology exam in the Gottessman Library, I quickly went to catch the 1:00 am shuttle. Not in the mood to talk to anyone, I made a beeline for the back seat of the shuttle. Looking around, I felt relieved to see only a few other people on the shuttle, sitting close to the front. 'I can have my peace and quiet and go over photosynthesis in my head,' I thought.

"My dream came to a crashing halt when I saw a boy get on last minute and head to the back row. Why God was testing me that night, I do not know, but all I know is that the boy came all the way to my back row to ruin my life.

"Panicking at the thought that I would not be able to study, I instinctively reached for my iPod and quickly shoved the headphones into my ears. I went to turn it on, but forgot that a few nights ago my roommate borrowed it and there was no battery left. After struggling to try to turn it on for a few minutes, I decided to pretend to be listening to it anyway.

"The plan went well until I heard the boy mumble something to me. Keeping in role, I pretended not to hear him since I was clearly listening to my tunes. I thought he fell for it until he turned to me and shouted, 'Thanks for ignoring me! I know you can hear me...your iPod is clearly off!' I sat there dumbfounded and kept my headphones in for the rest of the drive.

"Then, after regaining my composure and inching away slowly, I went back to focusing on my photosynthesis."

- Antisocial Passenger

"On the shuttle one night, a boy sitting a few seats away from me called his friend and said, 'Hey, I just wanted to tell you that you sound like Kermit the Frog. Don't take that the wrong way though.'"

- Anonymous

## ATTENTION JUNIORS:

Where will you be this October 30?

That's right, at the Junior Class Shabbaton,  
coming soon to the Beren Campus!



## FEATURES

## Of the Seine, the Hudson, and the Cultural Codes Between: Getting to Know the French Students

Avital Chizhik

*Avenue des Champs-Élysées* is a far cry from Lexington Avenue. Gone are the chestnut trees, the cafes, and Arc de Triomphe, the rolled "r"s and clockwise-numbered *arrondissements*. Enter a gridded city that speaks a different language, has a new rhythm, and holds promise in its wealth of opportunities, in its myriads of yellow taxicabs and sleek skyscrapers.

This is the scene that greets students from France as they alight the sidewalks of the Stern College for Women (SCW) campus. For "the French girls," as they are popularly known at SCW, choosing to come to New York was a leap into the dark unknown, but considered worth the risk. "We bet everything and left," says political science major Mouchka Darmon, a native of Paris, France. "[Coming to Stern] was the only way to be authentic with ourselves, to fulfill our religious and intellectual aspirations."

To come to Yeshiva University, these women did not just cross thousands of miles and cultural barriers. They left everything behind.

"We leave our family, friends, references, language," writes Darmon in an email. "We leave the system we have been raised in and have always known. We leave our streets, our baker, our food, our culture, our compatriots. We take everything we have built for seventeen, eighteen, nineteen years, put it in a box and leave it at the airport when we take the plane for NYC."

For American Jews, it is often a shock to learn that France is home to the largest population of Jews outside of Israel and the United States. The Jewish community in France dates back to before the destruction of the Second Temple, and has contributed enormously to French cultural and academic growth, despite the constant per-

secution of Jews, from the medieval Crusades to the Vichy's assistance to the Nazi death camps.

The persecution of yesteryear has yet to bid its adieu. Richard Prasquier, president of the Representative Council of French Jewish Institutions (CRIF), France's Jewish umbrella organization, was quoted last year as saying that "there is a climate of hatred against Jews that manifests itself through insults and often physical attacks" - a climate impossible to ignore. French Interior Minister Brice Hortefeux issued a statement in late 2009 that anti-Semitism in France has reached an "alarming level." With the Muslim population of France at approximately six million (ten times the size of the Jewish population there), and sympathy for the Palestinian cause growing among the French public, anti-Israeli-turned-anti-Semitic vandalism and beatings are not uncommon.

Thus the close of the Jewish year 5770 brought more than 3,000 French Jews on aliyah to Israel - a 20 percent increase from 2009 - coming with the hopes of leading a life without fear or persecution.

Meanwhile, those who have decided to stay behind, in Paris, Marseille, Strasbourg, Lyon and Toulouse have learned to accept the reality of being Jewish in the Diaspora.

"France is one of the most resourceful, cultured and refined countries," Darmon insists proudly. Some of these Jews can trace back generations of life in France, centuries of flourishing and suffering. Others come from North African immigrants, who were grateful to a modern democracy that gave them asylum and a place to thrive. Neither find it easy to leave, notwithstanding the gloomy predictions for the future of French Jewry.

For a young Orthodox woman, to studying in France involves many

more challenges compared to those encountered in New York. Darmon says that she and her friends know that, as Jews and as religious young women, their opportunities in France will grow more and more limited as time goes on. "We witness, in France, the rise of Islamism, the exponential accretion of the quantity of veiled women, who wear the burqas and speak Arabic as if they were still in the Middle East," writes Darmon. "Some of us don't want to go to a university where she would need to hide her *magen david*."

Everyone has difficult personal experiences: in French universities, Jewish students are not allowed to reschedule exams set for Shabbat - thus often failing whole year-long courses. In the street this past August, a dozen kosher pastry shops and stores were marked with large black swastikas. Beatings are no longer newsworthy, and safety is simply a matter of knowing which areas and neighborhoods to avoid.

Then there are the stories that cause international outcries: the horrific 2006 capture, three-week-long torture and eventual death of 23-year old Ilan Halimi - an atrocity committed by a thug gang in the center of a populated area in a Parisian *banlieue* (suburb). According to a report of the incident by The New York Times, Halimi was found "naked and bleeding," covered with acid burns and handcuffed to a tree by a railroad track outside of Paris. He died soon after he was located.

Darmon recalls another recent attack - the murder of her Jewish neighbor, a crime later found to be racially charged: "The police found a bloody fork on the crime scene... my Dad, who had to go recognize the body, had nightmares for weeks." The Jews of France know that they are "marked as different" - and perhaps, she posits, that is why Stern's "French girls" always

stand by one another.

For the Teaneck and Five Towns students at SCW, "the French girls" have evolved into a sort of social coterie: exotic and evasive, in a certain corner of the Kushner Caf (right by the elevators) and always at the table next to the Koch Auditorium entrance on Shabbat. With their own language, culture, and yes, sense of fashion, the French have established their own club without even having to file an application with the Office of Student Life.

But Darmon understands SCW's French mafia as more than just a social clique. "We learned since childhood that, as Jews, we had to help each other, be there for each other in order to survive," notes Darmon. "We consider any other Jew as brother or sister, we are part of a same entity, a unique big family and we create and feed a network of solidarity and mutual aid within us. *Achdut*, unity, is always a key word for a French Jew. We were all surprised to find that it didn't necessarily work that way in New York but I guess the reality is different here."

That New York reality showed to be a different world entirely, to the students flying in from De Gaulle airport. Coming to America and seeing religiously-dressed Jews openly walking the streets, for the French Jewish expatriate, is nothing short of amazing. Amazing, and strange: adjusting to life in Stern and New York is a day to day challenge, between catching up with the English of American classmates, studying the New York subway map, dealing with being far away from home and family, and learning that pushy people on the street is, well, normal.

Friends helped the most. "They made me laugh when I wanted to cry, made me grow when I wanted to go back to my mom," Darmon recalls. "They pushed me and

cheered me up, believed in me when I didn't believe in anything anymore, reminded me about why I came here on the days it was so hard I just wanted to go back home."

SCW has helped also by offering resources for international students. School advisors like Mrs. Marga Marx and Mrs. Miriam Schechter make themselves readily available for guidance.

"Adjusting to Stern was...like being thrown into the ocean just days after learning how to swim," Darmon reminisces. "It was intense, demanding, sometimes disappointing, sometimes rewarding, full of compromises and struggles. I wanted to go back home so desperately, but my friends and my ambitions kept me on track."

When asked about the cultural shocks Parisians deal with when introduced to New York living, Darmon smiles. "Wow, so many, many things."

She begins listing them effortlessly, without pause: Girls coming to class in pajamas, going to the bathroom in the middle of class without asking the teacher, not sharing grades with fellow classmates, the absence of good real espresso simply anywhere, saying a casual hi to deans, employers and teachers. Constant snacks instead of sit-down meals, answering to teachers with what would be considered in Europe as "effrontery" and here is simply normality. Giving tips for every single thing, store sales every two months, expensive healthcare. "And computers, they're everywhere - you see them more than trees!" she exclaims.

"And you want to know the funny thing?" she adds. "Now, when I go back home, I am an alien there too, because I became so Americanized!"

### Student Scoop

*An interview with Helen Unger, sophomore, biology major and enthusiastic dancer.*

**1) You mentioned that your favorite type of dance is belly dancing; when and where did you learn to belly dance? What appeals to you most about this particular genre of dance?**

Most of the women in my family know how to [belly] dance, but I only started to get into it when I was in seventh grade. I learned from my aunt, mostly. I enjoy the music that goes along with this dance; it's what I grew up with. . . I mostly dance to Egyptian classical music.

**2) How often do you dance? Do you take a special class?**

At home, I dance almost every day. Here at Stern, I practice about twice a week, since I'm so busy with school and clubs. I don't take a class for it, but Stern has hosted belly dancing events that are a lot of fun!

**3) Are there other genres of dance that you are involved in?**

I took ballet for a few months, but I couldn't get into it; belly dancing is very "flowy" and creative, whereas the ballet class I took was very structured.

**4) Where can students learn more about belly dancing? Any words of advice for someone who wants to learn how to belly dance but isn't quite sure how to get started?**

I would say to check out the music and see if you like it. There are some great demo videos that you can watch to learn basic moves; one really good group is The Belly Dance Superstars. To get started, you can Google teachers in the area. There are tons of classes you can take all of New York City.

**5) What is your favorite thing about Stern? If you had to recommend one course to another student, what would it be?**

I love the classes here and the atmosphere; it's great to be able to go to school in the city. I would have to recommend Dr. Young's Intro to Art course, and Dr. Babich's Genetics course. They're both great!

*Do you want to be interviewed for "Student Scoop"? Have a friend in mind that you'd like to see interviewed? Email: [dzharnes@gmail.com](mailto:dzharnes@gmail.com)*



## ARTS AND CULTURE

## Around NYC

Have some extra time between classes?  
Looking for a change in routine?  
Check out our recommendations for fun  
activities this month!

**Tuesday, October 12, 2010, 7:30 PM**

Movie Screening: *Voice of Jerusalem*  
The JCC in Manhattan

334 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, New York 10023.  
(646)-505-5708

Visit [www.jccmanhattan.org](http://www.jccmanhattan.org) to register, or call the above number.

Note: Registration is required for this program.

**Thursday, October 14, 2010, 12:00 PM**

*Bryant Park Juggling*

Between 40<sup>th</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> streets & Fifth and Sixth Avenues

Visit [www.bryantpark.org](http://www.bryantpark.org) for more info

Meet on the SE corner of the lawn.

Note: Lessons are free and equipment is provided.

**Sunday, October 24, 2010, 6:00 PM**

Movie Screening: *The Syrian Jewish Community*

Presented by the Joseph J. Sitt & the Sephardic Heritage  
Museum at Avery Fisher Hall

10 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023. (212)-875-5030

Visit [www.lincolncenter.org](http://www.lincolncenter.org) for ticket information.

**Ongoing through November 21, 2010**

*Women in Wartime: Anne Morgan and the American Committee for Devastated France, 1917-1924*

The Morgan Library & Museum

225 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016. (212) 685-0008

Visit [www.themorgan.org](http://www.themorgan.org) for Museum hours and ticketing.

**Ongoing through Sunday, January 2, 2011**

*16 mm Postcards: Home Movies of American Jewish Visitors to 1930s Poland*

Yeshiva University Museum at the Center for Jewish History

15 West 16th Street, New York, NY 10011. (212)-294-8330

Visit [www.yumuseum.org](http://www.yumuseum.org) for Museum hours.

Note: Students with valid ID enter for free.

## A Pedestrian's Crossing: The Artistic Window of Opportunity

Sari Margolis

One of the benefits of living in Schottenstein Residence Hall is that it is six city blocks away from my classes. Yes, this distance is a benefit—and not just for the sake of exercise (we have a gym for that purpose!). Walking to school gives me the opportunity to experience the culture of New York City. So when people say, "Oh, you dorm in Manhattan! What's that like?" I have dozens of entertaining anecdotes to share with them. My daily walks to and from Stanton Hall and Sy Syms are never dull.

Well, things will be a little different now. And it's because Chashama is leaving 141 East 33<sup>rd</sup> Street. If the name "Chashama" doesn't ring bells for you, then you either excessively text while you walk to classes or you don't stare into the windows that you pass along the way.

On the corner of Lexington Avenue and 33<sup>rd</sup> Street is a tall beige and brick building. Every Stern and Sy Syms student passes the building on her walk between Sy Syms and Stanton Hall. In the window of this beige and brick building hangs a large sign: "Retail Space Available."

I get a pang of disappointment every time I pass the building now, because there used to be another sign hanging there as well, a sign that described the purpose of Chashama, which, according to their website, is to "[support] thriving cultural communities by transforming temporarily vacant properties into spaces where art can flourish. By recycling and repurposing buildings in transition, [they] invest in neighborhoods, foster local artists, and sustain a vast range of creativity and culture." But now, this sign has been ripped off the window and lies crumpled on the floor of the emp-

ty building.

Last semester, as some of you may recall, there was a large LED video screen with swirling colors and designs hanging in the beige and brick building's window, with a sign next to the screen that read, "Interactive Art Display - Please Touch The Window." When I first passed it, I wondered if the invitation to "please touch" was part of some major psychological study being conducted to see how many gullible pedestrians would fall for the trick and touch the window.

Finally, I worked up the nerve and tried it. Much to my surprise, the screen reacted to my touch through the windowpane. The designs and patterns came to life, churning around my hand and following its direction and movement. Then I sheepishly looked around to see if anyone was watching.

It was so amusing for me to observe the passersby who discovered the display too. Of course, most people—in their busy city routines—dashed right by it never noticing the "Please Touch" sign and LED screen. Kids, however, always seemed to be drawn to it—maybe because of the hypnotizing colors, or maybe because children usually don't have such tight schedules and are more open to experiencing the world around them.

I did see one woman walk right past the screen, do a double take (of the clichéd, cartoon variety) and march right back to the window where she had a party with the display for several entertaining minutes. Once, a man in a business suit stiffly went up to the window, carefully inspected the sign and hesitantly placed his hand on the glass.

I guess I wasn't very inconspicuous; he saw me watching

and explained his actions: "It says to touch the window." I laughed. "Yes, I know."

The title of the display was "Semi Boneless," - later renamed "Xtraboneless" - designed by artist Robert Stratton, who holds a Master of Fine Arts in computer art from the School of Visual Arts. Stratton explains his art piece on Chashama's website: "I am fascinated by the concept of rigid, mathematically generated processes being randomly influenced by random, organic happenstance . . . [The] system allows me to transcend the boundaries of the traditional art installation; this piece truly becomes part of the neighborhood." Visit Stratton's really cool website, [madbutter.com](http://madbutter.com), and scroll down to the bottom of the page to watch footage of his display on Lexington Avenue. Watch carefully...I'm pretty sure there are some Stern girls walking by in the video!

I was sad when I first realized that the display window had been removed; it was a big part of my spring 2010 semester. But I researched Chashama, and discovered that the company is still around and thriving. They move around a lot to different vacant buildings throughout New York. Now, I am excited to keep my eyes open when I am in various parts of the city; maybe I'll discover some of Chashama's other exhibits.

I hope they come back one day to 33<sup>rd</sup> and Lex though, since the beige and brick building is still vacant and I miss the old display. Maybe, to make a statement, I will "Please Touch the Window" every time I pass it on my daily trek between Stanton Hall and Sy Syms, until Chashama decides to come back.

Check out Chashama's website, [chashama.org](http://chashama.org). They are also on Facebook.

Submit your "A Pedestrian's Crossing" stories of your cultural experiences in NYC around Stern to Sari Margolis at [SMargoli@yu.edu](mailto:SMargoli@yu.edu)

## Beauty and the Truth: A Review of 'Something Rich and Strange'

Abbie Wasserman

Albert Einstein once said, "The ideas that have lighted my way have been kindness, beauty and truth." "Something Rich and Strange," Yeshiva University (YU)'s first venture into the world of the literary magazine, strives to encompass these very qualities of light and enlightenment. Though the magazine was not distributed until May of the spring 2010 semester, its late arrival does not take away from the beauty and truth found within its 60 pages. Full of stories, poems, pictures and essays, the magazine has been carefully crafted to be an attractive and easy read. "Something Rich and Strange," stands as a trophy for YU, exemplifying diversity and the ongoing journey for success within the student body.

Certain pieces included in the magazine contain a special view into everyday human life that readers can easily relate to. For example, "The Uncontrollable Twitch and the Beauty that Follows" by Jeremy Lichtman elegantly describes the daily challenge of living with Tourette's syndrome. Lichtman gives a dignified illustration of how the human struggle can add so much wisdom, power and beauty to everyday life. The magazine also has poets like Avigail Soloveichik, who whimsically discusses the seemingly mundane topics of snowmen and organic chemistry lab, transforming them into mesmerizing page-turners and descriptive pieces of art. To add to the diversity, in "Oshiro's Son," Renee Kestenbaum spins a won-

derful story about Japanese and American culture and the need for family approval; her smooth writing style enables the lifelike tale to resonate strongly with readers of all cultural backgrounds.

However, some of the pieces in "Something Rich and Strange" speak to some readers more than others; indeed, a few of the presented works may cause the reader to question why that particular submission was included. Matthew Aldis skillfully dances along the fine line between fact and fiction in his well-written "The Introduction to Roland Hayworth, Enthusiast of Education," masterfully eulogizing the fictitious Hayworth with sincerity and flair. However, due to its length, the piece comes across as an extraneous, exhausting history

lesson whose cleverness and interesting message is perhaps lost against the wit of other, shorter pieces. That said, the magazine still contains a magnificent air that is created with each poem, picture and short story and is definitely worth reading, or at least glancing through.

The presentation of pictures and artwork, however, is poorly designed. Dispersed between stories and writings, without title or author alongside, the seemingly random imagery is distracting and takes away from both the essence of the artwork and the writing itself. To find out to whom each piece of art belongs, the reader must flip back and forth to the table of contents, interrupting the tranquility of meditation and in-

trospection that the reader might have experienced when first gazing at a thought-provoking image.

Artwork is also placed against and in between literary pieces, which sometimes leads the reader to think that the picture in connected with the writing, when they are, apparently, unrelated. The art should perhaps have been presented as a standalone against a blank page, so the reader could fully enjoy, analyze and appreciate the submitted images without the influence of meaning from someone else's words placed randomly next to it on the page. While lack of funding may have made this option unattainable, readers should

See LIT MAG page 15



## ARTS AND CULTURE

## The Art of the Skyline

Atara Arbesfeld

The skyline of New York City is about to change, thanks to recent approval from the City Council for a new skyscraper to be built just 900 feet away from the Empire State Building. This approval comes only a few short weeks after Mayor Michael Bloomberg voiced his support for the new building plan. In late August, the Mayor came out in favor of Vornado Realty Trust's plan to have a building erected on 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, the present location of the Pennsylvania Hotel, which is across from Madison Square Garden and Penn Station.

The new skyscraper, 15 Penn Plaza, towers at a whopping 1,216 feet - only slightly shorter than the 1,250-foot Empire State Building - designed by Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects. Anthony and Peter L. Malkin, the current owners of the Empire State Building, objected to the location of the forthcoming 15 Penn Plaza and suggested that a 17 block "no-go zone" be placed around the Empire State Building, which would prevent the construction of similarly sized structures in the 17-block radius surrounding the tower. The Malkins also proposed that 15 Penn Plaza be reduced to 825 feet.

The Malkins and similar critics worried that the new building would obstruct the grand view of the Empire State Building from certain directions, dramatically changing the beloved New York City skyline. Real estate owner George Kauffman, a friend of the Malkins, even sent out a letter stating that the new building "would be an assault on the Empire State building and the New York City skyline."

However, the Malkin's proposition was rejected and the City Council approved the new two-billion-dollar structure in a vote of 47 to one. Many council members were of the opinion that 15 Penn Plaza is an example of the ever-growing change that characterizes Manhattan. "We're a place of growth and forward motion," said Council Speaker Christine Quinn. "We are not Monument Valley, we are not a place that will ever be frozen in one moment in time."

Still, for some it will take time to get used to seeing a structure of nearly equal height, and so close to, the most famous office building in New York City.

Since its construction, the Empire State Building has been admired for its sleek architecture, grandiose height, observation deck and the color schemes of its lights at night. The prominent New York landmark was built during

the Great Depression, a result of the competition between John Jakob Raskob of General Motors and Walter Chrysler of the Chrysler Corporation over who could erect the tallest building. Though Chrysler finished construction of the 1,046-foot Chrysler building in 1930, Raskob was undeterred. Completed in 1931, the Empire State Building remained New York City's tallest structure until 1972, when the World Trade Center took the title, rising above at 1,727 feet.

After the World Trade Center was destroyed by the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the Empire State Building resumed its position as the highest skyscraper in Manhattan and will continue its reign until construction of the second World Trade Center is completed.

The Empire State Building styles itself as an "Ambassador to New York" for dignitaries from all over the world, including Queen Elizabeth, Prince Charles, Fidel Castro, Nikita Khrushchev, the King of Siam and many others. The skyscraper attracts tourists 365 days a year and is featured in popular movie classics such as "King Kong," "An Affair to Remember," and "Sleepless in Seattle."

The building contains two banks, a post office, three coffee shops, a drugstore, a Hallmark card shop, a sushi bar, and two restaurants - including Rosa's, a kosher pizzeria frequented by members of the Stern College for Women (SCW) student body. Because of the Empire State Building's historical and cultural significance, many of its supporters are reluctant for it to share the limelight with another building within close proximity.

Though most government officials and journalists are in agreement regarding 15 Penn Plaza's right to be built on 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, some are disappointed with its unoriginal design. An editorial from *The New York Times* called the tentative design "so thick and bulky beside the elegant Empire State."

Conversely, others applaud the construction of the new building because it would help create thousands of jobs for New Yorkers in an economy and job market that has become increasingly desperate, thus improving the quality of life for thousands of people. Its supporters see 15 Penn Plaza as an opportunity to help the city grow and prosper.

As the great architect Frank Lloyd Wright put it: "Without architecture of our own we have no soul of our own civilization."

as delectable. A Panini to take back to the dormitory room is about \$7.00, while a Panini eaten in the restaurant is almost double the cost. However, when eating in Tiberias, a salad and chips come free

with the meal. The chips are fried, thinly sliced pieces of grated potatoes.

Yes, Stern students like free food, but this venue is a *chavaya* (experience) worth paying for.



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## Goodbye Eden Wok, Hello Tiberias: A Culinary Review

Aimee Rubenstein

If two cafeterias, two "caf stores," and two local eateries are not enough to satiate the stomachs of roughly 1,000 students, then the 24-hour service from Tiberias, a new dairy restaurant across from Brookdale, should suffice. Despite the bustling activity on 34<sup>th</sup> Street, two Israeli brothers have made Tiberias a place that will relax even the most stressed out freshmen.

The restaurant used to offer paper menus, but has upgraded them to match the elegant interior. Marble floors, chocolate-brown leather chairs and delicate lighting work to create a warm and upscale aura. Appetizers, entrees, and desserts illuminate the counters, where numerous Stern students can be spotted. The large windows by the store's entrance allow din-

ers to watch pedestrians.

Tiberias has just a big enough spoonful of Israeli and American cuisine combined. Since July, the menu - although quaint, is flexible to fit your cravings. Whether a customer wants a particular order from the salad bar, or no peppers and extra sauce in the pasta, the Tiberias staff will cater to her needs. A recommended order is mushrooms, pesto sauce and melted mozzarella cheese on a fresh Panini.

The small, breaded and fried cheese sticks - mouthwatering mozzarella sticks - dipped in sweet marinara sauce or tangy pesto mayonnaise make an impressive appetizer. The Mexican Panini filled with fresh corn, black beans, onions, and a mix of melted

mozzarella and cheddar cheese is a crisp and delicious main dish, along with complementary dipping sauces. For dessert, the staff will make milkshakes foamy or thick upon request. The "Chunky Monkey" or "Strawberries and Cream" will shake away worries and prepare students to start the day off right or motivate them to finish the work piled up on their desks.

For breakfast, get the fresh and delectable pancakes. Mixed with sweet strawberries, bananas or blueberries, the pancakes are the restaurant's great secret advantage over other places on the block. Students can't get two buttermilk pancakes like this in most places, and to top it off, they only cost \$7.95.

Other prices at Tiberias are not



SPORTS

**Anu Ratzim v'Haym Ratzim:  
A Close Look at Famous  
Jewish Athletes**

Kerri Strug

Born in Arizona in 1977, Kerri Strug attended Hebrew school until the time commitment required of a national-level gymnast led her daily training regimen to begin immediately after school ended. Yet despite her religious schooling from a young age, she said years later in a lecture at University of Florida that "thinking about Judaism is something that did not come to me until college."

In 1991 Strug was chosen to be a member of the Team U.S.A. women's gymnastic team for the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games.

In the 1996 Olympic games in Atlanta, the American women's gymnastics team was on the verge of receiving the first all-around gymnastics gold medal in the country's history. The United States had an imposing 0.897-point lead over the Russians - secure enough to guarantee the Americans the gold against anything short of a disaster on vault, Team U.S.A.'s final gymnastics apparatus.

The first American gymnast completed her vault with little difficulty. Yet two American gymnasts still needed to vault before the night's close: Dominique Moceanu and Kerri Strug. Moceanu ran towards the vault, flipped, and fell. Then the whole world watched as Moceanu, succumbing to the pressure of the Olympic games, could not stick her second landing. Though vault is often viewed as the most successful apparatus for Team U.S.A., vault was quickly turning out to be a painful nightmare. In hindsight, however, the night's true excitement had yet to begin.

American fans' hopes and dreams now centered on one last Olympian, Kerri Strug. Could she pull off a quality vault to redeem Team U.S.A. and secure the first Team Gymnastics Olympic gold for the United States? Strug ran towards the vault and flipped through the air ending in a painful heap on the mat, tearing two ligaments in her ankle and causing a third-degree sprain.

In a flash, fans' hopes were crushed. Though each gymnast has two tries on the vault, no one in their wildest dreams could imagine that a gymnast with a badly injured ankle would retry a vault, much less receive a score above 9.4 out of 10 to salvage American hopes for gold. Yet Strug had the vision, the determination, and, as we were about to see, the ability.

As she limped to the vault platform, Strug was determined not to let anything stand in her way of the goal. She got into position, managed to run toward the vault, did an impressive flip in the air, and stuck the landing *on one foot!* Strug was given a score of 9.712, securing the Olympic Team Gymnastics gold for the Americans beyond doubt.

Carried onto the podium by her coach Bela Karolyi, Strug, along with her six teammates, received the first gold medal for Team USA in Team Gymnastics. Strug and her fellow gymnasts are still known today as the women's gymnastics "Magnificent 7." They dreamed big, competed with great fortitude, and left with the gold.

**Sports Quote of the Month:**

"I have heard the same question over and over since I received my gold medal in gymnastics on the Olympic podium. "You're Jewish?" people ask in a surprised tone. Perhaps it is my appearance or the stereotype that Jews and sports don't mix that makes my Jewish heritage so unexpected. I think about the attributes that helped me reach that podium: perseverance when faced with pain, years of patience and hope in an uncertain future, and a belief and devotion to something greater than myself. It makes it hard for me to believe that I did not look Jewish up there on the podium. In my mind, those are attributes that have defined Jews throughout history."

- Kerri Strug

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
		October 12 - 8:00	13	14 - 8:00
17 - 10:00 - 12:00	18	19 - 8:00	20 - 8:00	21 - 8:00
24 - 10:30	25	26	27	28 - 9:00
31 - 12:00	November 1 - 8:00	2	3 - 8:00	4

= Cross-country  
 = Soccer  
 = Tennis  
 = Volleyball

\*For more details and game recaps, visit [yumacs.com](http://yumacs.com).



## SCIENCE AND HEALTH

## Ten Questions with Dr. Robert L. Wolke

## Observer Staff

Robert L. Wolke, Ph.D., is professor emeritus of chemistry at the University of Pittsburgh and the author of "Food 101," a food column in *The Washington Post*. He has written several books explaining commonplace scientific concepts, and is most known for his food science book "What Einstein Told His Cook: Kitchen Science Explained." Dr. Wolke has won several awards for his writing, including the James Beard Award for the best newspaper column, and in 2005 the American Chemical Society selected him for the Grady-Stack Award for interpreting chemistry for the public.

**Observer Staff:** Your Ph.D. is in Nuclear Chemistry, yet you are most well known for your book "What Einstein Told His Cook," which is about food science. Can you please describe your transition between the two fields?

**Dr. Wolke:** (Laughs) They're pretty far apart, aren't they? Well, I was always a skinny, fussy eater as a kid; my mother was pretty conservative and not the greatest cook. The first time I experienced good food was as a grad student at Cornell...the Home Economics students ran a cafeteria as part of their curriculum and that's where I learned about real good food. Once I began my career in chemistry, I always kept my love of food, and began to write about it. After I retired from teaching, I decided to focus on my writing, particularly writing for newspapers. My wife, Marlene, always worked with

food—she was food editor of a magazine for some time—so we decided to try to combine food and science into writing. I wrote a column, Food 101, for the *Washington Post* for ten years, after which I wrote "What Einstein Told His Cook" and the sequel, "What Einstein Told His Cook 2."

**OS:** How do you find that writing books compares to teaching in a lecture hall?

**Dr. Wolke:** There are many similarities. Writing books is just teaching on paper. The definition of teaching anything, and especially of teaching science, is to explain something in simple terms in order to make people understand. You have to make things simple.

**OS:** Which areas of chemistry have you taught? Where there any specific courses that you enjoyed teaching? Why?

**Dr. Wolke:** I taught a class on research in nuclear chemistry, which was exclusively for seniors and grad students. I really liked my freshman chemistry course; I taught it to a class of about 300 students, which was really fun.

**OS:** Why did such a big crowd appeal to you?

**Dr. Wolke:** I like to put humor into everything: my lectures, my writing, and my everyday life. Teaching a big crowd allowed me to put humor into my lectures and let it have a big audience. It was a performance, but it was also a lot of hard work; I had to really work to make sure I was explaining everything clearly.

**OS:** You often focused on teaching chemistry courses for non-science majors. Why is that?

**Dr. Wolke:** Simply put, I like it because it's more challenging. Science majors, in general, take science courses in order to spit information back onto tests, get their good grades, and move on to either medical school or graduate school. Non-majors are a challenge to teach—and I love challenges. My students often took chemistry as a requirement and were scared stiff; it was up to me to make them understand and enjoy the material. I remember one class in particular... it was a class of about 200 freshmen in the University's nursing program, but sprinkled into the class were a few older R.N.'s (Registered Nurses) who were returning to school for their bachelor's degree. They were fun...they were tough and didn't take nothing from nobody (laughs).

**OS:** Many undergraduates find the idea of a career in teaching higher-level chemistry to be too daunting (and thus feel discouraged from taking the Ph.D. route) because they feel that they will have to spend many years doing laboratory research and publishing papers based on their research. How has chemistry research fit into your career?

**Dr. Wolke:** In my undergraduate studies, I had to complete a senior thesis, which required a lot of laboratory work. Then, graduate school is mostly laboratory work, which is guided by a professor.

By the time you get an academic appointment in a university, you usually have graduate students working for you in the lab. It really depends upon the professor's working style.

**OS:** Do you find that a career in scientific research is easy to balance with a family life?

**Dr. Wolke:** It depends upon whether you are working in a university or in industry. Women in universities tend to have an easier time with taking time off to have children. Nowadays, they have maternity leave, and even paternity leave! I suppose the men have to change their share of diapers, too (laughs). I'm not too sure of industry, though, since I'm not experienced in the area.

**OS:** Do you have any advice for aspiring chemists?

**Dr. Wolke:** I hate to sound cliché, but study hard, and learn, learn, learn! Don't ever stop learning. Throughout my career, I've always learned as much as I've taught. You need to learn chemistry until you get to the point of understanding where you've got it in your gut, not just your mind. You have to make chemistry a part of you, to have passion for it. And if you study hard and don't feel it inside you, perhaps you need to look into something else.

**OS:** And aspiring writers, especially science writers?

**Dr. Wolke:** As far as writing goes, it's a matter of language rather than science. For science writing, it's more important to be a

good writer than a good scientist, but even so, it is helpful to have a scientific background so that you know what you're writing about. I remember my first food editor at the *Washington Post*; she switched from the food section to the real estate section with no problem...journalists amaze me with their flexibility. Being a good writer requires being a good thinker first; you have to have a respect and passion for language in order to succeed.

**OS:** Where do you see the future of science headed?

**Dr. Wolke:** I see science as continuing on the trajectory it's been on for the past 30 to 40 years. On the whole, science research has been aimed towards human health: physiology and brain function. Really, what science is aiming to do is to help us understand more about ourselves.

**OS:** Lastly, you included many recipes in "What Einstein Told His Cook" and its sequel in order to illustrate different scientific concepts. Which was your favorite recipe to develop?

**Dr. Wolke:** Well, all the recipes in my books were developed by my wife, Marlene Parrish. Well, all but one. The Marshmallow Zaps [a dessert that demonstrates the mechanisms of microwave technology] are my invention, though, and I love them. They're so much fun!

## Science Book Short

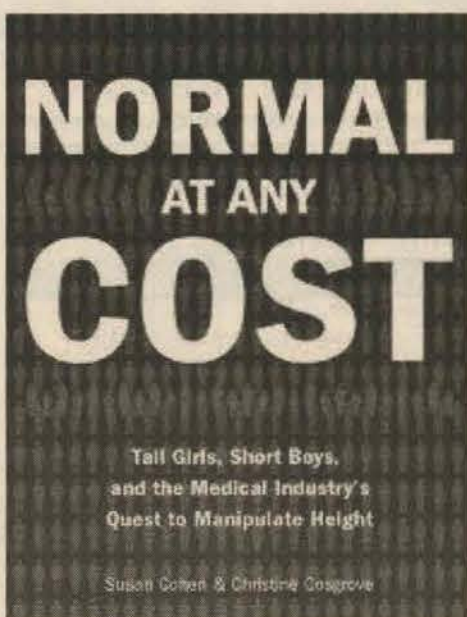
## Book about Height has Room for Growth

Helen Ayala Unger

This month's science pick, "Normal at Any Cost" by Susan Cohen and Christine Cosgrove, begins with the story of Laura, a girl whose mother is over six feet tall. Fearing that their daughter would reach the same towering height, her parents took her to a doctor, who immediately begins hormone therapy with a then-experimental drug called DES in order to stunt her growth. The side effects of the treatment are gruesome and long-lasting, eventually rendering Laura incapable of having children. The story is unfortunate for the reader as well, since after this sad tale is told, the book goes downhill rather quickly.

"Normal at Any Cost" portrays the widespread efforts of parents and doctors to "standardize" children's height, most often by trying to stimulate growth in boys and stunt it in girls. In order to do this, risky therapies and medical procedures are performed, many of which are

untested before they are used on patients. The side effects of these treatments are severe, often caus-



entourageedge.com

ing problems that last through adulthood. Unfortunately, most of

the people treated for the "handicap" of extreme height do not benefit at all from their treatment, and the only parties that ultimately gain are the pharmaceutical companies who manufacture the medicines.

The interesting subject matter of "Normal at Any Cost" provides ample room for scientific explanations about physiology and gives several opportunities to present case studies with personal anecdotes about the patients treated for "abnormal" size. Unfortunately, though, the book takes advantage of barely any of these prospects, and instead chooses to focus on the development of drug treatments and the gains made by manufacturing companies. Nothing is redeemed by its writing style, and the people interviewed for the book are sparsely quoted. Ultimately, this book about height has its own significant room for growth.

## Coming Soon: 'The Nutrition Nook'

Sarah Edinger

Once again, a long-awaited summer has passed. Normally, this would cause a state of mourning amongst Stern College for Women (SCW) students; however, this year something new and exciting is about to appear.

You are currently holding a fresh copy of the *Observer* newspaper, but this year is no ordinary year for the *Observer* as it introduces a new column titled "The Nutrition Nook." This column is going to provide a plethora of practical information about the many different aspects of nutrition.

There is much more to nutrition than simply eating brussel sprouts and avoiding trans fats; proper nutrition encompasses a whole new way of life. This column hope to provide useful, fun

and inspiring words of advice and encouragement about how to keep you and your loved ones on a healthy track to year of success.

Some future topics will unveil the many myths that surround food and eating habits; for example, the truth behind substitute sugars, whole grains and low-fat foods. The column will raise awareness about childhood obesity and spread information about how to battle it. Additionally, the column give helpful advice about all the different types of eating disorders.

We look forward to hearing your feedback; please feel free to contact us with ideas for future articles, comments, questions or concerns at [sedinger430@gmail.com](mailto:sedinger430@gmail.com).



## SCIENCE AND HEALTH

### Science Career Spotlight: 'Army Medicine...Nation Strong!'

Avigail Soloveichik

It is often said that there is a place for everyone in medicine. This statement is strengthened by the fact that any medical field must adapt to various locations and patients. Specialty fields such as wilderness, aerospace and army medicine must adapt to situations and issues not pertinent to standard hospital care.

Army medicine is unique in that it serves not only individuals, but also the nation as a whole. Military healthcare personnel are part of an elaborate structure and must therefore exhibit complex teamwork. U.S. army healthcare is overseen by two organizations: the U.S. Army Medical Department (AMEDD) and the U.S. Army Medical Command (MEDCOM). While AMEDD oversees special corps deployed with the traveling army, MEDCOM is in charge of fixed healthcare facilities and routine military treatments. The teamwork required to maintain this hierarchy is highlighted by AMEDD's strategic theme, "Build the Team." In a

similar vein, its mission statement concludes with "Army Medicine... Army Strong!"

Army medicine in the United States dates back to the Revolutionary War. The Continental Congress sanctioned a U.S. Army in June 1775 and founded the first Army hospital less than two months later. Not until 1818, however, did the Army hospital become a permanent service, termed the "Medical Department." Subdivisions and branches materialized over the years, and the Medical Department was renamed once in 1950 before becoming the Army Medical Department in 1968.

Today, U.S. Army medicine is part of a complex political and military structure. In fact, bridging these distinct aspects—behind-the-scenes administration and on-the-field treatment—is a primary Army concern. For this reason, one physician serves as both the Army surgeon general (head of AMEDD) and the commanding general of the U.S. Army

Medical Command (MEDCOM). As Army surgeon general, he is the top physician advising Army leaders and developing policy and budget. As head of MEDCOM, he executes policy and commands fixed hospitals. In order to better unify the two divisions, staff responsibilities overlap between AMEDD and MEDCOM.

AMEDD is comprised of six special medical branches, or corps: dental, medical, medical service, medical specialist, nurse, and veterinary corps. MEDCOM is divided into six Regional Medical Commands, each overseeing a different geographic area. This diversity is only a small part of the variety present in the five military branches: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard. Just as there are many different ways to be a soldier, there are many different ways to be a military healthcare provider.

Members of the Medical Service Corps, for example, manage many administrative and scientific spe-

cialties. Although direct patient care is found in the Medical Service Corps, it is more common in the Medical and Medical Specialist Corps. Personnel in the Medical Specialist Corps include occupational therapists, physical therapists, dietitians and physician assistants. Commissioned physicians serve in the Medical Corps; they must have a Medical Doctor (M.D.) or a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.) degree and a medical license.

Army doctors can serve primarily in either field units or fixed units. Field units are stationed with soldiers who are in combat; fixed units, found at home as well as abroad, function as general healthcare facilities for all military personnel. Although the Medical Corps is a non-combat branch, physicians can still occasionally be deployed to combat zones. This assignment, however, differs from trained-in-combat army medics. Despite the seeming job specificity, there is no typical army expe-

rience and each army doctor has his or her unique stories.

As part of the U.S. government, the function of the U.S. Army Medical Department is, to a large extent, political. Like other federal departments, AMEDD has to deal with budgeting and conducting business.

But army medicine is also a physical and ideological necessity. After noting its duty to "Conserve the Fighting Strength," AMEDD's website writes: "At another level, our mission is a very human one. Army Medicine reassures warriors and their families that, if they do get hurt, they will receive the best possible care and will have the best possible chances of recovering full health." Army doctors, nurses, therapists, researchers and administrators are standing behind our soldiers. Their presence is a sign of hope and trust for the soldiers, just as the soldiers are a sign of hope and trust for American citizens.



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## ISRAEL

## Israeli Pop-Star on Beren Campus

Lauren Burstein

On August 27, members of the Yeshiva University (YU) undergraduate student body gathered in the Geraldine Schottenstein Cultural Center for a concert starring Israeli pop-singer, Gad Elbaz. The concert, organized by Student Affairs and funded by Lori Schottenstein, was part of a week-long series of orientation kick-off events. Unlike the other orientation events that took place during the week which were only opened to new students, including a night tour of New York City and a trip to Madame Toussad's Wax museum, the concert invited all undergraduate members to attend.

Elbaz, originally from Yehud, Israel, has recorded several albums. His songs include religious and spiritual elements, and he has had world-wide success. He is known for his desire to relay meaning to both observant and non-observant Jews through his lyrics. As his personal website mentions, "Gad believes that music can help bridge the gap between different peoples' viewpoints in life."

Elbaz succeeded in bringing spiritual elements to his performance for the YU community. He mentioned his inherent connection to the State of Israel, and even harmonized to a blessing that he made before drinking a glass of water. Other songs that he sang included hits such as, "Haleilah



Gad Elbaz performs at the Schottenstein Cultural Center.

YU Flickr

*Zeh Hazman*" and "*Al Naharot Bavel*."

But Elbaz did not only exude a sense of calm spirituality. He also managed to energize the crowd with a number of rock songs that brought the audience members out

of their seats. People sang along to the lyrics as glow-in-the-dark necklaces were handed out.

Dena Shayne, a senior at Stern College for Women (SCW), utterly enjoyed herself. "The Gad Elbaz concert was amazing," Shayne

commented. "The energy that he brought to the stage was infectious; the entire room felt it. It really shows how amazing Student Affairs is for getting YU an Israeli pop-star. I can't wait to see what they have next!"

Dani Lent, a senior at SCW, was pleased to have participated in such an event. "The Gad Elbaz concert was a fun way to hang out with friends on a Thursday night," she noted. Ayala Raice, also a senior at SCW, could not have agreed more, calling the concert "a Stern sensation."

While some students, including Naomi Rosenberg, felt that the concert was successful, they would have liked to see greater attendance. "It was really fun, but I wish there had been more people there," noted Rosenberg, a senior at SCW. "It was open to Stern and Yeshiva College (YC) students, but there were so few YC students that it felt more like an exclusively Stern event," she said. Yet, though Rosenberg felt the audience was small, she noted that those who came benefited greatly. "Everyone was really into it and had a great time," she added.

The Gad Elbaz concert combined two imperative aspects of YU's "Torah U'Mada" philosophy: Judaism and modern culture. It was the perfect way to begin the new academic year and introduce new students to life at YU. In his song, "*Haleilah Zeh Hazman*," Elbaz sang words that encapsulated the night's theme of beginning:

*Let the rhythm lead you.*

*Raise your hands 'cause everything starts here.*

## The Jewish Holiday in Israel

Lauren Burstein

I can see the yellows and greens in the distance. The colors juxtapose one another as if they were a sliver of the rainbow. A perfect combination of an unlikely pair. I am walking up Jaffa Street in Jerusalem, approaching the *shuk* (Israeli market). The colors suddenly become objects that are familiar to my eyes. They are rows of *lulavim* and *etrogim*, the plant and fruit used for religious purposes on the Jewish holiday of *Sukkot*.

It is *erev Sukkot*, and Jerusalem's town center is filled with last minute shoppers. Mothers pushing small children in strollers, children carrying food-filled shopping bags back to their homes, men racing to purchase their holiday supplies. I pass by a running teenager wearing headphones. I can hear the music blasting into his ears. "*Lecha dodi likrat kallah*," are the words that he is listening to, a Jewish song that is sung on *Shabbat*. I look around and think about how I am surrounded by Jewish customs. I am surrounded by lives that revolve around the Jewish holidays and prayers, and during this pre-holiday craziness everyone is affected by the infectious excitement and spirit.

I revert my attention back to the *lulavim* and *etrogim*. Men and women lean over carefully to ex-

amine their prospective buys. They each tenderly pick up the small, round *etrog*, smell it, and feel its bumpy texture. They examine their *lulav* by running their fingers down the plant's long, green side. Somehow amongst the hustle and bustle of the shopping, a quiet atmosphere has enveloped around the holy plants and fruit.

I think this might be the perfect metaphor for the Jewish essence. Each individual is having an introspective moment, a moment in which they choose their personal religious object. And yet, they are all having their introspective moments as a group. They are a blend of insular experiences, and together they form a communal event. The Jewish holidays require each individual to evaluate his own place and purpose in the world. Yet, the prayers are done as a group. Jews can never really have a purely individual experience because they are so inherently connected to other Jews through rituals and prayers.

That magical experience was during my post-high school year studying in Israel, the only time I have ever been there for the Jewish holidays. Fast forward three years, to the present. I have since returned back to the United States, and my holiday season has been

restored to the November and December months. While I do think back on the prayers and the singing that I engaged in during *Sukkot* and other holidays that year in Israel, I mostly think about this experience that I had while walking in the street on that *erev Sukkot*.

I am able to experience very moving and intellectually stimulating prayers in the United States. As I mentioned, Jews have the ability to come together and create a community through their individual strengths. And this can happen anywhere, whether it be Israel, New York or Hong-Kong. Yet, one thing that is not replicable outside of Israel is the complete attention to the Jewish calendar. By the mere fact that it is a Jewish state, Israel functions on the Jewish calendar. Life revolves around the Jewish holidays, and communities are built with a sense of Jewish spirit. The Jewish holidays in Israel go beyond the religious aspects of the days. They mark the seasons and are ultimately foundations for the development of the year as a whole.

I walk over towards the *lulavim* and *etrogim* table. I pick up the smallest *etrog* on the table, smell it, and decide that it is the one I will buy.

## Beauty and the Truth: A Review of 'Something Rich and Strange,' Yeshiva University's Literary Magazine

LIT MAG from page 12

take a second look at the pictures again without focusing on the surrounding words. This allows one to experience each piece of artwork in the manner its submitter intended.

To go through each piece and the elements they contribute to "Something Rich and Strange" would take away from the surprise and delight that can be found in the magazine's pages. In it, however, the reader will discover and encounter what the Encarta dictionary describes as "rich": something with "a pleasantly strong, smooth flavor, having a strong and

pleasant smell, deep or fully saturated in color, with a deep smooth full sound." Indeed, all of the reader's senses will be utilized and enlightened through this strange - not expected, normal or ordinary - literary experience.

"Rich" is similarly defined by the Encarta dictionary as "worth a great deal, made from or consisting of things of the highest quality" and is therefore an appropriate title for YU's first foray into the literary magazine realm. Students are left with a sense of dignity and pride after discovering that they attend a university whose student body has created such a piece of art and intellect.

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# STUDENT SNAPSHOTS

## WIN A \$5 GIFT CERTIFICATE TO STARBUCKS!

The first 5 students to solve this week's puzzle corner get a \$5 coffee gift certificate. Email solutions ASAP to [rtrogawski@gmail.com](mailto:rtrogawski@gmail.com)

### PUZZLE CORNER

DAVIDA KOLLMAR

My first Thursday night after my first full week on campus, I returned home exhausted. I explained to my mother that on each evenings that week from Sunday to Wednesday I had participated in a different activity (one of the evenings had two activities), in addition to all the homework I had. Each event had been run by a different person, and lasted a different amount of time (0.5 hour, 1 hour, 1.5 hours, 2 hours, 2.5 hours). Also, each activity was held in one of four locations (including off-campus). I was so tired that I was unable to get my sentences straight, so can you help my mother figure out which event occurred on each night of the week, its location, who organized it, and the amount of time it ran?

1. Thankfully, the two activities which were on the same night were the two shortest activities and were held in the same building.
2. The five events were the only activity held on Sunday, the only event held at the Sy Syms building, the shortest activity, the shiur, and the activity led by an admissions officer.

3. The pre-engineering meeting, led by a faculty advisor, was later in the week than the evening my family took me out to dinner for my birthday, but lasted for a shorter amount of time.
4. The student and the professor both hosted their events earlier in the week than the event held at the Yeshiva University Museum; at least one gave her presentation at Stanton Hall.
5. The length of Wednesday's program was longer than the sum of the times of the newspaper information session (which was not led by a professor) and the only event held on Tuesday.
6. "And to top it all off," I said to my mother, "yesterday I was complaining to an upperclassman friend that I would not be able to participate in any other activities that evening due to the honors dinner. And you know what she said? That this week had relatively few events, and that subsequent weeks will have even more!"





## STYLE

## Getting Bang For Your Bulk: My Search For Health Club Happiness

Talia Kaufmann

Any fashionista knows that the greatest accessory of all is one's health. A healthy attitude and figure are necessary for embracing one's own fabulousity. But having a fit figure means more than avoiding the Sharpie look in a pencil skirt. It's about a healthy body and a healthy mindset on a life. With New York City pulling us in every direction, we need to firm up to survive out here. A good gym can help you to hold it together better than any pair of Spanx ever could.

I was on the hunt for a healthy cub this semester. There was so much consider, between not feeling like an outcast Orthodox Jew in a trendy New York City gym, finding upbeat group classes, and sending Daddy the bill. But I knew that I needed to keep things in perspective; shopping for a gym is much like shopping for a new dress - you need to consider your budget as well as the quality to find what fits you best. And luckily for those searching for frocks as well as those on the hunt for a health club, we are dealing with the city that has an answer for every budget.

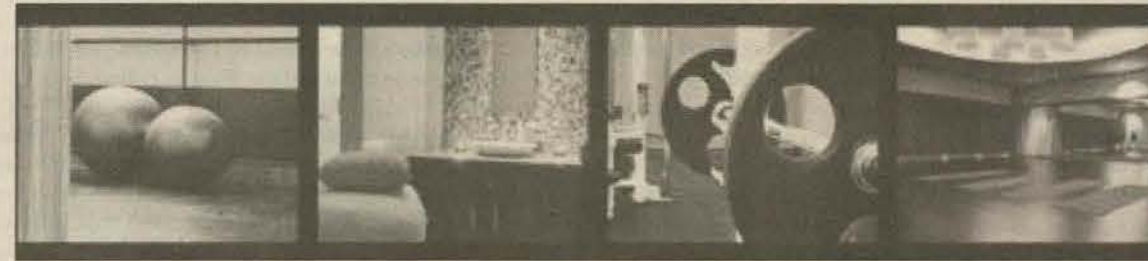
As a student of Stern College, I think we have it pretty good health-wise. The salad bar may have wilted vegetables now and then, but we can always work off those pre-wrapped peanut butter cookies in our own private gyms. However, sometimes we want to expand our horizons beyond the mini dumbbells of the dorm basement. Sure, the treadmills in Brookdale are nice, but sometimes we need to actually go somewhere to reach our workout goals.

And so starts the search for a gym. Thankfully, there are more gyms in the Murray Hill area than overpriced gourmet markets and undersized purse pooches. So how do you choose which health club can get you whipped into shape?

For many, going to the gym is all about looking good. And

how good does this look: \$19.99 a month - the price per month of the new promotion at Boom, a gym just around the corner. It's just a hop, skip and a squat away from Brookdale.

That price certainly had me imagining frightening thoughts of meat-heads and body odor. But Boom most certainly had me pleasantly sur-



The face of fitness is most certainly looking good with Equinox's top-notch facilities

Equinox

prised. The value is truly impeccable. It truly is a Park Avenue gym with a sketchy basement rec room price.

Boom offers loads of equipment, a friendly environment and a booming class schedule - including high intensity cardio, abs and glutes xpress courses, as well as a variety of classics, such as Boot Camp, Zumba and even Physical Education. They have a variety of cardio and strength training machines as well as a dedicated staff to make sure that their clientele feels comfortable in the gym.

The classes are smaller to offer individualized attention. "We make an extra effort to provide a comfortable environment for our female clients," says Boom Manager John Servivo, "Many of our trainers and instructors are females and our classes are often 50-50, women to men, even 75-25." He adds, "this is certainly not a beef cake or power lifting gym."

But what truly makes Boom unique? "This is a people's gym", explains Servivo, noting that "everyone truly enjoys coming here. There is

no hierarchy.... We are always here for you. Our entire staff is not only dedicated to our clientele but incredibly down-to-earth. Boom truly is a community; it's large enough that we can offer the top quality services, but small enough that it has a friendly, quaint feel. But when it comes down to it, when you're a student, it's all

about convenience and affordability."

Boom certainly delivers. They are open 24 hours most nights, and with their no-excuses distance from most dorms we should certainly take advantage of it when we need to kill stress around exams times. The price is equal to two Mendy's salads a month. Try crunching those numbers.

If Boom is the people's gym, then Equinox is the VIPeople's gym. Equinox is known for their star-studded clientele. However, I learned that every celeb-body wannabe that sets their sneaker inside is treated like red carpet royalty. Equinox will not only cater to you like an A-Lister, but will have you looking like one as well.

Upon arriving to Equinox I was quickly directed to my newest best friend and membership advisor, Christin Whitley. Her Southern charm was simply an addition to the experience, because Equinox simply sells itself. "Equinox is one happy family - literally," Whitley declares. "From the front desk, to the membership advisors, trainers, instructors and

spa staff, everyone is always smiling here. It's because we really believe in what we do. We help our members reach their goals and provide the highest quality service. We help people lead healthier lifestyles. What's a happier job than that?" asks Whitley.

It's no wonder Whitley and the rest of her Equi-family are so chip-

per in the endorphin-charged oasis of Equinox. Everything, from the futuristic cardio machines, to the towels, to the members is beautiful. Everything is top-of-the-line because Equinox is truly dedicated to giving members the highest quality experience. Their philosophy? They provide the best for their customers so that their customers will expect the best from themselves.

Trainers literally line up around the block to audition to teach one of a kind classes, such as the plastic surgery alternatives: Brazillian Tummy Tuck, Upper Cuts and Transcend Cycle, an intensive "transcendent" workout for the soul as well as the thighs. The Equinox instructors and trainers have equally impressive resumes, having trained former football and soccer star players as current as New York Jets' Curtis Williams. Other of their former clients include a junior Olympian, a Martial arts master, a boxing coach and several strong man competition champions. This eclectic crew of in-shape overachievers has helped Equinox to develop

a pretty impressive resume as well.

Equinox was named Best Health Club in New York for its impressive 18 year of existence. It was also awarded Best Health Club in America by Fitness Magazine.

"Perhaps I am most proud of being named the Healthiest Gym in America by Health Magazine," Equinox Manager Adin Alin tells me. "That truly shows that we more than your average gym. We take a 360-degree approach to wellness. And it shows, not only in our traditional health club amenities, but in our in tour cutting-edge spa treatments, our bi-annual member parties, [and] mostly in our consistency with our members. We have the highest retention rate of any health club in country. 70 percent of people who join for one year stay on board for at least a second year. The numbers truly speak for themselves," she says proudly.

And they spoke to me as well. I became one of the newest Equinox members. And membership to the greatest health club in New York City surely has its perks. Upon membership, members receive free Equifit health evaluation, personal training (with my other new BFF and personal trainer Julia), pilates sessions, discounts at many local businesses (free Berry Wild!) and so much more. But the most importantly, I chose the right gym that I believe cares about my all-around wellness, since the most important investment you can ever make is in yourself.

Luckily for the ladies of Stern College, both Boom and Equinox have been kind enough to offer deals to our student body.

*If you would like to join either gym, please contact me at [talia.kaufman@gmail.com](mailto:talia.kaufman@gmail.com), subject Bulk, and I would be happy to coordinate a student deal.*

Aimee Rubenstein

Alas, the time has arrived when the summer is actually over; we unpack all of our goodies and settle in to the dorms. Don't fret the big dollar signs on your credit card bill when decorating comes to mind. Recessionistas have united and planned a DIY (Do It Yourself) guide to make every dormitory room fit for a princess. Whether you are into sports, incense or glamour, your room should be your oasis. After a long day of the Stern College dual curriculum, a little feng shui will definitely re-energize your mood.

Hooks. First things first, no matter which dormitory you live in it is obvious that space is key. Even

if you have the alcove, a little more room will keep you more organized. Buy plastic adhesive hooks in whatever size you deem necessary. Hang them in the bathroom for your fluffy towels or by the door to serve as a coat hanger during the winter. Here's an idea: your hook, placed by a mirror, can model your outfit before you do.

Plastic adhesive hooks are available in Duane Reade, K-Mart, and Jack's 99 Cent Store. Browsing around Jack's after snatching some hooks for other cheap buys is recommended. Bed risers are a great space-maker, too!

With the necessary space available, start to create and reinvent.

## DIY Va Va Room

The walls serve as a black canvas for kaleidoscope-like ideas. To make your room a cocoon of inspiration, cover the walls with the pages of novels you don't read anymore (you can buy used books very inexpensively around the city). We all have piles of books we have never read, or have read already and just serve as clutter. Simply rip out the pages and tape them onto the wall (this could be therapeutic). Pages like these can replace the ordinary posters students usually hang on dorm walls. Never underestimate how much you can do with zero money, tons of creativity, and a little frustration added in.

A brilliant way to distance yourself

from conventional picture hangings is to reinvent their medium. A laundry line can be an alternative hanger for pictures and memorabilia. Homesickness will be cured when pictures of your family, high school friends and pet dog hang whimsically around you.

It's really simple: you will need string, tape and clothespins; paper-clips work too. First, cut a long string of yarn or ribbon and tape one end to a wall and one end to another wall, ceiling or piece of furniture. Next, attach clothespins evenly, or randomly, onto the line. Then choose photos, Broadway show ticket stubs, or whatever you wish to hang and clip them to the line. Voila, your

very own laundry line of memories.

For a more traditional room decoration that still has variety, use temporary wallpaper, known as Tempaper, sold at Target and Urban Outfitters. Tempaper can be easily applied, removed and repositioned, so you can indulge in guilt-free bursts of creativity. You can also buy cork-board from Staples, push-pin mementos to its surface, and cut it into squares to sprinkle around your room.

There is an endless amount of ways to design or innovate your dorm room this fall. Home away from home just turned your cubicle into va va room.



## OPINIONS

## The Park51 Controversy: Students For and Against

Against the Mosque at Ground Zero:  
September What?

Sasha Bogursky

I was a fifth grader in school on the Upper West Side of Manhattan when terrorists hijacked two commercial passenger jet airliners, and crashed them into the World Trade Center. The city was completely shut down, but it had never seemed busier. There was a constant hum of helicopters flying overhead, people were running around hanging up posters of missing loved ones. The sky was black with thick smoke; the smell of burning lingered for what seemed like weeks.

I watched the footage of the towers falling over and over again with my family. For some reason, I do not recall feeling scared. What I do remember was sharing an overwhelming sense of unity with the rest of America. On the news you heard crowds of people chanting "USA, USA," and anyone who was able ran into the burning buildings hoping to save a life. Even at such a young age, I had never felt such faith in America and in the ability of the American people to remain united and strong through difficult times.

A wave of shock swept over the country as footage of Middle Eastern reactions to the attacks surfaced. People were dancing in the streets, burning American flags, and celebrating the murder of thousands of innocent people. Americans swore to never forget what happened on that grim September morning.

Yet, nine years later, under a new presidential administration, I am appalled at how quickly and easily Americans have forgotten what was lost and what was gained on that day.

In the aftermath of Sept. 11, a message of purpose and determination rang out clearly through the country. The intention of this cowardly act of terrorism was not merely to murder innocent people; it was a direct attack on our way of life, our values, our freedoms, and what makes us unique.

That uniqueness is summarized perfectly by the phrase on the humble dollar bill: E PLURIBUS UNUM, "out of many, one." This phrase does not denote our acceptance and tolerance of all races, religions and cultures simply because we are a democracy, but rather it means that out of the many faces, accents, cuisines and prayers that you experience in a walk around Manhattan, you will see one people arise, united.

In the absence of a monument to honor those who were murdered in the 9/11 attacks, building a so-called "cultural center" on the ashes of Ground Zero, and



SOMA Architects

An artist's rendering of the proposed Islamic Center

claiming that it is a place to foster tolerance, strains credulity. If Imam Rauf really wanted to help bridge the gap between American Muslims and the American people, why not build a 9/11 memorial or join others to build a truly non-denominational space? Why are they building such a prominent structure to house a mosque?

Certainly, not all Muslims are responsible for the 9/11 attacks, but the people who are responsible claim allegiance to Islam. Nine years later, with the reconstruction of Ground Zero still unfinished, while we are still at war with the very same extremists, it is not the time to build such a prominent religious-orientated facility on the edges of Ground Zero. No valid reason exists to build this center in that exact location, except as a twisted statement of triumph. This is not a discussion of tolerance or constitutional right, but it is a simple question of what is right and what is wrong.

Next year, I do not want the 10th anniversary of Sept. 11 clouded by controversy. I want to see Ground Zero rebuilt, full of life, and a stronger and more united America. It is vital that we regain the clarity and the purpose that we felt after 9/11.

Have we forgotten so easily what we are up against? We cannot allow the lives of those who were murdered to be forgotten nor can we forget the thousands of

Ilana Hostyk

Much controversy has arisen in recent months regarding the Park51 Community Center, hailed by critics as "the Mosque at Ground Zero." The point of controversy is Park51's location near the site of the World Trade Center. The outcry against the Park51 has been vicious and loud, with virtual and actual protests taking place across the United States.

A superficial analysis of the case against Park51 can help explain the initial fear and anger felt by Americans towards the establishment of the community center. September 11th was a scarring event in American history, and for the past decade America has been involved in a war against radical Islamic terrorism. The combination of these two has obscured our view of the

true meaning of Islam. Therefore, a Muslim-based center, no matter how peace-driven, can understandably strike panic within many.

Yet this panic is unfounded, embarrassing and quite unnecessary. This fear stems from both a lack of education about the Park51 and the general lack of exposure Americans have regarding the American Muslim Community. By studying the true facts regarding the community center, one can see how this fear is based on erroneous convictions fueled and sustained by right-wing Americans and the general media's need to have a good story for the 6 o'clock news.

Park51 is a \$100 million initiative that aims to be a pluralistic Muslim community center. Its plans include fitness facilities, a 500-seat auditorium, a restaurant and culinary school, education programs, a library, art studios, childcare services, a mosque and a September 11th memorial. The center is modeled on the 92nd Street Y, a well-known Jewish community center. The target audience will be the New York Is-

lamic population, but all facilities will be open to anyone who wishes to use them. The September 11th memorial within the center will be open to the general New York City and tourist community.

Opposers have stated that this is "desecration of holy ground." However, many facts show the fallacy of this criticism. First of all, there is no view of Ground Zero from the community center. It is two blocks away, and the area is crowded with other buildings. Second of all, those other buildings are not all memorials for September 11th and probably should be the ones under fire instead of a peace-based community center: strip clubs, bars, lounges, Century 21, Wall Street - the area is packed with a plethora of different toxic commercial ventures.

The building for Park51 was originally going to be an apartment building, but the owner believed that the property might better serve the area with a different usage; deciding on a community center that pledges to spread education about pluralism and culture, and about the importance of peace and tolerance, the owner assembled a team to put the community center together.

So far the community center sounds great, so who are the people opposing its construction? The first people to start the protest were two bloggers who generally espouse hatred of Islam and founded the group "Stop the Islamization of America." Other people protesting the building are the same breed of angry teapartiers found at Sarah Palin book signings. Palin-esque PR teams are the ones making this an issue when there really does not need to be one.

Additionally, scapegoating was never an American characteristic to be proud of. Feeding into this kind of mania perpetrated by conservative, right-wing Americans is humiliating. America is embarrassing itself; while fighting to preserve "American freedom," these conservative demagogues prevent the true freedom of constitutional liberties - namely, the right to build and worship without fear of persecution. Americans should strive to rise above superficial fear of the dangers of extremism, which has shifted into blatant racism toward Muslims in general.

Engaging in severe Islamophobia (for this is what the uproar is, and nothing more) is absurd. Park51 is the pinnacle of moderate Islam, and is an example of what other Islamic countries across the world should build. Let it be a model for

other Muslim communities, and let it prove to all Americans that "Islam" does not automatically mean radical Islam.

Indeed, if there is to be an Islamic community center in the city, there is no better place for it. Imagine the bravery it requires a Muslim teacher to take students down the street and teach them that this was a terrible tragedy caused by a fellow member of their own faith. Imagine being able to own up to a situation in which members of your faith mess up, and then decide to educate your youth to never make those same mistakes. If only we would have the same backbone!

As Jews, this issue should resonate well with us. America is the only country in the world that gave us the degree of religious freedom we take for granted today. As victims of anti-Semitism throughout the centuries, we should stand by our Muslim brothers and prevent them from receiving the same treatment of scapegoating to which we were subject throughout our history. Although Muslim Americans should be more vocal condemning acts of violence perpetrated by other members of their religion, their silence does not justify the removal of their rights as American citizens. We, as Americans, should uphold our constitution at all costs, and as Jews, should embrace the building of any religious center, no matter where it is built.

Tolerance breeds tolerance and hate breeds hate. If the center is welcomed with open arms into the New York fabric, then hopefully in turn, the world's hatred of Americans will lessen. The outcry toward the center should instead be about the state of poverty and homelessness in America today, the low level of education American children are receiving, and the way animals are treated in American food plants. Why alienate the Muslim population and youth of America by protesting this community center?

Perhaps in the future, Yeshiva University students will volunteer at Park51, or help host interfaith dialogue with the members. Just as many non-Jews use the fitness facilities at the JCC, perhaps many Jewish Wall Street brokers will use the gym at Park 51 on their way to work. Maybe they will form a bond with someone on the treadmill next to them, and break down a barrier that religion can sometimes unfortunately create. Park51 is the next step in America's Muslim relations. Let us hope we do not force it a step backwards.



## OPINIONS

### Between Astronaut and Ballerina

Hannah Marmor

During the last presidential election, America experienced one of the most pivotal events it had ever known. Barack Obama, an African American, and Hilary Clinton, a woman, ran for president of the United States.

While this election united many groups of people behind common fronts, it divided citizens as well. Questions of, "Can a woman be president?" and "Should a woman be president?" arose, with numerous proponents on each side. A similar dialogue is being repeated today, in the Jewish community, with respect to the topic of a woman being president of a shul.

According to the constitution of the National Council of Young Israel (NCYI), the position of shul president shall "be filled by male delegates only." In other words, a woman is not allowed to be president of a Young Israel synagogue. In 2005, however, the Young Israel of Syracuse, NY elected a woman to take over the position as shul president. For the next three years, aside from a financial deficit, the shul ran smoothly and free of controversial issues.

In 2008, the NCYI notified the Young Israel of Syracuse that unless the president resigned, they would sue the shul and claim its assets. Faced with an urgent problem, the shul voted to resign from the NCYI. In doing so, they renamed themselves Shaarei Torah and became unaffiliated with the NCYI.

A new issue then arose with the NCYI's constitution. The constitution asserts that a member congregation may not resign from its membership and affiliation. As such, the council would have the right to expel the shul and seize its assets.

While the NCYI affirms that the reason for expulsion is purely for financial reasons, the Syracuse Young Israel affirms that it is because of the election of a woman as shul president. Many people believe the NCYI's religious ideals were moving steadily to the right at the time of the accusation.

This event calls into question numerous concerns. First, should a shul be prohibited from resigning from its parent organization? If the entire congregation agrees upon the resignation, why should it not go into effect? Shuls and congregations should not feel as

though they are in captivity, that they have no vehicle for change. Freedom of choice and freedom altogether should not be limited in these circumstances.

Second, and perhaps more pressing, is that a woman is not allowed to be the shul's president according to NCYI rules. The Young Israel of Syracuse has an extremely small Orthodox Jewish population, and the number of people willing to take on the role as shul president may have been few. If this were the case, should the Syracuse community be penalized for having a small Orthodox population?

It is disturbing to think that a person's position in shul is dependent on their gender. The role of president is *not* to serve as a religious leader, so why should it be dependent upon gender? Presidents are not the rabbis of a shul; they lead and organize the shul politically. As a female president she would not sit on the bima, but most people would probably be able to live with that. In America a woman almost became president of our country, and yet the NCYI says a woman may not be president of the shul.

Today, women are doctors, lawyers, professors, CEOs, etc. Women are more than capable of acting as president for a shul. We, as women, are constantly told that we can be leaders. Stern College offers numerous leadership seminars and encourages us to fine-tune these skills. And yet the Young Israel of Syracuse was told that they may not have a female president. How would someone explain this to his or her young daughter? What effect would this have on them?

We are taught that we can be anything we want - an astronaut, or maybe a ballerina. We could even be the next president of the United States. But can we be president of a Young Israel? No.

It is important that we rally behind the cause of Shaarei Torah in Syracuse. What transpired there was wrong, and to many, even offensive. Women should not be limited in their roles on the board of a shul simply because of their gender. If enough people stand together behind this notion, then maybe being president of a Young Israel can go back on the list of things women *can* do - right between astronaut and ballerina.

### VIP Column

### More Than What Meets the Eye

Rabbi Dovid Cohen, Mashgiach Ruchani of Stern College

As the father of a special-needs child, I am often sensitive to the way people view my son. Will they judge him by his disabilities, or will they be able to see past his challenges and appreciate the beautiful child that he is? You can then only imagine my joy this past summer upon walking the streets of Jerusalem and hearing all the accolades my son received. Numerous times, absolute strangers would approach us and proclaim, "tzaddik" (righteous one). They then would often follow with an explanation of my son's tremendous spiritual virtues and how fortunate we were to have him in our family.

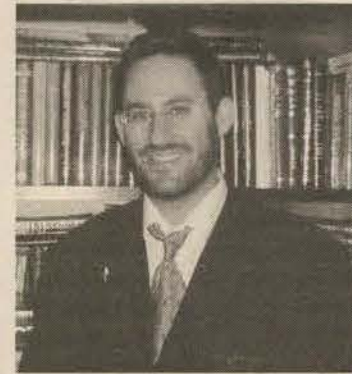
This uplifting experience accompanied me into the Yomim Noraim period. Our prayers on Rosh Hashanah are very focused on mankind at large. We repeatedly beseech G-d that all the nations of the world become a single society. We yearn for the days when G-d will be accepted as King over the entire corpus of creation.

The entire mankind should unite? Middle Eastern peace: Jews and Muslims, Iran all coming together? These are pretty ambitious, or shall I say audacious, prayers we offer up. Are we so unified as Jews that we are ready to move on to more global issues?

My summer experience notwithstanding, do we always view our brothers and sisters of diverse backgrounds with such encouragement and support?

The Talmud teaches us that our first Temple was destroyed because the Jewish people violated the three cardinal sins for which we are commanded to give our lives rather than violate them: murder, adultery and idolatry. The Second Temple's destruction is attributed to baseless hatred amongst ourselves. The contrast is striking. The cardinal sins, the worst the Torah speaks of, are seemingly put on par with baseless hatred or lack of consideration of another person's feelings. Why is insensitivity placed on par with the worst of sins?

The answer is in the daily Shema prayer, in which we speak of



the oneness of G-d. The word "echad," "one," is the last word recited by every Jew. This word reverberates throughout Jewish history as the final cry of the soul departing its earthly abode. At such critical moments, as well as on a daily basis, we affirm that G-d chooses to reside in places of oneness.

The holy Temple, G-d's sanctuary on Earth, needs to manifest oneness. A Temple cannot continue to exist upon a rotten foundation of discord and enmity. That is why Aharon HaKohen, whose *modus operandi* in life is peace, is anointed to perform the service in the *mishkan*, the predecessor of the Temple. He embodies the unity necessary for G-d to dwell amongst us. Aharon also visits us in the sukkah as he embodies our hope for G-d's canopy of peace that we desperately yearn for. Additionally, he also links us to world peace and the more universal aspects alluded to throughout the sukkos festival.

We aspire for world peace on Rosh Hashanah and allude to this theme again throughout the sukkos festival. From this I conclude that G-d quietly demands something from us. While the broader, more global, issues are in His hands, He wants us to take care of business at home. Only then He will be inspired to bring about the broader world peace that we so fervently aspire to.

Our revered institution is a haven and sanctuary for many of us. It is a place to cultivate friendships and grow academically and spiritually. President Joel, the indefatigable leader of our institution, has

stated: "I agreed to be president of Yeshiva University, knowing full well that it's an environment that should provoke both a big tent of Orthodoxy, should be open to the larger Jewish world, but within that big tent also have a particular brand." I would humbly suggest that our "brand" must be identified as being able to see and appreciate the best in each other. Synthesis demands searching and incorporating the most elevated dimensions of our fellow students. For G-d's presence to permeate our halls, He demands of us a commitment to unity and love for each other.

I would like to end with a story that has moved many.

A young man was in line to visit the famed Skverer Rebbe of Monsey. He was wearing jeans, a polo shirt and a kippa sruga. The gabbai eyed him suspiciously, as his garb was not the norm for visitors to the Rebbe. Upon entry, the young man asked the Rebbe for a bracha for a refuah shleima for Dovid ben Sara. The gabbai overheard the request and asked the young man what his connection to Dovid ben Sara was. The young man explained that he was a counselor at Camp HASC for special-needs children and Dovid ben Sara was his camper. It was the boy's birthday, and he thought it would be a meaningful gift to receive a bracha from the Rebbe, as the boy was a Skverer chassid.

The young man noticed that the gabbai was now crying uncontrollably. He apologized and asked the gabbai why he was crying. The gabbai replied, "Dovid ben Sara is my son, and I am incredibly moved by your efforts on his behalf."

We need to get past externals and assumptions about one another, and dig deeper to find the really good stuff. We too can walk the halls of our hallowed institution, look to each other, and proclaim "tzaddekes" (righteous woman). How fortunate am I that I attend university with such lofty, elevated souls!

Welcome back and have a great semester!  
-From the Staff of the Observer



## OPINIONS

### Women's Magazines Turn the Clock Back on Women's Lib

Tzipora Schwartz

Consider the tabs *Glamour* magazine's homepage: Fashion, Beauty, Sex, Love & Life, Weddings, Health & Fitness, and Body by *Glamour*.

*Glamour* is renown as a magazine for women, yet these tabs offer only a very slim glimpse into the reality of womanhood. In fact, they pertain to nothing but intimacy and the body. The cover page of any *Cosmopolitan* presents a very limited scope of womanhood as well, urging potential readers to flip to page 64 for tips on how to "please your guy," or to learn "What guys secretly think of your hair and makeup: The truth revealed!"

Not only do these magazines and others like them only contain articles about sexuality, intimacy, makeup and hairstyles, but their underlying message is that women want most to be attractive to men. Women should be concerned with things like how to apply makeup in a way that gets his attention and how to prepare various other niceties to that effect.

This message is backward and offensive during an age in which Nancy Pelosi and Hilary Clinton hold prestigious positions in public office, Tina Fey is the face of most modern cultural icons, and President Obama reported to first lady Michelle Obama in their workplace before they were married.

Women's magazines didn't always debase women and their role in society. In fact, *Cosmopolitan*, *Glamour* and *Good Housekeeping* started out as periodicals of sophistication that were at the forefront of social action.

Before *Good Housekeeping* started putting women back in the kitchen, it catalyzed the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act by advocating for regulated food production. It started an anti-cigarette campaign twelve years before the Surgeon General's warning was even printed on cigarette packs, and endorsed the Ludlow Amendment in the 1930's, which required that any declaration of war—with the exception of an invasion—be ratified by a direct vote of the citizenry.

*Glamour* magazine was the first magazine to put an African American woman on its cover. In 1992, *Glamour* won the National Magazine Award in 1992 for its coverage on the abortion issue. It was also the first to address its female readers from the viewpoint of work outside of the home.

When *Cosmopolitan* first launched in 1886, it was a family magazine. In 1897, it launched a free correspondence school, offering to pay all educational expenses for its readers. And in the early 1900s, when serialized sto-

ries were becoming popular, *Cosmopolitan* published contributions from such authors as Jack London, Edith Wharton, and Upton Sinclair. *Cosmopolitan* once even published articles by Theodore Roosevelt.

At some point, however, these magazines took a wrong turn. In the 1960's, *Cosmopolitan's* editor-in-chief, Helen Gurly Brown, began to completely remodel the magazine. Brown's vision was that the woman who could have love, sex, and make her own money would be happier; it was her initiative that began the racy cover shot each month with the sexually liberated woman. Instead of liberating women, however, countless articles made it the norm for women to be overly concerned with the desires and whims of men. How sad that today's magazine has hijacked the word *cosmopolitan*, whose true definition inspires the excitement of possibility, world-travel and cultured enlightenment.

It has come to the point where Caroline Kennedy made the remark to *New York Times* political reporter David Halbfinger, "Have you guys ever thought of writing for a woman's magazine or something? ...You're supposed to be crack political journalists." Caroline Kennedy, the type of woman to whom these "women's magazines" catered to in their early years - an attorney and writer who is on the board of many influential non-profit organizations - today ridicules what these publications have become.

The reader demographic of these magazines is surprising. The National Magazine Company, which publishes *Cosmopolitan*, is proud of a new readers' survey showing that 73 percent plan to vote at the next election. Recent demographics for *Cosmopolitan's* readers show that 34 percent of its readers earned between \$30 to \$60,000 a year and 24 percent earned \$60 to \$100,000, with the majority being females between the ages of 18 and 24, living in affluent urban neighborhoods.

This begs the question of why so many financially comfortable, educated young women would consume these magazines, that focus so little on real life, and not only covers so narrow a part of being a woman but truly debases women, stripping them down to superficiality and physicality.

To take the question a step further and draw the issue to the readers of *this* women's publication, it certainly seems paradoxical to find that these magazines are so ubiquitous in the realm of Stern College. What Stern offers is a unique opportunity for superior education in an environment of religious and Torah values, all

### Lets Get Together, Yeah Yeah Yeah

Elana Goldberg

At some point or another, we have all done it: leaving the Brookdale dormitory at night for some quality library time or an emergency Slurpee run, we cast a surreptitious, sidelong glance into the infamous Brookdale lounge on our way out the door.

*Is she still going out with him?*

*Whoa, he is way too frum for her.*

*I thought they broke up last semester!!*

It's the runaway Jewish "yenta train," and we are all guilty of climbing aboard for a spin - myself included. But why is there the immediate urge to speculate on our findings?

In this day and age, it seems that any hangout between a boy and a girl in a public forum automatically falls under the category of a date. We see mixed company in the lounge, and we automatically calculate whether having helped said girl with her *Tanach* final last fall guarantees an invite to her wedding, or at least crashers' rights.

Admittedly, many dates do take place in the Brookdale lounge and in the immediate area surrounding Stern. So we aren't always totally off base. The issue is when it becomes the automatic assumption, the first conclusion we draw. By attributing significance to any mixed-company hangout, we imply that such an activity is not a normal, casual thing to do.

For some, it is definitely not a normal, casual thing to do. I do not dispute or disrespect that fact, nor do I discredit its validity. For those girls who are truly uncomfortable spending one-on-one, or even group time, with the opposite

geared specifically toward women. The message that these magazines broadcast is so counter to the value system we adhere to that it is almost oxymoronic to find these magazines lying around within the school.

It is understandable that these magazines may be entertaining. The reader is able to put her mind on hold behind the colorful glossy pages of these lighthearted magazines, get lost in the pictures and the easy reading, and take a break from the pressures of school and real life. But it makes little sense to seek respite by delving into such an offensive publication. It is very troubling that so many women thirstily drink up the tips and advice offered by women's magazines, buying into the message that this is what society expects from them. The messages promulgated by these magazines undermine the strides women have taken during the past few decades. At the very least, any woman who does choose to read these magazines should do so aware that these magazines do not portray reality.

gender in any manner other than official dates, the YU-Stern stigma is not such an issue. The problem lies where girls who normally spend time with guy friends feel genuinely uncomfortable spending doing so in the Stern College environment, simply because they are so self-conscious of the image they portray.

For example: the night of the Gad Elbaz concert I met up with a boy friend I met on a summer program. After the concert we walked the few blocks or so back to Brookdale; within a three-minute time span, I received perhaps seven subtle glances and flickers of recognition, directed at either him or me. After the tenth knowing glance cast our way, I decided to call it a night before it became Facebook official.

Perhaps the most obvious solution is to stop caring what people think. But I am a realist, and I think I am pretty on the mark when I say that no matter how much we tell ourselves we don't care, we will always be concerned to a certain extent with what people think of us. Especially when it is within the context of being involved with the opposite gender. It truly pained me that my casual night with a friend was largely ruined thanks to the stigma surrounding guy-girl hangouts on the Stern campus.

The epidemic is, of course, not only restricted to midtown Manhattan. If anything, it is even more of a statement to be seen with a boy on the YU campus than it is around the Stern neighborhood. The implications of being seen with a male in the Heights are not only an annoyance; rather, it creates an unfortunately vicious cycle of social restriction. If a Stern girl has no boy to see, and therefore cannot just casually make her way up to the Heights for any particular reason, how will she meet a boy under normal circumstances, for purposes of friendship or otherwise? The "shidduch scene," while seemingly becoming increasingly popular, simply does not fit the

mold for anyone and everyone. It is the sect of Stern girls wishing to meet nice, Orthodox YU boys in a relaxed, informal manner who ultimately suffer from the extreme emphasis decrying spending down time in mixed company.

Let's try to take a little more advantage of the opportunity given us by having a brother school so inherently accessible and closely located. A perfect example is the Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration that took place last year. Stern girls and YU boys were lent the chance to see each other in a casual setting, rather than under the cover of meetings or speakers, and for the most part people were just hanging out. On that day I heard so much praise of the comfortable atmosphere that existed between the genders and the genuine appreciation for an opportunity to legitimately mix with one another.

I also heard much lamentation that such occurrences do not take place more often, and a resolve to perpetuate such hangouts in the future to ensure a more "normal," college-esque environment. I am not encouraging the greater Yeshiva University community to go all "secular college." It is important that we recognize what we are and what we are not, and many of us chose to attend Stern College for certain reasons that guarantee a degree of separation.

But the degree has expanded to a world apart, and my message is simply that for those who feel comfortable doing so, let us take some of the awkwardness out of the boy-girl interaction at YU. If you want to go up to the Heights for a schwarma at Golan with an old friend, or to meet up in the Kushner caf for a casual lunch or dinner—without it meaning impending engagement—you should be able to do so with pride and without causing a whisper-wheel of speculation. And, if a night out in mixed company ends with hanging out in the Brookdale lounge, so be it.

Eyes forward, ladies.

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