



The Yeshiva University

# OBSERVER

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## YU Institute Receives \$1.6 Million from Avi Chai Foundation to Strengthen Day School Finances

YU CPA

In support of achieving financial stability and sustainability of the Jewish day school movement, the Avi Chai Foundation has made a \$1.6 million grant to the Institute for University-School Partnership at Yeshiva University (YU), a division of YU's Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration.

The grant will support YU's comparative financial benchmarking work with 30 Jewish day schools in five communities across the country. The goal is to improve Jewish day school financial operations and planning and help make them more affordable without sacrificing quality.

"We are delighted to be working together with Yeshiva University and the Institute for University-School Partnership towards our shared goal of building a strong and sustainable day school field," said Yossi Prager, executive director of Avi Chai North America.

The three-year capacity building grant, which is designed to match an equivalent amount of funding from local sources, including local foundations and federations, establishes a comprehensive program that involves comparative financial benchmarking, long-term financial planning, and extensive consulting support for those schools.

Local communities, with the

support of their area philanthropists who view sustainable day schools as a key communal priority, are actively pursuing participation in the program, and the Institute is currently working on the selection process. The Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE) will provide consulting support to the program.

YU and Avi Chai view the program as a "Phase I" effort, which, if proven successful, would ultimately be scaled up to encompass 200 schools in 30 communities.

"This initiative marks the first time such an all-encompassing effort of comparative financial analysis and long-range planning has been established on a communal level," said Dr. Harry Bloom, the Institute's director of planning and performance improvement. "It will provide great transparency into day school finances, from costs to revenue, so that they may achieve significant improvements based on hard facts, while preserving educational quality. Ultimately, our goal is to help these 30 schools achieve a 10% improvement in their finances, with a collective target value of \$30 million in benefit to them."

The initiative is an expansion of a pilot program facilitated by the Institute in several communities across the country, including Bergen County, NJ. That effort em-

ployed a "Benchmark Survey" to identify significant school-specific revenue enhancement and expense reduction opportunities.

"The YU Benchmarking survey helped our schools learn a great deal about themselves," said Dror Futter, co-chair of the Cost Reduction Committee, Jewish Education for the Generations in Bergen County. "The information gathering effort required by the study yielded insights by requiring schools to look at their own information in new ways and different categories. The comparative aspect of the study helped each school identify areas for savings and increased effectiveness in both their operations and fundraising."

Dr. Bloom noted that comparative financial analysis is a promising tool in the independent school world and has been used by the National Association of Independent Schools and PEJE.

"Hence the need for this new initiative," said Dr. Scott J. Goldberg, Institute director, who stressed that, "comparative financial analysis and long-term financial planning are part of a multi-pronged solution to day school sustainability, including endowment building and efforts to increase government funding."

He added that it is "critically important that Jewish day schools

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## Community, Committees and Co-education at the 2010 Town Hall Meeting

Ramie Smith

On November 17, the first Town Hall Meeting of the year took place in Yagoda Commons on the Beren campus, with students directing questions to President Richard Joel concerning such topics as the "censorship committee," co-education and informal sexism.

Victor Schwartz, university dean of students, made the meeting's opening remarks. After a funny introduction, Dean Schwartz kicked off the session with a more serious tone by discussing the importance of community, a topic that would be recurring throughout the meeting. He explained that the two attitudes a community can have are "every man for himself," or "we're all in this together." Dean Schwartz specified his point by explaining that Yeshiva University (YU) has a strong sense of community and what happens at the university affects the people around it.

President Joel took the podium next, following up on Dean Schwartz's notion of community before opening the floor for questions. He described how the issue of community is "globally one of the challenges we have now," and YU continues to strive for "unity without uniformity," a community comprised of different kinds of people.

President Joel then discussed a

write-up about YU in *First Things*, a catholic magazine published by the Institute on Religion and Public Life, which listed the best colleges with regards to three important factors: academics, student life and religious environment, and YU placed as the sixth best school. *First Things* also stated that the university is not a big "party school," and alcohol and drugs are almost non-existent, to which President Joel proudly said to the audience, "Put that in your pipe."

With that, the floor turned to the students. Tirtza Speigel, a super senior at Stern College for Women (SCW), asked President Joel if he could comment on the alleged "censorship committee," an issue that has been discussed at length since it was covered in the last issue of *The Observer*.

President Joel clarified that the committee's goal is not censorship, but has more to do with administration and faculty becoming proactive as opposed to reactive. He explained that there have long been policies of approval for programs at YU, and that the goal of the committee is for the faculty and administration, who deal with requests for student activities, to be able to talk to each other in-

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YU Flickr

Just when you thought you've seen enough of them,... On Thursday, Dec. 2, over 1,100 people came to see the Maccabeats, Matsiyahu and the Moshav Band at YU's annual Chanukkah concert. For more on the concert please see page 4.

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## FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITORS

### Our Greater Responsibility

Estie Neff, Editor-in-Chief

On Chanukah the Jewish people miraculously overcame Greek rule and were able to openly study Torah and practice *mitzvos*. Accordingly, this past Chanukah I overheard many Torah insights from rabbis, teachers, family and friends - each commenting on a different nuance of the holiday. One thought I came across stood out in my mind, given its significance to recent events.

This year's Torah portion on Shabbos Chanukah told of Pharaoh relating his dream, in which he describes himself as "standing over the [Nile] river." At first glance this phrase simply describes Pharaoh's physical location; however, on a deeper level, it shows that Egyptians did not take their gods so seriously. Pharaoh worshipped the Nile, but he saw himself in a superior position to it, and ultimately saw it as a servant that could provide him with prosperity.

In contrast, Yosef tells Pharaoh before interpreting his dream, "That is beyond me; it is God who will respond with Pharaoh's welfare." Yosef clearly understood that he was inferior to God's will, as opposed to Pharaoh and the Egyptians, who saw gods as servants to the needs of Man.

This encounter, read every year around Chanukah time, mirrors the clash of ideologies between the Greeks and the Jews. Greeks saw Man as the center of the universe and a work of perfection, while Jews see Man as a servant to God; without God, Man is nothing.<sup>1</sup>

The Egyptian and Greek empires

died out long ago, but their ideologies still live with us today, albeit in high-tech form.

The latest outbreak of classified documents via the WikiLeaks website has interested many Americans and drawn criticism from high-ranking government and political organizations. Founded in 2007, WikiLeaks is currently run by a core group of five volunteers. It publishes content on its own site that is housed on servers in Sweden, Belgium, the United States, and other locations around the globe that the organization "considers friendly to journalists and document leakers," according to *The New York Times*.

WikiLeaks states that it endeavors to "be of assistance to people of all regions who wish to reveal unethical behavior in their governments and corporations." By exposing classified documents, Wikileaks hopes that corruption will no longer be safe from prying eyes and a plaintive public, spurring on worldwide reform.

Criticizers of the website have posited that exposing classified documents may actually cause chaos instead of world peace, as millions of viewers become privy to government information, and that WikiLeaks also completely invades the privacy of individuals by exposing their personal email and pager messages.

The most disturbing outcome of the WikiLeaks phenomenon to me, however, is that it supports a norm of selfish righteousness in society. WikiLeaks says to us that

if you have an issue, take it up with the world and disregard the damage it may cause others, as long as you achieve your personal victory. With the right technology, which is fairly easy to access, people can indulge in this perverted sense of self-entitlement after seeing the success of WikiLeaks. A disgruntled employee can take revenge on his boss by exposing the company's secrets online. A desperate political candidate can expose competitors to voters in minutes.

The WikiLeaks mentality is similar to that of Pharaoh and the Greeks, both of whom saw Man as the center of the universe.

The Jews were challenged with fighting the notion that each man is for themselves, and the battle still rages today. We are brought up on the dictum that the Torah dictates our actions, not our own desires alone, and therefore we always think about the larger picture.

As students at Yeshiva University, we have an added obligation to think outside of ourselves. Our university is internationally recognized as the foremost center of modern Jewish life and education. We have to take into account that we are not in a bubble - we represent Torah Judaism to the world, and we will be judged for it for better or for worse. Therefore, we must carefully think about the messages we send before sending them, as with this great legacy comes a great responsibility.

<sup>1</sup> Taken from "The Guiding Light" by Rabbi Yehonasan Gefen

## NEWS

### Student Holocaust Education Movement Remembers Kristallnacht

Tamara Frieden

Students from Yeshiva University (YU) gathered in Koch Auditorium to commemorate the 72nd anniversary of Kristallnacht with a ceremony led by the Student Holocaust Education Movement (SHEM) a student-based, student-run organization founded by YU alum Simon Goldberg in 2009. The event featured an exhibit on the 1938 pogroms and an address by Dr. Michael Berenbaum, Academy Award-winning director and Holocaust scholar, author and educator.

The event included a formal address, a visual exhibit of photographs taken from the United States Holocaust Museum, and two poems that were thoroughly researched and chosen by the board of SHEM. After the speaker, the

night ended with a video of powerful images. "In an effort to connect between the tragedy of Kristallnacht and modern-day bigotry, we created a video presentation on the relevancy of anti-Semitism in today's world," explained Goldberg.

As students filtered into Koch to peruse the photograph exhibit displayed along the walls, Jared Schmidt, an undergraduate student at Yeshiva College (YC), played "Oyfn Pripetchik" on the violin, setting the mood for the night as one of remembrance.

Goldberg gave a brief introduction to the full room of teachers and students. He began by exploring the roots of the tragedy and what it now means for us today. "It didn't begin with tortures and

guns, but with ideas and thoughts," Goldberg reminded all those in the room. He described how "Kristallnacht matters not only because we should remember the dead, and we should, but to protect the living as well."

Rabbi Yosef Blau, mashgiach ruchani of Rabbi Isaac Elchana Theological Seminary (RIETS), introduced Dr. Berenbaum, who played a major role in establishing the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum both as project director and as the director of the museum's Holocaust Research Institute. He is the current director of the Sigi Zierling Institute at the American Jewish University in Los Angeles where he explores the ethical and religious implica-

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The Yeshiva University

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## NEWS

## Saving the World, One Agunah at a Time

Elana Goldberg

Stern College for Women (SCW) hosted a panel forum on Monday night November 29, given by the Organization for the Resolution of Agunot (ORA), which helps women whose husband refuses to grant them a *get* (Jewish writ of divorce), thereby rendering them *halachically* married even after they receive a civil divorce.

The panel, held in Koch auditorium, intended to highlight and emphasize the importance of an organization like ORA—currently the only one of its kind—placing a special emphasis on the significance of obtaining a *halachic* prenuptial agreement. Rabbi Jeremy Stern, director of ORA, mediated the panel.

Panelists included Rabbi Mordechai Willig, Rosh Yeshiva and Rosh Kollel at Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS); Mrs. Shana Frydman, director of Family Violence Services at the Met Council; and Mrs. Lonna Kin, a current *agunah* and real estate broker in Monsey, NY. Each panelist received an opportunity to express his or her feelings regarding *agunot* awareness, followed by a question and answer session that

gave SCW women the opportunity to voice their questions, concerns and opinions regarding ORA and the *halachic* prenuptial agreement in a public forum.

Each respective speaker stressed the importance of signing a *halachic* prenuptial agreement. "If you're old enough and responsible enough to get married, you need to be old enough and responsible enough to know it might not work out," Rabbi Willig declared at the panel. Since 1991, Rabbi Willig, author of the *halachic* prenuptial agreement, has been attempting to convince rabbis throughout the world of the necessity of encouraging couples to sign the prenuptial agreement.

While some rabbis remain hesitant to bring up divorce at the very outset of a marriage, Rabbi Willig has largely encountered success in his endeavors to establish the *halachic* prenuptial agreement as a standard part of the marriage process similar to the signing of the *ketubah* (Jewish marriage contract). The *ketubah's* text does not provide for the theoretical plight of the *agunah* and therefore it is increasingly considered insufficient

as the sole Jewish legal document of the marriage process.

As a result, a growing number of widely respected Orthodox rabbis are determining the signing of *halachic* prenuptial agreements an essential rather than optional procedure; some rabbis have even refused to perform marriage ceremonies if couples decline to sign the agreement.

The *halachic* prenuptial agreement has thus far proved 100-percent effective in preventing women from attaining *agunah* status in the case of divorce. Both Frydman and Kin attested to the necessity of signing such an agreement and asserted that if a fiancée refuses to sign the agreement without any sort of conversation, his resistance should push the woman to reconsider before committing herself to him.

Kin, a successful mother of five children, has been unsuccessfully attempting to obtain a *get* from her ex-husband for the past seven years. Though civilly divorced, Kin remains bound to her ex-husband in the Jewish legal sense, which prevents her from moving forward and potentially even dating other

men. While numerous public protests have failed to convince Kin's ex-husband to give her a *get*, Kin's affiliation with ORA has lent her a sense of hope and confidence that her predicament will eventually be resolved. "I feel that *Hashem* put me here so I can help other women not to be in this position," Kin said. "There are people out there who do care."

In March 2002, ORA was founded by Yeshiva University (YU) undergraduate students; since its inception, the organization has assisted in resolving the cases of approximately 141 *agunot*. ORA is a not-for-profit organization, providing services to women who need a *get* entirely free of charge. ORA's mission statement attests to its objective of using legal means to pressure recalcitrant parties to give a *get*, protecting against abusive behavior, preventing *get* abuse, and raising awareness regarding the oft-overlooked manipulations of the Jewish divorce process. At any given time, ORA contends with approximately 60 open *agunot* cases.

ORA's ultimate objective is to eventually be run out of business. "I'd be happy to no longer have

any work to do at ORA," Rabbi Stern said. Unfortunately, the rising number of *agunot* keeps ORA busy, which reinforces the urgency of the message to utilize the *halachic* prenuptial agreement. Rabbi Willig expressed his belief that once the agreement becomes standard among the Modern Orthodox community, it will pervade all sects of Jewish society and hopefully bringing the *agunah* crisis to a standstill.

Through informative and enlightening panels such as this one, young men and women are being educated as to the financial, emotional and spiritual security ensured by the *halachic* prenuptial agreement. "The panel brought up issues I didn't even know existed to such an extent," said Elka Nussbaum, a junior at Sy Syms School of Business. "It's so important to spread the message of the panel."

ORA's main creed: stand up for the Jewish and legal rights of women, and help to better the Jewish community for the present and the future.

## YU Faculty Celebrates at Book Bash

Estie Neff

The front lounge of the Schottenstein Residence Hall was filled with noise on the night of November 15, and for due cause: Twenty-six Yeshiva University (YU) faculty members were celebrating the publication of 29 books over just two years.

"If we had good data, I would bet that this breaks all the records for the Yeshiva University undergraduate faculty," said Dr. Karen Bacon, the Dr. Monique C. Katz Dean of Stern College for Women (SCW), in her address to the faculty that evening.

YU had celebrated faculty book publications in the past, but at a much smaller scale. Dr. Jeffrey S. Gurock, one of the celebrated faculty members, noted that YU held a "Yom Moreh" about 20 years ago.

Dean Bacon admitted that the YU administration was not consistent with organizing book-publishing celebrations because they had been busy with student and faculty recruitment and facility expansion.

This year's party was much more selective; faculty members were approached individually about showcasing their books, said Gurock, also noting that the event "is very indicative of the fact that we have a productive faculty."

The books were put on display in the Hedi Steinberg Library on the Beren campus during the SCW open house week, and Dean Bacon believed that this certainly helped

recruit new students for the upcoming academic year. "It's not just me that's wowed," she said, "it's the outside world as well."

long project, so you really want it to be about someone you won't get bored spend your time on," said Steinberg, who completed her

interview. "Ramban's a very rich commentary who analyzes Biblical narrative, and so I decided to dig in."

Gurock, the Libby M. Klaperman Professor of Jewish History at YU, celebrated publishing his 15<sup>th</sup> book, "Orthodox Jews in America," which is a social history of the religious behavior patterns of people who attended Orthodox synagogues in the United States. Having taught Jewish history in YU for 36 years, Gurock noted that "everyone says Yeshiva's a small place - it's really a large place in terms of Jewish studies. I have the opportunity to teach what I work on, and share it with...my students," he said. "I'm now teaching women whose mothers I taught, which is pretty scary, but nice," he added.

The evening ended with a short address by Dean Bacon. President Richard Joel and Provost Dr. Morton Lowengrub were supposed to speak at the event as well but were unable to attend. After the address, Dean Bacon called upon each faculty member to announce their book's title and briefly describe its content.

Dean Bacon ended her speech by referencing "Sparks of Genius" by Robert and Michele Root-Bernstein - a book that lists the skills creative people need. By publishing these books, "you're planting sparks of genius in our students," said Dean Bacon, "and for that I thank you, I really thank you enormously."



YU News

Above, books published by YU faculty on display at the faculty book party

The event provided students, fellow faculty members and family members time to socialize and eat light refreshments while discussing the newly published books.

Dr. Gillian Steinberg, assistant director of English at Yeshiva College (YC), was accompanied by her in-laws that night to celebrate the publishing of her book, "Philip Larkin and His Audiences," in which Steinberg analyzes how music influenced the Larkin's literary works.

"Writing a biography is a very

book after five years and two kids.

Dr. Michelle J. Levine, associate professor of Bible at SCW, also took several years to finish her book, "Nahmanides on Genesis: The Art of Biblical Portraiture," based on her dissertation for her Ph.D. from New York University, which discusses Ramban (Nachmanides)'s approach to stories in the Torah.

"For Ramban, it is not only important to know what the message of a particular Biblical story is, but he wants to understand how the story is told," said Levine in an

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**Clarification:**

In the November edition of The Observer, the article titled "Students Start First Fraternity in YC History" incorrectly chronicled the existence of fraternities at Yeshiva University (YU). Yeshiva College students started a chapter of the AEPi fraternity in 2005 and it lasted until 2007, when efforts to continue the society were not successful. It never became an official YU club.



## NEWS

## YU Holds Annual Chanukah Concert

Observer Staff

On Thursday night December 2, Yeshiva University (YU) held its annual Chanukah Concert featuring the Maccabeats, the Moshav Band and Matisyahu, performing for a sold out crowd in Lampport Auditorium on the Wilf campus. The concert was jointly organized by Yeshiva College (YC) Student Association, Sy Syms School of Business Student Association, Stern College for Women (SCW) Student Council and the SCW Torah Activities Council.

The opening musical performers were the Maccabeats, YU's very own a capella group, who received a warm welcome from their enthusiastic fans. Dressed in their typical uniform of white button-down shirts, black pants and black ties, the Maccabeats sang the Miami Boys' Choir "Yavoh" and their most recent hit, "Candlelight."

This Chanukah-themed song received much hype in the week leading up to the concert, due to a newly produced YouTube video featuring the song. The video is a spin-off of Mike Tompkins' version of the song "Dynamite" and has gained remarkable acclaim nationwide. Before the live premiere of "Candlelight," Maccabeats member Immanuel Shalev thanked the audience for their tremendous support.

Following the Maccabeats' entertaining performance, the Moshav Band took center stage, with their creative and powerful presence. Their passion and energy had an effect on the crowd, which began to sing and clap along

with the familiar tunes. When the fan-favorite "Come Back" was played, as audience members rose to their feet, dancing and singing with excitement.

From that moment on, the intensity in the auditorium was tangible, to the extent that the Moshav Band exited the stage to chants of "One more song! One more song!" The audience's enthusiasm progressed, and by the time Matisyahu made his appearance, the entire crowd was jumping up and down, with their hands waving in the air.

Midway through Matisyahu's performance, a Dreidel-shaped disco ball descended from the ceiling above the stage. Matisyahu sang his new Chanukah song, "Miracle," and ended the concert with the popular hit "One Day" to applause and cheers.

Ilana Wilner, vice president of SCW Student Council, was thrilled with the turnout of the Chanukah concert. She noted the fact that the concert was sold out, which had not occurred since Shwekey performed at YU three years ago. "The concert was a huge success," Wilner stated. "We had people scalping for tickets and trying to pull all sorts of stunts just to get in."

Yoni Kushner, president of Yeshiva Student Union, was the "head man" behind the concert. He emphasized that events like this concert create a lot of unity among the YU student body. "I'm sure there have been very few, if any, student council events in YU history that had more students at one time than last night's Chanukah Con-

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stead of "talking past each other," he said.

President Joel assured Spiegel that student involvement is welcomed, but "yesh gvul [there is a limit], this is a Torah Umadda community, we will be making determinations as have always done. And like any community, there are rules."

This point about rules led President Joel to address an issue that was apparently on his mind: "There is no fraternity at YU," he declared, and then jokingly added, "I am not a member of AEPI." He continued by stating that YU is not a fraternity school, and that more than half of the universities in America are not either. He concluded this thought by saying that the Jews simply do not thrive under the "Greek system."

While President Joel's answer seemed to put the allegations of a censorship committee to rest, the issue of censorship in general was still on students' minds. Jina Davidovich, SCW junior and Torah Activities Council (TAC) treasurer, asked how the university can achieve both "unity without uniformity" and an environment of Torah Umadda if it seems as

cert," Kushner said happily. "Having events that can bring as many students together as possible is a beautiful thing for the university and causes tremendous *achdus*."

though YU hosts speakers from the religious "right" but not as many from the religious "left."

President Joel agreed that this does seem to be the situation, but



Julia Siegel  
Gila Yarmush (SCW '13) poses a question to President Joel at the 2010 Town Hall Meeting

noted that when deciding whether someone should speak at YU, the topic they speak about, not who the speaker is, is the determinant. For example, President Joel noted, Niturei Karta, a sect of anti-Zionist Orthodox Jews, is to the right of us but would never be allowed to speak in YU. "We tend to have more to do with the right because certain things are givens...we don't have that same commonality with the left in terms of *halacha*, what's negotiable and what's not," President Joel concluded.

Gila Yarmush, a sophomore at SCW, complained about the lack of variety of classes in the history department, requesting that YU put more money into the program. President Joel quickly responded, "I was really with you until the

words 'put more money into it.'" Then he explained that YU would ideally be able to offer everything in terms of course options, but at this point YU has a deficit of over \$20 million. One option YU is considering is computer courses, offering students a variety without having to hire a full staff.

The next issues students raised were co-ed classes and informal sexism. Ariella Gottesman a junior at SCW, asked, "Why can't Gila sit in on a men's classroom if they offer three more history classes?" President Joel simply stated, "That's not who we are. We are a separate education school."

Ilana Gadish, a senior at SCW, followed Gottesman's question by addressing "informal sexism" on campus, both among male students and faculty. Gadish referred to a few examples of informal sexism on campus, including reports of sexist comments or jokes made nonchalantly by faculty to students on the Wilf campus. President Joel responded, "I can renounce them or denounce them, but I can't muzzle them, unless of course they are deans."

President Joel agreed that YU is no place for objectifying people. In his concluding remarks, he said that "we should do more to educate people; we believe in a culture of equality but not egalitarianism."

## Dreidel-Palooza Breaks Dreidel-Spinning Record

Marganit Rauch

Dreidel-Palooza, an event designed to raise money for student scholarships by breaking a world record, took place at the Max Stern Athletic Center on the Wilf campus on November 30. Dreidel-Palooza was the brainchild of the Students Helping Students organization, a student organization run by club co-presidents Fiona Guedalia and Jason Katz and presidential fellow Daniella Weprin.

"Our goal is to raise much needed undergraduate scholarship money for Yeshiva University (YU) students, and to create a cohesive environment on campus, while enhancing the student community," explained Guedalia in an interview. "Currently over 70 percent of our students are on scholarship, so it is an extremely important initiative."

The goal of the fundraiser was to gather together people from the YU community in the Max Stern Athletic Center to spin enough dreidels to break the current Guinness World Record for the amount

of dreidels spun at once, which stood at 541 people. This year's

from the Jewish community at large.

to think of an event that would help raise money while bringing students and Jewish families together in support of YU. "With Chanukah coming up, we thought about the game of dreidel, how it's a fun game for all ages, and pretty much enjoyed by everyone," said Guedalia. "Almost all families play it. And of course it's always fun to break a record."



Julia Siegel  
A young boy gets ready to spin at Dreidel Palooza

Dreidel-Palooza managed to get a total of 618 people to participate - both YU students and members

The idea for Dreidel-Palooza came from the Students Helping Students organization's desire

Although they are still waiting to hear the result from Guinness, the goals of raising money and awareness about the Students Helping Students organization, and of creating a fun, unifying activity for the Jewish community, were definitely accomplished.

"Dreidel-Palooza was not only a great fundraiser that gave YU great publicity, but it also gave students

the opportunity to bond, have fun, and just celebrate school pride," said Meirah Freiden, a junior at SCW. "This is something that is definitely necessary, yet far too often overlooked at YU."

Dreidel-Palooza's fame spread far beyond the YU community. Before the event had taken place, its name appeared on the *New York Daily News*, *The New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, Nachum Segal's "JM in the AM," and several online blogs. The event has also spurred competition from University of Washington students who have managed to get 250 people to spin dreidels, and a basketball team, the Minnesota Timberwolves, who spun on December 8.

After the event, Dreidel-Palooza continued to appear in the news; most recently, the record-breaking event was mentioned on "Saturday Night Live." "You know you have made it when SNL pokes fun at you," Guedalia laughs.



## FEATURES

## Broomsticks and Snitches Run Loose in Manhattan

Renee Kestenbaum

Fantasy descended upon New York City from November 13 to 14 when 46 teams from the International Quidditch Association (IQA) gathered in DeWitt Clinton Park to compete in the fourth annual Quidditch World Cup. Middlebury College, alma mater of the founders of "Muggle Quidditch" and the IQA, took home the Cup for the fourth year running.

The first rules for Muggle Quidditch were drawn up in 2005 by Xander Manshel, a student at Middlebury at the time. Muggle Quidditch is an adaptation of the magical sport invented by J. K. Rowling for her Harry Potter book series, meant for non-magical people. Manshel's rules have since been adapted; the rulebook is up to its fourth version. They are voted on yearly by IQA members and are overseen by a 13-member council.

In Harry Potter's world, Quidditch is played in the air by seven players astride enchanted broomsticks. The object of the game is to score points and prevent the other team from scoring points while trying to catch a tiny golden ball called the Snitch.



IQA

This last objective is especially difficult because the Snitch is enchanted to fly fast and hide itself. Catching it wins extra points and ends the game.

Muggle Quidditch compensates for real-world magical handicaps while retaining the flavor of the original sport, substituting enchanted balls and brooms with stamina and creativity. The players on the team must toss, catch and block balls one-handed, while clutching a broom between their legs, to simulate flying.

When Muggles play, the Snitch is not a ball; it is another player. "The person playing the snitch dresses in yellow and runs around with a tennis ball inside of a sock, which he or she hangs from his pants," explained Devorah Zharnest, co-captain of the Quidditch Team of Stern College for Women (SCW), in an interview. "He or she can do anything and everything to stop the seekers from grabbing the tennis ball from him - including leaving the field, stealing players brooms, jumping on players backs."

Like "real" Quidditch, the tournament in New York featured tall hoops for sinking goals, commentators, and injuries. The Middlebury team beat Tufts University

100 to 50 in the finals. Q.C. Pittsburgh and Vassar followed in third and fourth places, respectively.

Though SCW's very own Quidditch team did not take part in the tournament, they came to cheer on all the finalists. Zharnest did not expect the game to be played as violently as it was. "People definitely got hurt because the players themselves were quite aggressive," she said. Referees and moderators were present to scale down the violence, "but even with the refs, many players still crashed into each other or tripped over one another, etc."

Zharnest described how one person was taken off the field on a stretcher, and another was winded and escorted off as well. The players pursuing the Snitch would often crash, fall down, or get tackled, since the Snitch could run however he wanted.

There were moments of playful humor too. To avoid capture, the Snitches ran around, did cartwheels and flips, or left the field for a short period. Sometimes, said Zharnest,

"they were downright sneaky and aggressive. Near the end of one game, all of the Snitches ran on the field to confuse the players and give the real Snitch time to run away. A few actually jumped on players backs and grabbed brooms right out from underneath them." Team spirit was palpable, like in the "real" Quidditch matches depicted in the Harry Potter books. The Quidditch World Cup drew a large crowd that included a whole range of nationalities. The teams all sported bright custom-made T-shirts, and many brought banners to proudly display their schools and team names. The tournament opened on November 13 with a parade of all the participating teams cheering and waving their banners.

Like in standard sports tournaments, the teams first scrimmaged against one another in elimination rounds, beginning Saturday, November 13 and continuing until Sunday afternoon, November 14. By then, the participating teams had been whittled down to semifinals, and then to finalists.

According to the IQA's mission statement, they were not only formed to govern and play Quidditch, but also to "utilize

the game to inspire youth to lead more physically active and socially engaged lives." The IQA leads socially-conscious projects. At the Quidditch World Cup, for example, a percentage of their T-shirt sales was earmarked for Book Aid International. The Quidditch World Cup also marked the end of the IQA's first annual book drive, in which 17 Quidditch teams helped to collect and donate over 9,000 books to libraries and schools.

SCW's Quidditch team follows in their footsteps. This past month they led two socially-conscious projects. They crocheted yarn squares for blankets to donate to those in need, through the organization Warm Up America. They are also running a book drive through the end of December along with the Education club.

## The Vampire Fad: Something to Sink Your Teeth Into

Elana Goldberg

Women of Stern College beware: Vampires have officially run amok. Though their existence has never actually been proven, it has not prevented the publishing, movie, and television industries from capitalizing on their mysterious appeal.

Widespread fear of vampires originally stemmed from Eastern European and Balkan legends of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Americans living during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in New England believed in vampires and attributed tuberculosis (TB) to nightly visits of deceased family members who had died of TB themselves.

Yet the vampire industry we know today was founded in earnest only toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1897, author Bram Stoker published "Dracula," a novel that became the paradigm of vampire fiction and set an entire genre of vampire, werewolf, demon, and other-creepy-things-themed literature into motion.

The recent publication of Stephanie Meyer's "Twilight Saga" catapulted vampires from folklore to rock star fame. Meyer succeeded in humanizing the vampire in an intensely relatable manner through the Cullen vampire family, who are given normal human features, feelings, and emotional capacity for love, rage and hatred. "Twilight" also romanticizes superhuman attributes of vampires, lending them a dreamy, movie star quality. Meyer's works spurred numerous offshoots of the vampire theme, among them the popular TV show "The Vampire Diaries,"

and depicted vampires in all their legendary gory glory, the fan base would undoubtedly be smaller. Hardcore horror fans would stay excited, but thousands of adoring teenyboppers would not proudly wear T-shirts emblazoned with "Team Edward" if Edward Cullen chased after Bella Swan sans the bulging muscles and amber eyes.

While many members of the Stern College for Women (SCW) community have undoubtedly enjoyed "The Twilight Saga" books and movies, there seems to be no outbreak of vampire-induced fanaticism on campus: students are not sporting "Team Edward" shirts - yet. Some SCW women express concern and upset over the vampire phenomenon that has overtaken such a large extent of young America. "Honestly, I think it's bizarre," says Sarah Gross, a junior in the Sy Syms School of Business. "I don't understand - first 'Twilight,' and now all of these unoriginal copies? It's lame." Eden Nussbaum, a junior at SCW, seconds Gross's commentary, opposing the pervading preoccupation with vampires in the TV and movie industries. "I think it's ridiculous how everyone is obsessed with vampires," Nussbaum says.

which was introduced in 2009 on the CW network.

The vampire fad is probably so popular because of everything it's not. If the vampire trend today stayed true to the folktales of yore

merely humans that did not have a spiritual essence to them; i.e., not demons.

Rambam's interpretation of this *medrash* is consistent with his comments in Hilchot Avoda Zarah of the Mishne Torah, where he states that all magical matters are "words of falsehood and deception, which the early idolaters used to trick the nations to follow them. It is not fitting for Jews, who are the cleverest of the clever, to use such nonsense, or even to think that they are of any use...."

However, there are instances in the Gemara (*Eruvin* 100b, *Niddah* 24b, *Shabbos* 151b) that mention the existence of a vampire

named Lilith, and also places that discuss the existence of *sheidim* (demons), hinting that there exists a type of in-between world in Jewish belief, neither of the living nor entirely of the spirit, which is where such demonic beings may exist.

The Ramban (Nachmanides) recognizes this in-between world in his commentary on the Torah. He explains that our universe contains a natural world, a quasi-spiritual world, and a totally spiritual realm, i.e., God. The natural and quasi-spiritual worlds operate based on set rules, but are ultimately controlled by God. If Man makes use of the quasi-spiritual world in the wrong way, he might mistake the quasi-spiritual as being totally independent of God. Thus Judaism does not approve of people trying to access otherworldly creatures, such as demons or vampires.

The beings depicted in the aforementioned Gemaras are also mentioned within the context of *aggadah* - stories fashioned by the Gemara's authors with the intent to teach some form of moral lesson. It is therefore illogical to assume that the references to vampires and other demonic beings in the Gemara should be taken literally or at face value. Given the Torah prohibitions against adherence to any such practices, one could conclude that, while enjoying a book or movie about a vampire does not transgress any *halachic* prohibitions, truly believing in their existence is forbidden.

Therefore, the lukewarm attitude towards vampires at SCW could very well stem from the Jewish trend against all things superstitious. Alternatively, perhaps we just have better things to do with our time. No matter the cause, the Beren campus is safe from fake fangs - at least for now.





## FEATURES

## Seminaries as Part of Student Programming at Stern

Renee Kestenbaum

Ayelet Ozar, a junior at Stern College for Women (SCW) left her seminary, Michlalah Yerushalayim, in January 2010 after learning there for a year and a half. "Coming to Stern after spending a year and a half in Israel was...a major culture shock," said Ozar. Taking her place at SCW involved a transition, switching "from Yerushalayim to New York City, from learning only Torah to once again learning secular studies."

This year, Ozar was given the opportunity to coordinate the Michlalah alumnae shabbaton, one of seven seminary alumnae shabbatonim being hosted on the Beren Campus this fall. In addition to these shabbatonim, numerous other seminaries will send their rabbis and teachers to speak to SCW students and guest alumni.

According to several seminary rabbis and alumnae directors, one function of post-seminary programming is to continue relationships between students, staff, and school. Often, it is difficult to maintain that connection given the time difference and distance. Alumnae programming on campus, through the combined forces of SCW and individual seminaries, helps to bridge that gap.

Seminaries and teachers often make very strong attempts to stay in touch with their alumnae. "We do it because we like them," said Rav Tuvia Kaplan, mashgiach ruchani of Midreshet Lindenbaum, in an interview. "After an intense year together in Jerusalem we don't want to just say goodbye."

"A Michlalah student continues her relationship with Michlalah and her teachers long after her year on its Machal program concludes," said Rav Chaim Pollock, head of Machal - Michlalah's program for overseas students - in an interview. "The Stern shabbaton affords our students a wonderful opportunity to make that post-seminary contact a 'normal' event, not something out of the ordinary."

Michal Porat Zibman, director of Alumni Affairs at Midreshet Moriah, relates that the programming at their shabbaton is geared toward reconnecting teachers and students. "On the one hand we're preparing *shiurim* and discussions that will provide insight and inspiration," she said. "But we are also making sure that there will be plenty of time for one-on-one schmoozing and learning with any of the three senior staff that we are sending."

Ozar readily affirmed that she had maintained close contact with her teachers from seminary. Now, by arranging the reunion shabbaton, she can help other alumnae stay in touch. Ozar worked with

another Michlalah alumna, Shira Kruger, a junior at SCW, to set the schedule for the shabbaton, as well as to coordinate payment and find beds for guest alumni.

Seminaries first began conducting alumnae shabbatonim in America in the 1990's in various communities. Yeshiva University (YU)'s Beren campus Office of Student Affairs (OSA) extended invitations to seminaries to conduct their shabbatonim on campus along with student clubs. Zelda Braun, associate dean of students, said this transition was a natural development since YU enjoys strong relationships with the seminaries and *yeshivot* on the S. Daniel Abraham Israel Program, and therefore hosting reunion shabbatonim on campus was important. OSA is also committed to meeting the needs of the campus community; creating programming that interests students, like these shabbatonim, is part of that commitment.

Seminaries are pleased to be hosted by SCW. "[The SCW administration] bend[s] over backwards to provide us with anything we need," Rav Kaplan explained. "[In SCW we are] in a Torah institution where Shabbat is honored both in the *reshut ha'yachid* (private domain) and in the *reshut ha'rabim* (public domain). The location is ... central for many of our college-age alumnae. The facilities are all there for this kind of program: a large dining hall, a *beit midrash*, *seforim*, classrooms, etc."

Though seminary shabbatonim were once separate-gender affairs, they now join with shabbatonim of other student clubs and include participants from the Wilf campus. According to Beth Hait, assistant dean of students, this is partly due to a shortage of weeks in the academic year, but also by student requests to daven with a YU *minyan* every Shabbat. Most seminary shabbatonim are now co-ed; the joint Michlalah and Machon Ma'ayan shabbaton remains the only exception.

Numerous students enthusiastically anticipate the alumni shabbatonim. Older students related that the majority of first-year-on-campus students attend their respective shabbatonim, and this year is no different. "I'm really looking forward to it," commented Minna Loventhal, a sophomore at SCW who just returned from Mischelet Mevaseret Yerushalayim (MMY). "I don't know anyone not going."

Rav Pollock related that "many [Michlalah] women are in touch with their rabbis and teachers for decades after their seminary year is over." In fact, he added, "one of the keys of establishing such a re-

lationship is continued contact in the first post-seminary year. Once an alumna knows that it is fine to be in contact, she will not be self-conscious in continuing that contact for years to come."

Though first-year seminary alumnae are the majority at reunion shabbatonim, older students do attend. Rivkah Rogawski, a senior at SCW, has attended the Michlalah shabbaton each year since her return from the seminary. "The shabbaton is really a highlight," she enthused. More than simply helping students keep in touch with their teachers, students have an opportunity to "discuss transitions in a much more realistic way than when [they] were in Israel. Also," she added, "they're really fun."

The reunion is not only enjoyable for students, but for teachers as well. "For me, these shabbatonim are an inspiration," said Rav David Milston, director of overseas students at Midreshet Harova, in an interview. "To take a time out during a very heavy recruitment schedule to be with alumnae is simply wonderful. To me it's like being with family."

Seminary shabbatonim are enjoyed by all involved, but they seem to tighten the social circles, as discussed by Shira Goldstein in an article in the October issue of *The Observer* titled, "The Seminary Effect." Goldstein chronicled the impact of the year in Israel's students' social lives once they arrive on campus. She suggested that many students' social circles are set before they arrive on campus based on the seminaries they go to, and even when students do branch out, they tend to do so as a group. Goldstein ultimately concluded that students make other friends outside their seminary circle, though it may take several semesters.

"Coming in with a really strong *chevra* (group), both from Michlalah and from other places, was extremely helpful and made the transition much easier," said Ozar of coming to SCW. "It quickly became clear that there are so many amazing girls, so many programs and *shiurim* and opportunities for learning and growth in Stern." If a reinforcement of the seminary environment, *chevra* and all, helps students transition smoothly, it seems to be worth it.

Perhaps shabbatonim are simply an exclusive treat for alumnae of seminaries that have high numbers of students at SCW. Like an unexpected bonus, the shabbatonim represent a return to the teachers, learning, and friends from the year in Israel, and offer a chance to reconnect with them.



## Shared on the Shuttle

Edited by Ariella Lipetz and Leah Peyman

As I was sitting on the shuttle on the way back from Dreidel-Palooza, I overheard one girl say to another "I can't believe they did it, they actually broke the world record...for most sstuds!"

- Anonymous

I was on the shuttle coming down to Stern and there was a group of rowdy boys in the back. They kept talking, really loudly, about different icebreakers they use. I wasn't really paying attention to them, but then they started an icebreaker for the entire shuttle. They made everyone go around, introduce themselves, say where they were from, and of course, the number one ice breaker...everyone had to say their favorite ice cream flavor. As if that wasn't enough, things got pretty awkward when a couple of guys starting arguing over whether or not vanilla was a real flavor.

- Anonymous

Sitting on the shuttle waiting for security to come was like waiting an eternity. Finally, the security guard came and gave the OK to the driver. I was safe to travel back to Stern with no distractions and no confrontations. However, right as the security guard was leaving I saw four boys headed right at me. They seemed to be in a deep and serious conversation, so I tried to keep to myself.

After about 10 minutes into the ride, they were still deep in conversation and still had intense looks upon their faces. I tried to maintain the somber aura and keep to myself for the remainder of the shuttle ride. However, there was little traffic that night so as the driver accelerated, the bumps in the back intensified, and as I was heaved upward into the air I began to laugh incessantly. It did not make things any better that I have a really loud laugh that can be heard from dozens of feet away. I tried to calm myself down, and as I did one of the guys in front turned around and said, "I guess not getting that second round interview is kinda funny." Mortified, I sank down into my seat, biting my lip for the rest of the ride back.

- Giggly Girl

## Azrieli Recieves \$1.6 Million

AZRIELI from page 1

achieve baseline financial management and fundraising efficiencies, and build organizational capacity. In so doing, they will be better able to offer a quality product at a reasonable price, level off the rate of future tuition increases, engage in more sophisticated financial sustainability activities, and bring transparency to day school finances in a manner that inspires the confidence of philanthropists, parents, the community and other funding and investment sources."

The Institute for University-School Partnership is committed to the advancement of Jewish education and to providing

comprehensive solutions to the complex challenges confronting day schools today. It provides the academic knowledge and research, educational experience and expertise, and strategic planning and performance improvement programs necessary to build a better day school. Collectively, these initiatives help improve the academic, behavioral, social, emotional, and religious outcomes for students in Jewish schools, develop more and better quality educators and lay leaders, and create a culture of research and innovation in the field. And, most importantly, they strengthen Jewish education today and bring wisdom to life for generations to come.



## SPORTS

## Anu Ratzim V'Heim Ratzim:

## Gretel Bergmann-Lambert vs. Nazi Germany

With the rise of the Nazi party, German Jews were not allowed spots on the German Olympic team for the Berlin Olympics of 1936. So Gretel Bergmann-Lambert, a world-class high jumper from Berlin, packed her bags for London where she won the British high jump championship in 1935.

Later that year, the United States government informed Germany that they would boycott the Berlin Olympics unless Jews were allowed to compete on the German teams. Attempting to avoid such an embarrassment on German soil, the Nazis agreed to reserve 21 spots on its national teams for German Jews. Thus, the Nazis decided to force Bergmann-Lambert to return to Germany

by threatening to hurt her family if she stayed in London.

Though the Nazis agreed to allow 21 Jewish athletes on their national teams, they had no intention to actually send Jews to the Olympic games. After all, what could be more embarrassing than a German Jew beating an Arian at the Berlin Olympics? Nevertheless, the United States, still upset by Nazi Germany's failure to treat all athletes fairly, continued to boycott the Berlin Olympics until Germany finally agreed to draft Gretel Bergmann-Lambert onto their Olympic high jump team.

The only "full Jew" on the German team training for the 1936 Berlin Olympic games, Bergmann-Lambert, as she said herself, "was determined to show [the Nazis] that a Jew can do it, and better." And she definitely gave the Nazis a fright.

A few weeks before the Olympics, Bergmann-Lambert tied the all-time German record by jumping 5 feet and 3 inches. Bergmann-

Lambert, describing her thoughts at the time, said, "The thought that I might represent Nazi Germany had sickened me, and yet I desperately wanted the chance



Torch lighting at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

to compete...but my motivation was different from...any other athlete...I wanted to show what a Jew could do, and I wanted to use my talent as a weapon against Nazi ideology." She wanted to show the world that the Jew was not "fat, bowlegged, and miserable." Yet the Nazis, unenthusiastic about granting a Jew time in the spotlight, still never intended to allow Bergmann-Lambert to compete in the Olympics.

Two weeks before the Berlin Games, after the United States athletes had already begun their journey across the ocean, the Nazis erased Bergmann-Lambert's records and awards from their record books. After which, the German sports authorities cut Bergmann from the high jump team for underachievement. As they wrote in a letter to Bergmann-Lambert, "Looking back on your recent performances, you could not possibly have expected to be chosen for the team."

The Germans replaced Berg-

mann-Lambert with Dora Ratjen, a high jumper who was later stripped from the records after a doctor confirmed that she was, in fact, a man. Though some sports historians claim the Nazis exploited Dora Ratjen in order to ensure that Bergmann-Lambert, a Jew, would not win gold on the high jump, most believe that Ratjen, raised as a girl because of indeterminate sexual characteristics, joined the German team of her own volition - but with the Nazis knowledge and approval.

Despite Germany's precautions to prevent a Jew from winning the high jump gold medal, Ibolya Csak, a Hungarian Jew, went home from the Berlin Olympics with the gold.

After being rejected from the Berlin Olympics, Bergmann-Lambert immigrated to the United States, swearing never to return to Germany. She entered the United States sports world, winning the American women's high jump championship in 1937 and 1938 and the women's shot-put in 1937, but retired from national competitions at the onset of the war in 1939.

Bergmann-Lambert kept her promise to avoid Germany for many years. In 1999, however, she returned to attend a ceremony at which Germany renamed the 1936 Olympics track and field stadium, the very stadium from which she had been excluded from competing - the very stadium upon whose doors hung signs that read, "No Jews or Dogs Allowed" - the Gretel Bergmann Stadium.

Originally, Bergmann-Lambert did not plan to attend the dedication. Yet, she finally acquiesced

## Play Together or Fall Alone

Meira Lerner

When my first-grade teammates and I were about to play organized sports for the first time in our lives, we had no sense of "team." Even cheering for our teammates was all about who could cheer the loudest. Everything that occurred on the field was an individual and in the moment experience.

One day, my team - the Red Sox - was playing our rival team, the Yankees (big surprise there). The Yankees were up at bat with a runner on first base. The batter hit the ball right next to second base. Somehow, the second baseman happened to swoop down just in time to field the ball a mere foot away from the base. We all held our breath, waiting for her to put her foot down to make the force out at second.

Much to our dismay, not only did she fail to put her foot down, but also took off her glove and did cartwheels around the field, singing, "I got the ball! I got the ball!" To say the least, the batter ended up with a two-run homer.

Though I often laugh about that game, at the time, I found it to be not the least bit amusing. I complained to my parents all night long. As much as I loved softball, I could not stand the games; I could not endure the helpless feeling that enveloped me as I waited on the field for the second baseman to regain focus and make the out.

Since then, my personality has been completely transformed through sports. Everything is about the team. Whether a team wins or loses, the players must take pride in the team; if a player makes an error, her teammates must cheer her up; if a player makes a good play, her teammates must share her joy as if they themselves had made the play (unlike that second

baseman, however, hopefully the celebration will wait until after the completed play).

During a national tournament for high school juniors and seniors from across America, the score was tied in extra innings during the championship game with two outs and a runner on third. The pitcher, pitching her second game of the day, fired a 60-mph fastball - the equivalent of a 90-mph baseball pitch in terms of reaction time - at the batter. The batter struck the corner of the ball, sending a fast grounder towards the shortstop. The shortstop, smoothly fielding the ball, whipped it to the catcher. Exhausted after an intense 10-day tournament, however, the shortstop uncharacteristically threw the ball over the catcher's head, allowing the runner on third to score for the win.

After shaking hands with the other team, the shortstop ran to the team shuttle without looking anyone in the eye. She felt personally responsible for the championship loss. Her parents, still shocked by the atypical error, tried to approach their daughter to no avail. Nevertheless, due to her teammates' support, the shortstop began laughing and fooling around before the shuttle reached the team lodgings.

Teammates should be like family. They should be a solid support system on and off the field; they should make fellow teammates proud and full of confidence.

Yeshiva University is an incredible institution, and we, the student body, have much to be proud of. Yet we need to act more like a team. We need to unite as one student body and, in doing so, raise the satisfaction, morale, and success of the overall student body.

when German sports authorities announced their intention for the renaming: "When young people ask, 'Who was Gretel Bergmann?' they will be told [her] story, and

the story of those times." As Bergmann-Lambert commented, "I felt it was important to remember, and so I agreed to return to the place I swore I'd never go again."

## Sports Quotes of the Month

*Somewhere behind the athlete you've become and the hours of practices and the coaches who have pushed you...is a little girl who fell in love with the game and never looked back.... Play for her.*

-Mia Hamm

*I am a member of a team, and I rely on the team, I defer to it and sacrifice for it, because the team, not the individual, is the ultimate champion.*

-Mia Hamm

*What I spent, I had; what I kept, I lost; what I gave, I have.*

-Henry Ward Beecher







*Every team requires unity. A team has to move as one unit, one force, with each person understanding and assisting the roles of his teammates. If the team doesn't do this, whatever the reason, it goes down in defeat. You win or lose as a team, as a family.*

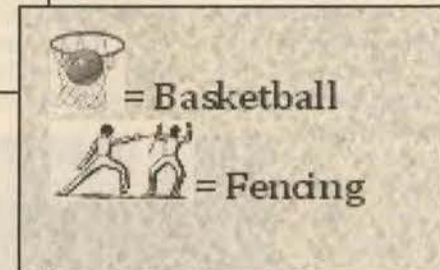
-Jack Kemp



## SPORTS/ARTS AND CULTURE

## Upcoming Home Game Schedule

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
			December 1	2  - 8:00
5  NIWFA Invitationa	6	7	8	9  - 7:00
12 - 1:00	13	14	15	16  - 8:00
19  - 1:00	20	21	22  - 8:00	23
24	25	26  - 8:00	27	28



\*For more details and game recaps, visit yumacs.com.

## Other news in Yeshiva University athletics:

Since the beginning of last year, we have been trying to form a varsity Softball team at Stern College. If you are interested in playing softball, please send me an email at mclerner@yu.edu. Hopefully, together, we will successfully form a team by this spring!

When Marriage Connects Cultures: A Film  
Review of 'Arranged'

Atara Arbesfeld

"Arranged" is a beautifully poignant film based on a true story that focuses on the relationship between two women from different worlds. One is an Ultra-Orthodox Jew from Boro Park, the other a hijab-wearing Syrian Muslim. Their friendship blossoms as they work together in a Brooklyn public school classroom, educating fourth grade students about tolerance and enduring an insensitive principal's negative comments about their religious practices and modest dress.

The main topic of their discussions and one of the film's prominent themes is an ordeal they both face: arranged marriage. Throughout the film, they grapple with maintaining their religious devotion, trusting their parents and confronting prejudice while dating for marriage.

Rochel Meshenberg (Zoe Lister-Jones) obtains a job as a teacher's aide to assist a visually impaired Puerto Rican boy in Nasira Khaldi's (Francis Benhamou) fourth grade class. Both are taken aback when a student asks if Muslims truly want to kill Jews, obviously referring to the two women. Until that moment, Rochel and Nasira hardly interacted, but they develop a close friendship after they perform a "unity circle" exercise with the class to teach the students about the choices they make in their re-

lationships.

Their bond is further strengthened by the religious prejudice unfortunately present in their workplace. The principal calls Rochel and Nasira into her office, telling them to get over "this whole religious thing," she even offers them money to buy "designer clothes" instead of wearing their modest garb.

When Rochel brings Nasira to her home to work on a project, Mrs. Meshenberg throws a fit and indirectly tells Nasira to leave, fearing that her daughter's *shidduch* prospects will suffer if they are seen together. In contrast, Nasira's family is quite accepting and civil towards Rochel when she visits. The Khaldi family is portrayed as a pious, peace loving Muslim family who values the importance of education. This emphasis is meant to dispel media stereotypes of extremist Muslim terrorist. Nasira is depicted as tolerant and forgiving towards those who insensitively comment on her head covering.

Both protagonists endure family pressure to get married. Nasira and Rochel each have their share of insufferable dates throughout the film, including suitors who are too old, too quiet, too talkative, too old-fashioned, too crude, and even one with no teeth.

When the going gets tough, they express their desire to choose for

themselves rather than have their suitors being chosen for them. However, Rochel is forced to realize that unbridled freedom is not as good as it seems when her relative Leah, who has drifted away from Judaism, brings her to a distasteful party filled with men, women and alcohol.

Ultimately, the overarching theme of the film is choice - the choice to form a friendship despite differences, the choice of picking a spouse, the choice to follow religion, the choice to follow intuition, and the choice to trust those you love to make decisions for you.

Instead of preaching to the audience outright, the film gives subtle clues to its take-home message by focusing on the character's developing friendship and their adventures as they find the right husbands. "Arranged" also gives the religious Jewish subjects a certain respect and dignity rare in a movie industry where Orthodox Jews are often satirized.

"Arranged" has an important, thought-provoking message to share. Its excellent script is coupled with a cast of actors who provide a skillful and convincing performance. It is a film that can perhaps be especially appreciated for its discussions about marriage, Jewish-Muslim relations, and its theme of choice and life decisions that permeate throughout.

## Around NYC

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

Ongoing through January 2, 2011

*Notorious and Notable: 20th Century Women of Style*

Museum of the City of New York

1220 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10029 (212)- 534- 1672

Visit [www.mcny.org](http://www.mcny.org) for pricing and hours.

Sunday, December 19, 2010, 11:00AM & 1:00PM

*Film Screening: Blessed is the Match-The Life and Death of Hannah Senesh*

Senesh

Irving Schneider and Family Gallery at the Museum of Jewish Heritage

36 Battery Place, Battery Park City, New York, NY 10280

Visit [www.mjhnyc.org](http://www.mjhnyc.org) for ticket pricing

Note: Film screening is free with museum admission

Through Sunday, December 26, 2010

*Andi Arnovitz: Tear/Repair*

Yeshiva University Museum at the Center for Jewish History

15 West 16<sup>th</sup> 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.

Wednesday December 29, 2010, 12:00PM

*West Side Stories Tour*

*A walk through a scenic part of the park. See rolling meadows, Lake views and more.*

Inside the Park on the north side of West 81<sup>st</sup>

Street at Central Park West.

Visit [www.centralparknyc.org](http://www.centralparknyc.org) for more information



## ARTS AND CULTURE

### A Pedestrian's Crossing: Paganini XXI Century

Melanie Sklaire

If appreciated properly, the Manhattan subway system can be one of the most interesting places in an already exciting city. As a commuting student, I navigate the subway on a daily basis and am usually greeted by the same scenes and sounds - crowds of people rushing past, loud voices chattering animatedly in a dozen different languages, foreign sounds mingling with the rumbling of trains that come screeching to a halt as a robotic voice announces, "This is 34<sup>th</sup> street, Herald Square..."

Amid all the noise and the chaos of the subway station, the sound of music often reaches out to greet me as I descend into the underworld of New York. Most people tend to pass by subway performers with barely a second glance, not bothering to pause and enjoy the music, and I admit that I am often guilty of the same apathy.

One day, however, as I swiped my MetroCard and pushed my way into the station, a unique sound forced me to stop in my tracks. My reaction was apparently shared by many other commuters; a crowd had gathered and there were eyes, cameras, camcorders and cell phones fixated on the source of the music.

At the center of the crowd stood a man with long dark hair wearing a white T-shirt, black pants, and bright red socks, playing an electric violin with intensity unparalleled by any subway performer I had ever seen before. As he played, he danced across his allocated space with a style that could only be described as a fusion of classical dancing, kung fu, and Michael Jackson choreography. The audience was spellbound.

This talented performer is Michael Shulman, who hails from

Russia, where he learned to play the violin as a child. He traveled to America at a young age to pursue his lifelong dream of being a musician and was drawn to the subway, where he had seen other musicians

and talent buy them. Further proof of his popularity lies in the many videos of him uploaded to YouTube by well-wishers seeking to give him a greater audience.

Although Shulman performs on television and at clubs, private events and other venues, his main stage remains the subway. He explains that he enjoys it because it gives him direct access to his audience. He describes his interaction with the audience of commuters as "always new and refreshing." The ever-changing audience of travelers rushing about

ensures that Shulman never has a dull moment. His frequent location changes also prevent him from getting bored. Shulman alternates between the stations at Herald Square, Union Square and Penn Station, playing at each few times a week.

Shulman's success has not come easy. Surprisingly, subway performers go through a rigorous audition process in order to obtain a permit before they are legally allowed to perform in subway stations. Music Under New York, an MTA program, seeks to draw people into the subways by creating a pleasant and melodious environment. Musicians have to first send a demo of their music to Music Under New York, and only if the demo is selected do they receive the opportunity to audition before a live audience of judges and media. Only the best performers are given a permit that allows them to make the subway their stage.

To learn more about this incredibly talented performer, visit [www.blackviolin.com](http://www.blackviolin.com) and check out samples of his music. Shulman also posts his performance schedule in each station, so be sure to stop by 34<sup>th</sup> Street/Herald Square when he is there.



Igor T., blackviolin.com

Above, Michael Shulman performs at the Union Square subway station.

earning a living. The years he has spent playing there helped him shape his unique style, and he finally achieved the sound he wanted with a custom-made electric shred violin named the "Black Dragon," created specifically for him by E.F Keebler, renowned manufacturer of electric instruments.

Now his distinctive style draws crowds of commuters, many of whom become regular attendees at these "concerts." Shulman's playlist includes his own original material as well as covers of many popular songs. He usually ends the performance with a few of Michael Jackson's songs, like "Billie Jean," "Thriller," "They Don't Care About Us," and my personal favorite, "Smooth Criminal." Onlookers laugh in delight as they recognize these songs, and sometimes they even break out in dance.

Shulman calls his project "Paganini XXI Century" to convey its combination of classical elements and modern influences. He does a lot of blending, both in his music and his dancing style, creating unforgettable performances that keep people coming back to see him again. He also keeps a stack of demo CDs with him, and many of those impressed with his skill

### Student Scoop

An interview with Dina Lustiger (junior, music major) and Penina Siegel (senior, Judaic studies major), Co-directors of B'Notes

When did you first become involved with the B'Notes?

**Penina Siegel (PS):** When I was a sophomore, two years ago, the seniors decided to start an a cappella group, and the B'Notes were created. I have been a member for the past two years and it has been amazing. My junior year, Zehava Birman was the head director, and I was co-assistant director along with Nurita Abromowitz. This year I am fortunate to be co-director along with Dina Lustiger, and it has been an amazing experience so far.

**Dina Lustiger (DL):** I auditioned for the B'Notes last year, during my first semester on campus. I really enjoyed being active in the group last year, and I'm happy I have the opportunity to remain involved and co-direct with Penina this year.

How have the B'Notes changed since the group first began two years ago?

**DL:** Well, since I wasn't on campus yet when the B'Notes started their first year, I can't definitively say how the group has changed since its grassroots days, but during the time that I have been involved, our musical tones have really developed. Each time we practice, we encourage and motivate one other to explore and push ourselves to the best of our vocal abilities - as a result, we keep getting better and better and our sound continues to evolve.

**PS:** We have expanded our repertoire and [continue to] improve in every way.

How do you decide which songs to sing? Who arranges the harmonies?

**PS:** Last year we purchased four arrangements and members of our group arranged the others. [This semester] we plan to perform many of the songs that we performed last year. Additionally we plan to perform new songs that members of our a cappella group will arrange. We really look forward to performing our older material as well as our new material!

**DL:** In certain cases, everyone in the group helps out with the harmonies; every now and then we'll try something out at a practice, and if it really works well, we'll keep it. We also allow members

to make song requests at practice and encourage everyone to try out for solos...it's important to us that everyone has good time at practice too.

When is the B'Notes next performance?

**DL:** December first, at the Chanukah Chagigah. Everyone should be there! It'll be awesome!

**PS:** The next scheduled performance will be Tuesday, December 7th at the Stern Social Justice Society event! We hope to see everyone there!

What is your favorite thing about Stern and why?

**DL:** The music department! Since I'm one of the few music majors on campus, I get a lot of individualized attention from all of the music professors. I feel like [the professors] really know me and are invested in my musical education and development as a musician. Also, I like the diverse offering of events held on campus each week - in fact, I just came back from "Smokey Janes" and it was great!

**PS:** There are so many, but definitely being able to be a part of the B'Notes. There are not many outlets for frum girls who want to sing and perform, and being a part of the B'Notes makes that a possibility!

Any words of advice for someone who wants to develop their musical ability or improve their singing technique but isn't sure how to begin?

**DL:** Firstly, I'd say to take advantage of the wide array of musical activities available at Stern. The music department here offers several instructive and informative music courses each semester. There is even choral ensemble for students who wish to work on their vocal abilities and chamber ensemble for students who would like to learn to play an instrument. Developing one's musical ability definitely requires consistent practice, but I do think it is a skill that one can always work on and improve over time, so if it's your dream to learn how to sing, don't give up on it - keep practicing and trying.

**PS:** Audition for the B'Notes next year!!

Do you have something to say?

A comment on an article? An opinion on a school event?

Tell us about it!

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## ARTS AND CULTURE

## A Visitor from Lod: The Lod Mosaic Exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Hannah Rozenblat

Are you planning a trip to Lod, Israel to see rare historic relics and artifacts anytime in the near future? If not, you may want to arrange a trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art instead, where a special Lod treasure awaits you. An ornate and large mosaic on a stone background hailing from Lod, Israel, now lies towards the back of the John A. and Carole O. Moran Gallery on the first floor of the Met.

Although the Lod mosaic is currently on showcase at the Met, it was actually accidentally discovered by workers during highway construction in Lod, Israel in 1996. Two months ago, the Israel Antiquities Authority lent the impressive and well-preserved mosaic to the Metropolitan Museum for a temporary exhibition.

Following extensive research, archaeologists have determined that the mosaic was likely constructed in about 300 CE, and was probably displayed in a large room of a private house where visitors were greeted and entertained. This particular mosaic is unusual in that it is preserved in pristine condition.

The main panel of the mosaic, measuring 13 square feet, is divided into a series of smaller squares and triangles by an interlocking cable pattern, forming square and triangular segments in which various animals, fish and ships are depicted. The ships depicted in the marine scene on the southern end mosaic panel are of particular value and interest to historians who are now using this imagery to learn more about the specifications of ships utilized by the Roman Empire around the year 300 CE.

Interestingly, although the ships have attracted much scholarly attention, little information is available about the giraffe and rhinoceros featured on the mosaic's central octagon. Both the giraffe and the rhinoceros are rarely depicted in ancient art, and thus their appearance together on the mosaic makes the piece all the more remarkable and unique. Historians speculate that giraffes may have been used in the public sporting games held in ancient Rome; the rhinoceroses were likely brought to Rome from northern Africa and used by the Romans for shows and entertainment as well.

Whereas the rhinoceros is rarely portrayed in art from this time period, the fish and marine creatures displayed prominently in another scene on the mosaic are a commonly found in ancient Roman

art. Fish was a staple in the diet of individuals in this area, many of whom lived close enough to the Mediterranean Sea to obtain fresh fish on a regular basis.

Discoveries of breathtaking artwork and archeological masterpieces in Israel have provided historians with much insight regarding the country's rich, wonderful cultural history for years; this is certainly not the first time that an ancient mosaic has been discovered in Israel. However, unique to the Lod mosaic is its rich imagery, beautiful colors, and near immaculate preservation. In April the mosaic will be returned to the Israel Antiquities Authority, so now is the time to go see the beautiful Lod mosaic before it leaves New York City forever. Once it returns to Israel, it will permanently be housed in the Shelby White and Leon Levy Lod Mosaic Center in Lod Israel, a museum that will be specifically constructed to house this magnificent treasure.

*Hannah Rozenblat is a freshman at Stern College for Women majoring in English with a minor in art history.*



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## SCIENCE AND HEALTH

### Eating Disorders Revisited

Chani Markel

It is an unfortunate reality that eating disorders are prevalent among young adults on college campuses. According to the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA), nearly 20 percent of university students have struggled with an eating disorder. A shocking 55 percent of those polled claimed that they personally know or have known in the past at least one person with an eating disorder.

Individuals with eating disorders are characterized by abnormal relationships with food, either overeating excessively or consuming as little food as possible. While eating disorders are often manifested through physical behaviors, they usually contain strong psychological and social components. Sufferers may obsessively think about food and body image and avoid food in social situations.

The two most common types of eating disorders are anorexia nervosa and bulimia. Individuals with anorexia have an obsession with becoming thin and will do anything in their power to achieve their drastic weight-loss goals, even if it involves starving themselves to attain their desired weight. Anorexics have such an intense fear of gaining weight that they slowly begin to avoid food altogether and end up starving their bodies of the basic nutrition needed to survive.

No matter how thin people with anorexia become, they perceive themselves as being overweight. Many fatal complications can arise from anorexia, such as dehydration, emaciation and cardiac arrest. While those with anorexia can be cured through psychological and nutritional counseling or medication, treatment is slow and many battle anorexia all of their lives.

While individuals with anorexia strive to subsist on a minimal amount of calories, those suffering with bulimia typically consume large quantities of food and then attempt to rid the food from their bodies, or purge. This can be achieved through vomiting, using laxatives, or exercising compulsively. Bulimics often feel ashamed of their behaviors and try to hide their disorder, purging secretly.

Although bulimics are often of average weight, they have the same emotional and psychological issues as anorexics. When left untreated, bulimia can lead to tooth decay, stomach complications, chronic sore throats and kidney infections. Although cognitive behavioral therapy and anti-depressants have proven to be effective methods of treating bulimia, many individuals suffer for years before getting the help they need.

Rising obesity rates in the United

States have increased awareness of a third type of eating disorder called binge eating disorder. Like those with bulimia, individuals with binge eating disorder experience a loss of control over their eating and consume large quantities of food in excess. However, unlike bulimics, these individuals do not purge themselves of the excess calories. Therefore, binge eating disorder often leads to dan-



Julia Siegel

gerous obesity.

Unlike some of the other common eating disorders, which are much more common in women, both men and women have an equal chance of developing binge eating disorder. And while overeating is not stereotypically perceived as dangerous, it can be just as fatal as starvation. Chronic bingeing leads to an increased risk of developing type II diabetes, heart attacks, strokes and other serious diseases.

The definitive root cause of eating disorders remains somewhat of a mystery, but potential triggers include chemical imbalances, difficult home environments and trauma. Studies show that individuals whose immediate family members have eating disorders are almost 12 times more likely to develop a disorder as well, proving that eating disorders may have a genetic component. Scientists exploring the biological underpinnings of eating disorders point to deficiencies in neurotransmitters, such as dopamine or GABA, in the brain. Research also indicates that those with eating disorders may have abnormalities in the hypothalamus, the part of the brain that manages hunger sensation.

While individuals of any age can develop an eating disorder - from young children to the elderly - the majority of those afflicted are teenagers and young adults. Researchers speculate that this is due to the host of bodily changes that occur during adolescence, coupled with the psychological pressures of identity formation, maturing relationships, and the new-found independence that comes with adulthood. Many point to a lack of self-esteem as one of the roots of eating disorders. The vast majority of teens with eating disorders

are female, in part due to the pressure in popular culture for girls to be thin.

With this information in mind, it is not surprising that the rates of eating disorders on college campuses are so high. College students are given the opportunity to finally become independent and live on their own. It is often the first time that many students are in charge of their own meal schedules and preparing their own food. Some may need to take on part time jobs while struggling with their school work. This increase in responsibility, coupled with a new environment and difficult course load, can be very stressful for many young adults. Along with anxiety and depression, eating disorders can develop in this stressful environment.

Dr. Yael Muskat, assistant director of the Counseling Center at Stern College for Women (SCW), attributes these factors to the increase of eating disorders among college students. "A student may attempt to impose internal control of eating and body weight as a way of gaining a sense of control over her life," says Dr. Muskat. "Additionally, college students are sensitive to perceived expectations of beauty, and some define thinness as the measure of attractiveness."

Dr. Muskat adds that university health and nutrition centers can be powerful resources to help students with eating disorders recover. "At the Counseling Center, we have worked with a whole gamut of issues, ranging from adjustment to more chronic mental health conditions...At Stern, like at all colleges, there are students confronting problems and emotional issues surrounding their eating behaviors." Fortunately, SCW students have the advantage of a small, caring student body that is relatively well informed about eating disorders and their potential consequences.

Any SCW student experiencing disordered eating can come to the Counseling Center to meet with a therapist or psychiatrist to form a treatment plan. If long term treatment is expected, the Counseling Center can refer students to nutritionists or therapists in the community. The Counseling Center also works cooperatively with the Residence Life staff to make sure that students at risk receive the attention they need. Dr. Muskat concludes that, "it is our goal to provide students with services in a warm and caring way, and we can help students with therapy, medication or consultation. Please look out for our various programs on campus."

### A History of Mrs. Victory

Observer Staff

For students studying the sciences, Mrs. Firuzeh Victory has become a familiar face in Stern College for Women (SCW). Perhaps it is because Mrs. Victory has been a lab technician at SCW for the past 33 years. She can always be found on the chemistry lab floor—teaching, cleaning, befriending students, or looking up places for the Chemistry Club to buy dry ice for their annual magic show.

Mrs. Victory's many roles elude any one title; upon being asked if she could be interviewed for *The Observer*, she replied, "Of course. I am like a mom for my students; they can find me anytime."

**Observer Staff (OS):** Where you were born? When did you come to New York?

**Mrs. Firuzeh Victory (FV):** I was born in Tehran, the capital of Iran. I finished my bachelor degree in Iran, and then I came here about 38 years ago, when I left Iran. And I've been at Yeshiva about 33 years.

**OS:** Did you like chemistry while you were in school?

**FV:** Yes. Science in general was my favorite. Orgo (organic chemistry) during college was the tops for me! Also, analytical was good, but the only thing was, they didn't have enough supplies [at my school]. Sometimes my entire solid, my entire sample, was dumped in the desiccator, and I had to go another eight hours working. That's why I liked orgo. It gave me more enjoyment. That's why I am attached to this subject. But I work with all the labs in the Chemistry Department—essentials, analytical, biochemistry and orgo.

**OS:** Where did you work before you came to Stern College?

**FV:** Before I worked for Yeshiva, temporarily I was in pharmaceuticals, at a company that was owned by England. I worked there, and then when my child was two years old, I stopped working. When I started working again, I went to Yeshiva.

**OS:** Why did you choose Yeshiva University (YU)?

**FV:** One of my friends suggested to me that, since I'm a Jewish person, that I should find out if I would be able to work there. I went uptown, and they told me that they needed somebody to work uptown [at Yeshiva College]. I was with the boys for two years. But, I'll be honest with you: at that time I was very young, and I couldn't deal with the young boys. I wanted to be serious, without any joking, and when I wanted to do this it did not go well. I said that this is not for me, and my boss called me and said, "Stern College needs somebody, are you willing to go there?" And I

have been here ever since.

**OS:** Of all the different labs, do you have a favorite one to work with?

**FV:** I like them all. Organic is a great lab for the undergrad, and biochemistry is a great lab for the people that want to go to science in future, such as medicine, Ph.D.s, something like that. But orgo lab for me is enjoyable.

**OS:** What is your favorite part of being a Lab Technician?

**FV:** I tell you, I don't feel that I'm only a technician. I do everything. I have taught the students, I work in the lab, and I act as a manager. I can't put an exact name on my job. I'm without a title, always, because I do everything. Yesterday I cleaned a room here because a glass broke in one of the cabinets, and there was no worker here. That's what I'm saying; I go from cleaning to teaching.

**OS:** What is the funniest thing a student has ever done in lab?

**FV:** You know, unfortunately, lab isn't very funny. If a student does something and I'm not there to supervise, it usually ends badly. For example, a student put the tubing for the water to the gas once. But thank God I feel that sometimes I have six eyes, and my eyes go to all sides of lab. My first priority is safety of the students. The scariest thing that happened is about 15 or 18 years ago, when one girl worked by herself without telling anybody. When I came to the lab, I saw the mercury thermometer from the Melt-Temp flying in the air! And another girl with long hair in the lab was working with a flame, and she burned her hair. That's why now you see that when I come to the lab I ask that everybody put the hair back, even the safety glasses on; and, thank God, nothing has happened. This is the stuff that, all the time, can happen if you are not careful.

**OS:** If you had any advice for the students here, what would it be?

My best advice is that you shouldn't discourage yourself; be strong in all situations, and have a very strong mind. The first year is a very hard year. You have to have self-confidence, and tell yourself, "I am somebody." Don't make yourself low. And, if you see that you like something, go on, be somebody—doctor, professor, whatever you want.

Be complete. You have energy, you are smart. You come to Yeshiva, you spend time in classes, and if you have a problem, go to the teacher, ask, and solve your problem. We need all these students in our future to become our doctors and professors!

*If you would like to learn more information about eating disorders, you can research the NEDA online. Additionally, you can call NEDA's hotline at 1-800-931-2237 if you suspect that you or a friend may be suffering with an eating disorder.*



## SCIENCE AND HEALTH

## The Most "Nobel" of Prizes

Naomi Friedman

The Nobel Prize, perhaps the most coveted and famous award in the world, is bestowed only upon those individuals whose actions or inventions profoundly impact global society. An international award administered by the Nobel Foundation in Stockholm, Sweden, the Nobel Prize has been awarded annually since 1901. Prizes are given in a range of categories, from Peace to Chemistry, Medicine and Physics. The latter three awards have been won by many famous scientists, such as Richard Feynman and Linus Pauling, and offer a good snapshot of what is happening in the scientific world.

The 2010 Nobel Prize in Physics awardees are Andre Geim and Konstantin Novoselov, two Russian-born physicists from the University of Manchester. The duo managed to isolate graphene, a new arrangement of carbon atoms that is both exceptionally strong and thin. Geim and Novoselov discovered graphene by extracting it from graphite, the material found in the cores of ordinary pencils.

Geim and Novoselov demonstrated that carbon in this form - only an atom thick - has astonishing properties. It allows physicists to study a new group of two-dimensional materials and conduct experiments in quantum mechanics. Graphene is mostly transparent and so dense that not even helium, the lightest of gases, can pass through it.

Graphene has the ability to completely transform electronics, with applications ranging from solar cells to computers and sensors. It conducts electricity as well as copper does and is an efficient heat conductor. It can therefore be used to manufacture higher-speed, innovative electronics such

as flexible iPad-like devices. One day, scientists and engineers may even make satellites, airplanes and cars out of this new material. Richard F. Heck, Ei-ichi Negishi, and Akira Suzuki were awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for their work in palladium-catalyzed cross coupling, a new way to link carbon atoms together. This is a trying task because carbon is a stable atom that will not react in chemical reactions. Before the discovery of palladium-catalyzed cross coupling, scientists could only form new carbon-carbon bonds along with many extraneous byproducts that would then have to be separated out from the desired compound.

Palladium-catalyzed cross coupling fixes this problem because it allows the carbon atoms to meet on a palladium atom - kind of like a chemical *shadchan* - that jump starts the chemical reaction. This advanced tool has made it possible for chemists to synthesize carbon-based molecules similar in complexity to those found in nature, like DNA. It is used worldwide in medicine to create drugs and pharmaceutical products and to develop more refined electronics.

The Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine was granted to Robert Edwards of Cambridge University for inventing in-vitro fertilization in the early 1950's. In-vitro fertilization (IVF) is the process of combining a woman's egg and a man's sperm outside of the body, allowing the cells in the newly-formed zygote to divide, and re-inserting the zygote into the woman's uterus for the rest of the pregnancy.

In the 1950's, Edwards realized that fertilization outside the body could be a potential treatment for

infertility. Previous research had proven that rabbit egg cells could be fertilized with sperm in test tubes, so he decided to try this method in humans. In 1969, the first human egg was fertilized by a sperm in a test tube.

However, Edwards faced a problem. The fertilized egg did not develop beyond one cellular division. He hypothesized that if eggs matured in the ovary before they were removed for IVF, they would divide and develop properly upon fertilization. Using this theory, Edwards and his partner, gynecologist Patrick Steptoe, established the Bourn Hall Clinic in Cambridge, the world's first IVF center.

Since the birth of the first "test tube baby" in 1978, IVF has made it possible to treat infertility in many couples, solving these couple's medical and psychological problems by allowing them to have families.

Today, IVF is an established therapy used throughout the world. Edwards' discoveries opened doors to a new field of medicine that contributed to development of modern society. Today, about four million people have been born through IVF due to Edwards' work, and his discovery has given joy to infertile couples all over the world.

The 2010 Nobel Prize winners have, through their achievements, improved lives and aided the advancement of technology. Their accomplishments will impact society at large, whether through improved electronics or through the birth of one more baby. It is apparent that these individuals are deserving of the most "nobel" of prizes.

Science Book Short

## An Intimate Look at One Doctor's Life

Helen Ayala Unger

This month's science pick, "Singular Intimacies: Becoming a Doctor at Bellevue," offers an account of the author's internship and residency at the prestigious New York Bellevue Hospital. Danielle Ofri, an acclaimed writer and internist, candidly recounts her early days as a doctor, her triumphs and pitfalls, and her connection to several special patients. Fascinating and frank, this book is a must-read for anyone considering medicine as a career.

"When I started this book, my desire was to get down all the stories I'd acquired from Bellevue, the ones I'd been telling friends and family about over the years," writes Ofri in her book's epilogue. The book is mainly anecdotal; each chapter features new patients, new experiences, and new lessons learned. For example, in a chapter

titled "Positive," she details her relationship with a newly diagnosed AIDS patient, while in "Change of Heart," she expounds upon the treatment of a drug addict with a defective heart valve. Along the way, Ofri explains the intricacies of hospital protocol, allowing the reader to follow her narrative smoothly.

Ofri's accessible writing style and personal stories make "Singular Intimacies" hard to put down. She humanizes both doctors and patients in a way that is both educational and engaging. This month's featured science read is not to be missed.

*Helen Ayala Unger is a sophomore at SCW from Cleveland, Ohio, majoring in Biology. She enjoys lab research and avoiding hospital codes. Go Cavs!*

Nutrition Nook

## The Deadly Seven: Foods that Can Ruin Your Diet

Sarah Edinger

Are you still struggling with your weight, despite following numerous dieting tips? Then think about eliminating these seven unexpected saboteurs from your diet:

1. *100-calorie snack packs.* Despite good intentions, these pre-packaged treats, often cookies or chips, can lead to overeating. Research has shown that students who eat the portion packets tend to eat several of them, in contrast to students who just eat from regular bags. A good tip to avoid this is to leave out your empty snack pack, because people eat less food when they see what they have already consumed.

2. *Diet treats.* Although your granola bar may look healthy and say 'fat-free,' chances are it is probably high in something else, like sugar or calories. Katherine Brookling, a Registered Dietitian, explains that people tend to eat twice as many calories when consuming low-fat snacks, rather than simply satisfying their craving with the real thing.

3. *Liquid calories.* A cup of cappuccino in the morning may not seem so bad, but those extra 150 calories can add up. Also, the brain does not register that it has received a substantial calorie burst and you end up consuming more calories overall.

4. *Energy snack bars.* Snacks are a good way to keep your me-

tabolism running and curb your appetite; however some snack bars can pack up to 350 calories. That's nearly the amount of calories in an average meal! Don't be blinded by high protein content - make sure that sugar and calories aren't equally present.

5. *Fat-free salad dressings.* A salad needs some to have some fat in order to help the body absorb the nutrients and vitamins in the vegetables. Whenever possible, go for the dressings with olive oil, which contain useful unsaturated fats, rather than the creamy dressings that contain unhealthy saturated fats.

6. *Baked potato chips.* It is true that they are low in fat; however they are also low in nutrients and fiber and leave you unsatisfied. You may think that since the chips are baked, they are suddenly healthy, but they are still just a potato chip with little to offer the human body. Opt for popcorn instead - it has fewer calories and more fiber.

7. *Diet soda.* There is no way that a mix of artificial flavorings, artificial sweeteners, and artificial coloring is beneficial for the body. Your body needs food products it can recognize, not foreign entities concocted by scientists in a lab. Additionally, the high caffeine levels can induce hyperactivity, high blood pressure and raised blood sugar levels.

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## ISRAEL

## Promises, Promises

Karen Steinberger

On a cold November night, a group of about 50 Yeshiva College (YC) and Stern College for Women (SCW) students gathered on the fifth floor of Furst Hall to watch a documentary called "*Hav-tachot*" (promises). The documentary, directed by Justine Shapiro, B. Z. Goldberg and Carlos Bolado, focused on the much-discussed topic of the Arab-Israeli conflict with a refreshing new perspective: through the eyes of Israel's children.

The film spans the years from 1995 to 2001. The beginning of the film shows an array of snapshots of different Israeli and Palestinian children, then moves to specific interviews of various children, all about the age of 10. The first to be interviewed are twins, Yako and Daniel, who live in Jerusalem. They are secular Jews, and through the interview they express their fears of going on buses and the possibility of being blown up by bombs. The next child, Shlomo, is an Orthodox Jew who lives in the Old City of Jerusalem. He speaks fluent English since he is originally from the United States, and proudly explains that he is the son of a rabbi. The next interviewee, Mahmoud, also lives in the Old City of Jerusalem, and his father runs a cof-

fee shop. He says that it explicitly states in the Quran that the land of Israel belongs to the Palestinians. Similarly, Moishe, a religious boy from Bet El, unrolls a Torah scroll and points to the verses that he believes prove that Israel belongs to the Jews. He says that he "fights because this land is ours." Sanabel and Hassan live in the Deheishe refugee camp, and explain that while they live 10 minutes outside of Jerusalem, they have never actually seen the holy city.

Throughout the interviews, the directors portrayed images that were slightly biased, exploited the plight of the Palestinians at checkpoints, and used such words as "settlement," "occupation," and "refugee." Besides this, however, most of the film stayed on a pretty even keel.

Certain scenes in the film relayed an underlying theme of miscommunication. In one shot, Sanabel travels with her family to visit her father in the Ashkelon jail. At a checkpoint, an Israeli soldier tells a mass of Palestinians to stop and wait, all the while yelling, "Does anyone understand Hebrew and Arabic?" He continues to beckon for any sort of translator while Sanabel looks upon him with confusion and anger. Sanabel

later expresses that the suffering her family goes through on a daily basis is because of Israel.

In another poignant scene, while a director interviews Shlomo in a common courtyard in the Old City, a Palestinian child runs up to the camera, stares at Shlomo and starts a burping contest. Shlomo tries to keep his focus on the question but eventually gives in, continuing the burping contest while keeping his eye contact uneasily with the director. The scene provides comic relief and bespeaks of the common language children have to relate to one another. It instills hope in the viewer and raises the possibility that if children can find common ground, then perhaps adults can too.

This hope is encouraged when Yako and Daniel visit Sanabel and Hassan in the Deheishe camp. Yako and Daniel focus on the fact that Hassan is also an athlete like them. In the camp, Yako and Daniel are made welcome by Sanabel's family and they eat, play, and ultimately talk of their differences. Yako and Daniel sit on one couch while the other children sit on another and both express their desires to listen to each other's sorrows. Hassan becomes emotional about the fact that perhaps after their meeting,

Yako and Daniel will not want to be friends with him anymore.

Several years later, Hassan is proven correct. Yako and Daniel express how it was difficult to remain in contact with someone in the Deheishe camp. Moishe expresses that he would want to meet Arab teenagers like himself to remedy the lack of understanding he believes exists between Arabs and Jews.

The film is a hopeful portrayal of how children can agree without worry or concern over matters that divide them. Linda Scherzer, a former reporter for CNN who came to speak during the event, spoke at the end of the film. She acknowledged that although the director did an excellent job imbuing a hopeful tone through the eyes of the children, "when common ground for the children is lost, then they realize that their friendships are unsustainable."

Ultimately, the film gives the viewer an interestingly new perspective on the Arab-Israeli conflict and raises awareness of the faults of both sides of the conflict. It simultaneously embodies a deep sadness by revealing the major problem: a lack of proper communication.

## A Temporary Dwelling

Dena Kapetansky

I always have had ties to Israel, since my aunt, uncle, and cousins live in Israel. Whenever Israel was mentioned in school or on the news, my reaction was, "My aunt lives there." Yet never did I associate Israel with my own life. After a summer trip to Israel for a bar mitzvah and a wedding in 2004, however, my point of view changed.

I was terrified for my upcoming trip to Israel, since I am terrified of heights, frightened of planes, get motion sickness, and fear terrorists will hijack the plane. Moreover, if by some miracle we made it to Israel, my blood curdled at thoughts of what would happen next. I knew my sister (who went two weeks before my family did) was fine in Gush Katif, but the city borders the menacing Gaza strip. Isn't it a war zone? With sweaty palms and a strident heartbeat, I crossed my fingers and anticipated arrival in the threatening land.

Stepping out of the airport, I felt a bit more at ease. It did not appear to be a harmful place. Anyway, I was too jet-lagged to even function.

I woke up the next morning to find my mother and father awake and dressed in fancy clothes. They told me to hurry up and get dressed for the bar mitzvah. As I rushed to get ready, my fears started accumulating in my head again. This bar mitzvah is at the Kotel, and wasn't that a target for an attack? The entire taxi ride there all I did was worry. Worrying is what I do best.

We got there and I became speechless, breathless, and even worrisome. The sight was impossible to describe. It was both beautiful and sad. I saw old ladies and young ladies on the women's side all fused together as one unit, praying against a historic wall. There was an overflow of request notes embedded in every crack and crevice. People were crying for loved ones while I participated in a celebration. I felt dreadful for all of the sobbing people who should be able to pray in peace, but instead they must witness joyous, dancing people while they experience anguish. Or maybe it makes them happier to see their fellow brothers and sisters having a *simcha* when they are unable to feel much of anything. It is amazing how one wall can lure so many sects of Jews in very different situations.

We gathered around the *mechitza* and peeked over to see the twins *laning* from the Torah. It may seem insane to some that this family traveled halfway around the world to have their sons become *bnei mitzvah*, when they can be *bnei mitzvah* back in Chicago. Not

See DWELLING page 16

## New Course at SCW Explores Contemporary Israeli Fiction

Lauren Burstein

While students at Stern College for Women (SCW) are offered ample ways to connect with and learn about Israel, whether it be by participating in numerous activities sponsored by the Israel club or writing for *The Observer's* Israel section, in the upcoming spring semester students will have yet another, more unique way to learn about the Jewish state. The SCW English department is offering a course entitled, "Contemporary Israeli Fiction," taught by Professor Adina Kay-Gross.

"I'm excited to teach literature at Stern," says Kay-Gross, who has taught English composition at SCW for the past three semesters and who is a faculty tutor at the Writing Center. "This will be an opportunity to read and study [Israeli] fiction," she adds. "I'm looking forward for the reading to take the forefront. But of course, there will be writing too!"

Kay-Gross also notes the advantage of teaching Israeli contemporary fiction specifically at SCW, where many students visit Israel and want to remain connected to the country. "Many of us visit Israel and come back to the States with a new favorite Hebrew

song or a taste for a new Israeli restaurant. But, perhaps we're less exposed to literature—an aspect of Israeli culture that's just as rich and meaningful," Kay-Gross points out.

While the SCW English department has offered courses that cover Israeli prose and poetry, this is the first course that will focus primarily on contemporary Israeli writers. In the course, Kay-Gross plans to discuss the relationship between changes in Israeli life and changes in Israel's literary canon. "I hope that by reading several short stories and novel excerpts written by the younger guard of the Israeli literary scene, we'll have an opportunity to compare and contrast what's happening in literature in Israel today with the works produced by celebrated Israeli writers of 40 years ago. I'd love for students to think about what those changes are attributed to in an attempt to find a reflection of the political and social changes in Israel through its literature."

Kay-Gross said she also plans to cover the less discussed, yet highly important issues covered by a smaller segment of Israeli authors, such as the idea of *ba'al tshuva*

(an irreligious Jew who becomes religious) and *yoezeh l'she'elah* (a religious Jew who becomes irreligious). Other material will include firsthand accounts of the first and second intifadas, the assassination of Yitzchak Rabin, and accounts of life in Israel from the perspectives of both Jewish and Arab Israelis and Palestinians. "I am looking forward to thinking about these very immediate questions," Kay-Gross comments.

As an undergraduate student, Kay-Gross took a class entitled, "The International Short Story," in which she read works by Indian, British, Israeli and South American authors. This class, in addition to her years spent studying in Israel before and after college, inspired her continued interest in Israeli fiction. While Kay-Gross currently has a favorite Israeli author, she is opened to obtaining a new one. "For a long time, A. B. Yehoshua was my favorite Israeli author," she says. "I read his book, 'The Lover,' while living in Israel as an 18-year-old and subsequently learned a lot about Israeli political history. I'm looking for a new favorite though," admits Kay-Gross. "I'm hoping the reading we do for

this class might allow me to discover one!"

Dr. Linda Shires, chair of the English department, shares her enthusiasm about the new course. "The English department is very pleased that Adina Kay-Gross will teach contemporary Israeli literature for us this coming term—a course in which she will feature some of the newest lights in the literary Renaissance now going on in Israel," says Shires. "As a creative writer herself, she brings a special understanding to the material as well as an excitement that is infectious."

The course is opened to both English and non-English majors. Students are encouraged to visit the seventh floor of 215 Lexington where additional information regarding the upcoming English courses is provided.

"By exploring contemporary Israeli literature," says Kay-Gross, "I think Stern students might have a chance to connect with Israeli society in a more complete way, and perhaps even more importantly, understand Israeli society and the experience of their contemporaries in Israel in a more complete way."



## STUDENT SNAPSHOTS

### A Temporary Dwelling

DWELLING from page 15

to me. I finally understood the importance of seeing this wonderful place. It is our homeland and we should come here every chance we get. I left the bar mitzvah feeling a sense of enlightenment.

During that week, I was also able to attend the wedding of my Israeli cousin. I did not see the bride yet, but I heard she looked radiant. Then there she was, breathtakingly beautiful. Her hair was up with sparkles everywhere. Her nails and makeup were perfectly done. Her dress was like nothing I had ever seen before. Everything was in place, just the way every girl dreams her wedding should be. My cousin, the bride, looked like an angel.

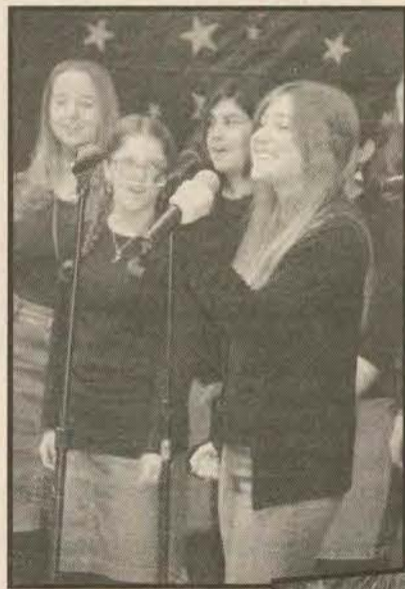
I did not know half of the people there, but the environment was so welcoming. I felt like these people were more my family than the family I have in the States. They were all so comfortable with each other, and do not feel the need to be formal with one another. Half of the people were not even wearing wedding clothes.

The ceremony was so different from American weddings. They did not walk down an aisle, and all the guests were talking while the bride and groom were under the *chuppah*. The room was decorated beautifully. Israeli weddings are casual, but not small. There were 700 people there, and the bride and groom loved every single one of them. I do not think I could even buy that many friends. The groom sang a song to his bride, and they danced together. I never saw this at a Jewish wedding before. It made me want to have my wedding in Israel. It made me never want to leave.

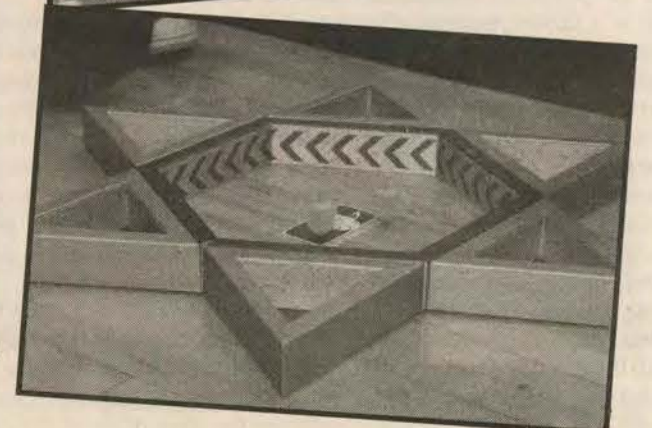
But we did leave. I could not believe we were leaving already. Now, my sister and I are ready to move to Israel any day. I have family there. The Jewish environment there is impossible to replicate someplace else. I saw every type of Jew there and they all co-exist with few conflicts. The land made me want to be a better Jew, and to stand up for my homeland through all of its hardships.

I really came to know my cousins on that trip. I want to find a way to remain in touch with them. I regret missing out on their lives and not being in Israel more often. I regret being afraid of my home.

I am not saying goodbye to you, Israel; I am saying see you again soon.



### 'NES' IN OUTER SPACE





# 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 SHABBAT ON CAMPUS

Even though I live only an hour away from Stern, I still enjoy staying in school for Shabbat. One of my favorite parts about Shabbat at Stern is the opportunity to spend time with my friends outside of a classroom setting, without the need to worry about tests, papers, and the like. It's still only halfway through my first semester on campus, yet I've already stayed in for Shabbat four times, each of which had a different theme. Each time, I was able to spend time with a different friend in the afternoon, each of whom hails from a different hometown. Of course, as all of my friends have very different personalities, I chose to spend my afternoon with each of them in a different manner.

Can you figure out for each Shabbat, the friend I spent the afternoon with, how I spent it, and my friend's hometown?

My four friends are Liba, the one with whom I sang Shabbat songs, the one from Cleveland, and the one with whom I spent the afternoon of the Ethics Shabbat.

It was nice that the Orientation Shabbat was still practically in the summer, as my friend and I were able to take a long walk to Central Park together and still have plenty of time to get back for Mincha. By the time the Shabbat that I spend with Rachel came around, which was the last of the four, I barely had time to play one game before it was time to leave.

Of Chana and Danielle, one is from Chicago and the other is the friend with whom I spent the TAC Shabbat.

My Chavruta was not with the girl from Boston or Philadelphia, and was not the week of the Yachad Shabbat. (Note: four girls are mentioned in this clue.)

Of Danielle and the girl from Philadelphia, one is the girl with whom I sang Shabbat songs and the other is the one with whom I took a walk.

The Shabbat I spent with the girl from Cleveland was not the most recent one.



Student Snapshot Photos by Julia Siegel



## STYLE

## March On Down, Troops

Aimee Rubenstein

If all is fair in love and war, then suit up ladies because there's a lot to prepare for! When it comes to jackets for fall fashion, we have seen it all: the cropped shrug, the too-big-boy-friend-blazer, and the L.B.C. ("little black cardigan"). Every fashion era has created new styles to keep our creativity cravings satisfied when the seasons begin to change. When everything in your closet screams last year gear, however, opt for the totally trendy yet conveniently comfortable green army jacket. Green definitely outshines black this 2010 fall and winter season, especially in camouflage-inspired hues. This look is marching all over New York City, and with the recent Indian summer/fall/winter weather confusions, this jacket will keep you practical, chic and salute-worthy.

This season, the fashion industry has utilized the utilitarian look by incorporating pockets big enough for your iPad and enough zippers to keep all your secrets hidden. Stella McCartney, Marc Jacobs and Kenneth Cole modeled the military jacket down the fall runways, proving that conventionality is not only important to the consumers, but also to the fashion world. The models must have walked down the runways and off onto the streets in their military look because the style is already all over town.

Although camo is not a new

trend, this green army jacket is selling off the racks quicker than the autumn leaves are hitting the



Google Images  
This jacket pays tribute to television series "Freaks and Geeks," circa 1999.

streets. Reborn this season, the versatile jacket is being grabbed by preppy Upper East Siders, urban Brooklynites, and eclectic Greenwich Villagers. The chic-uniform inspired style gives any plain, Mary Jane outfit an edge when the winter mornings challenge fashionistas' judgments. The green hue is neutral enough to wear every day, but anti-black enough that it can brighten New York City's traditional black uni-

form. Throw on an army jacket - whether it is cropped, oversized or tailored - and prepare to strut down the street (even if it's just to class).

The military look extends past just jackets this autumn. Military-esque pants, dresses and anoraks march around the city; however, the combat boot is my personal favorite. The rounded toe, laced up over the ankle, and leather material have attained an alter ego in the fashion world. What used to be essential for punk, edgy, Hot-Topic-lovers has become a fashionista staple. This boot is exploding outside its traditional stereotype and is marching down streets in deep brown and gray hues. Be adventurous and pair the boots with the green army jacket for a complete look.

The fashion industry prides itself on creativity, and even though the military inspired jacket and boots are not new, they are better than ever - and chicer. Whether you wear a green army jacket to spice up an old outfit, or a pair of army boots to give some edge to a new outfit, perhaps the green will rub off your hands and promote some soldier-like unity on campus. For the love of war, put on your green and prove that this university is "going green-er."

## Good Girl Gone Mad

Alyah Guttman

All women love fashion, especially the modern-Orthodox women of Stern College For Women (SCW) who live in the Big Apple. As they watch each new trend parade past them on the streets of New York City, it gets harder and harder to resist trying on a pair of extremely snug leggings or a revealing sequin mini dress. For years many observant women have been silently begging the fashion industry to put something in their windows for more than window-shopping. Releasing a line with more tznius clothing, fall fashion has either listened to the modern-Orthodox fashionistas, sold their stocks, or seen a lot of television.

There is a theory about the correlation between fashion and the economy. The idea is that whenever the hemline rises or falls, the stock market quickly follows suits, or vice versa. In the roaring twenties, the flapper raised the hemline from the ankle to the calf, while the baby boomers of the 60's raised the length to mod minis. During times of economic distress the trend has been for hemlines to drop lower, along with the market. In spring 2008, the lines of Bill Blass skirts dropped elegantly below the knee, as the recession simultaneously began. This trend has reappeared in 2010 Mercedes Benz Fashion Week in New York City. This fall, Louis Vuitton will feature stunning young girls donning full, long dresses and skirts. The elegant patterns of delicate floral prints and soft pastels make everyone, even the Modern Orthodox, yearn with envy. This look is not just for the Paris shopper, but also for the *simcha*-attender. Worn to a wedding or bat mitzvah, a-line or straight skirts with modest hemlines can be worn to many affairs. Although many believe that we are out of the recession, the

economy is still rejuvenating, and the style in vogue is the long skirt.

Yet this refreshing look might have less to do with stocks and more to do with television. AMC's "Mad Men" is the biggest hit on television with three million viewers. Since its premier in 2007, "Mad Men," set in the 1960's, takes audiences back to a time of cultural experimentation. More importantly, though, the show showcases the feminine fashions of its decade, when full-length skirts, tailored fitted



sheaths and women's business attire was born. Many see the current fashions in 2010 as homage to the show's influence on the industry. It seems like designers Louis Vuitton, Marc Jacobs, Ralph Lauren and Prada are all showing calf-length skirts and dresses down the fall 2010 runways. Additionally, the industry is seeing the beauty in covering up rather than exposing all.

Some women believe that the fashion trends on the runways do not affect their everyday shopping sprees. However, what you see on the runways will quickly and most certainly be seen on the racks within a few months. The trends set by designers trickle down into more affordable lines. Stores like French Connection, Urban Outfitters, Nordstrom Rack, and even Forever 21 are already catching the 'showing less is more' route with ultra feminine cuts and long - well, longer than last season - skirts.

Whether designers and the fashion industry are taking their cues from "Mad Men" or Wall Street, who really cares? As long as SCW keeps seeing the skirts of top brands influence the more affordable companies like Gap, Old Navy and Macy's, we will be able to smile without envy. It is about time for us to make the trend, and modestly, leaving that American Apparel black skirt at home.

## Students Remember Kristallnacht

KRISTALLNACHT from page 2

tions of the Holocaust. Besides writing and editing 18 books, he has received several awards, including an Emmy and an Academy Award for the many Holocaust-related movies he helped produce.

Dr. Berenbaum began by introducing the many paradoxes that Kristallnacht contains. "Many of those who were arrested that night are precisely those that survived," explained by Berenbaum, "because they understood there was one place to go, and it was to get out."

He noted the importance of photographs in remembering the Holocaust, specifically those of the synagogues, and described how the attacks during Kristallnacht were completely public. Bystanders stood aside and firemen were instructed not to put out the fire, but to ensure that businesses next door would not

catch aflame. Different portraits portrayed the before, during, and after images of the attacks, and



SHEM Facebook  
Students look at an exhibit of pictures of the Holocaust at the Student Holocaust Education Movement (SHEM)'s Kristallnacht remembrance event.

"that transitional moment is witnessed by all the people in the community," said Dr. Berenbaum.

After going through various horrifying aspects of the Holocaust, emphasizing those that dealt with the evolving role of the synagogue

in Nazi Germany and the implications of the deterioration in anti-Jewish policy, he concluded by summarizing what that night meant both for the Jews and the Germans alike. "The night that we commemorate today is the end of public life for Jews in Germany - every Jew knew it was time to leave....The Germans learned a different lesson too: how to do systematic, structural, legal [killing]."

Students left the event with a new attitude about what happened 72 years ago. "The program was truly inspiring," says Sarah Auerbach, a senior at SCW. "The speaker presented a perspective that really drew you in to what happened long ago, really gave you a connection with the horrors that are all too often forgotten because of time." When asked what

he wanted to accomplish with the event, Goldberg responded, "We hoped to make relevant the lessons of Kristallnacht; more than anything else, that democracy cannot be taken for granted simply because prejudice is alive and well in our time."

SHEM gives students the resources necessary to defend the memory of the Holocaust by utilizing a new and dynamic ap-

peal to Holocaust education that specifically caters to the younger generation. "We offer a range of innovative, dynamic platforms on which to grapple with and explore the lessons of the Holocaust," says Goldberg. "Through working with survivors, leading museum visits, and facilitating meaningful on-topic discussion, we hope to make relevant and highlight...the eternal lessons of the Holocaust."



## OPINIONS

### Poker Face

Mouchka Darmon

Who could have ever thought that Lady Gaga would be the one to summarize the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the so called "peace process"? Her "Poker Face" song indeed hits the right beat with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian saga that seems to be in a peace process, while neither peace nor any real process whatsoever is going on.

Please do not think I have inhabited an island of political isolation. As a student of the social sciences and a woman raised in a family where the alarm clock was the national Jewish radio, I am more than familiar with the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, the Balfour declaration, the Madrid conference, the Oslo Accords and so on. I, like many of us at Yeshiva University, am well accustomed to discussions about the Independence war, the 6 Day war, the Yom Kippur war and the Lebanon war. As Jews, I think we have all given at least some thought to the question of what could be done to get peace in Israel.

Let me elaborate on the issue. On the Israeli side, there is a need for a legitimate state, the awful situation of Jews having nowhere to go after the Holocaust, and the

military operations meant to ensure the security of the state. On the Palestinian side, there are people calling the Israeli day of independence "Al Nakba" (the catastrophe), commemorating it as the day they lost their homes, and using attacks on the Israeli population as means of pressure to reach a solution.

Well summarized? Far from it. That is only the most basic understanding of the situation. The next level is a far more complex situation, with major opinion gaps and gray zones within each side. On the Palestinian side, even though the PLO is engaged in negotiations with Israel, Hamas and Fatah are still terrorist organizations that do not recognize the rights of Israel to exist. Both those organizations have significant influence on the Palestinian population. On the Israeli side, you have a government in which Avigdor Lieberman, minister of Foreign Affairs, contradicted the discourse of his own government at the United Nations (UN). For anyone familiar with Lieberman, this is nothing new.

Neither side has a government that functions parallel to the United States government. Focusing merely on Israel's complex politi-

cal system, Israel has a PR (proportional representative) system that results in high polarization and fractionalization of its parties. In 62 years of existence, it has had 32 governments. That staggering number should give you an idea of the Israeli political stability. And just to make the picture more complicated, the Israeli governments are organized in coalitions, meaning that they consist in the gathering of several parties that often do not stem from the same political ideology. In the current government, for instance, the Labor party is in the same coalition as the Likud party, yet these parties are polar opposites of each other.

Moreover, contradictions do not solely exist within coalitions, but can also be found within the same politician. Ariel Sharon declared he would never touch Israeli territory only a few years before he withdrew from Likud to create Kadima and implement the withdrawal from Gaza. On the Palestinian side, Yasser Arafat framed the situation to onlookers pretty well by going to the UN with a gun in one hand and an olive branch in the other.

My personal opinion is that the olive branch was plastic. I would

like to believe that the Nobel Peace Prize was not just given away because they had no idea who to give it to, but I guess that I have too many scientist friends who influence me to look at the facts rather than theory. When it comes to the peace process, we are nowhere. The facts are, when a big conference is called at Annapolis, there is nothing left to talk about because neither side will make the right concessions.

Both sides have to answer to populations, which, to a certain extent, are not ready to make concessions at all. Some Arabs and Palestinians will tell you, "Let's erase Israel from the map," and some Jews will say, "Honestly, we are better off without them." Therefore my question to our beloved politicians, if I could ask them, would be, "What game are you exactly playing? Do you honestly believe you are getting to a solution?" To the Israelis I would ask "If you give a state to the Palestinians, what tells you they would accept your conditions? Can I just remind you that when Ehud Barak proposed East Jerusalem to Yasser Arafat he simply refused? And by the way, what kind of relations will you have with neighbours that

you, let's be honest here, despise?" To the Palestinians, I would ask, "Is it the Palestinian people or the PLO that wants a state? And please answer, once and for all, what will you do with the question of Jerusalem? How can you ensure us that you won't attack us anymore? Why would you content yourself with a two-state solution now after you refused the partition plan?"

Truly, each side is bluffing. Neither side is willing to ask themselves the right questions, and most certainly, neither side is going to make the right concessions. They are sitting on the so-called negotiation table, with Jerusalem, security, the refugees, the Arab Israelis and terrorism on the table. They hold their cards and smile and make promises and swear they want to get to a compromise and are ready to do everything necessary for it. They wait for the other play to put more on the table, and more, and more, until he cannot play anymore and finally leaves the game. "Can't read my, can't read my/No he can't read my poker face...."

### Girl Against TV

Talia Rona

This is not my pre-Rosh Hashana conscience talking, although it does help. I am no seminary flip-out either. I just really do not like TV.

I would say it is a fairly recent development - it probably happened within the last two years. I used to be what one would call a "normal" TV watcher. I grew up with "Sesame Street," "Arthur," and when I was at my grandmother's house with cable, "The Flintstones" and "Scooby Doo." Slowly I graduated to "Full House," "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air," and "Family Matters." (after all, who could resist Steve Urkel and Michelle Tanner?)

I spent a ridiculous amount of hours watching TV, but I think the real problems started around the "7th Heaven" and "One Tree Hill" eras. Looking back now, I am truly embarrassed to admit that I would push off studying for a test, wait an hour- or even two - to eat supper, just so that I could watch my "favorite show!" These shows also taught me many things that I did not need to know as an 11-, 12-, or even 15-year-old, and let me tell you - it was not Chumash or Navi.

No, I do not spend all my free time learning *sefarim*, or even a lot of it. No, I do not think that every minute of your day needs to be spent doing acts of *chessed* or *dav-*

*ening* or talking Torah. But yes, I do believe that TV is a huge waste of time.

I know, I know. We all grew up with it and turned out fine. That's your argument, right? First of all, TV today is definitely not what it used to be - and this is coming from a child of the 90's. TV today is so incredibly lewd and crude! When a good friend told me that her role model is Kim Kardashian, a TV personality famous for her scandalous videotape that "leaked" to the public, I was frightened. When I asked another friend to come with me to hear *kinos* (lamentations) and a speech on Tisha B'av and she declined because "The Bachelorette" was airing their two-hour season finale, it saddened me. I asked my friend if she was planning to go to the Junior Class Kickoff Dinner uptown at Yeshiva College, and she texted me back that she had "more important things going on in life at that time." Those things are "the season premiers of '90210" and "Gossip Girl." Hellooo! This is a direct quote. Seriously, where are our priorities?

Here are some startling statistics compiled by the California State University at Northridge: the number of videos rented daily by Americans is six million, and the number of public library items

checked out daily by Americans is three million. The number of minutes per week that parents spend in meaningful conversation with their child is 3.5, and the number of minutes per week the average child watches TV is 1,680. 54 percent of four to six year olds, when asked if they preferred to watch TV or spend time with their fathers, chose TV!

Another negative aspect to TV is the psychological influence it can have on a person. According to a study done by the University of Maine, TV can convince you that violent behavior is acceptable and desensitize you to it. TV impedes language development in children. It also promotes increased sexual acts at a younger age, clearly going against the rules and hashkafot of the Jewish religion.

I remember when my ninth grade Chumash teacher in my somewhat Bais Yaakov-type of high school showed my class a video of a rabbi who gave an anti-TV speech. I do not remember how it connected to what we were learning, or who the rabbi was, but the gist of it was that there was a young boy who was deathly ill, and this rabbi who happened to also be a kabbalist said that if 10 families pledged to give up their TV forever, the boy would definitely have a *refuah* (recovery). I remember having a

mental debate: "Of course I would give up TV to save this young Jewish boy's life...or would I? Come on, it's no TV forever. That's a big deal. I'm sure there will be other people more righteous than me who'd be willing to do it." I guess I'm at a different point in my life now, but the fact that I even had to think about it shames me.

The bottom line is, I find TV and movies to be such an abominable waste of time. In the two hours that I would spend watching a movie, there are so many more productive and beneficial ways I could be spending my time. It's kind of a lofty thought, but if you think about it, God only gave you so much time on Earth. Why would you want to spend it staring at people you do not know who are acting out a scene you should not be exposed to, for your "entertainment?" Go play basketball, read a book, bake a cake, or do your homework!

I ask you, fellow classmate and *ben* or *bat yisrael*, the next time you sit down to watch "Glee," or even, dare I say it, "Friends," think if it is what you really want to be doing. That extra half hour of studying might earn you extra points on that organic chemistry midterm, or even better, extra points up *there*.





## OPINIONS

### Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader?

Rita Carla Bron

In the television game show "Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader?" one player answers questions in varying difficulty and subject, while three so-called classmates – fifth graders 30 years her junior – quickly scribble out the answers. The player must correctly answer a specified number of elementary school level questions in order to win a generous prize. Besides promoting unethical practices (the game allows "cheats" – two ways the fifth graders can give the player an answer: peak or copy), the show itself aims to determine whether the player is smarter than a fifth grader.

Exactly how smart is a fifth grader? A fifth grader must know that the decibel unit of measurement was named after Alexander Graham Bell, anemometers measure wind speed, and that the moon is about 240,000 miles away from Earth.

I would not be surprised if most adults do not know the answer to at least one of those questions. Yet undoubtedly, the general world concludes that adults are smarter than fifth graders, despite their inability to recall these facts. What, then, measures intelligence? Does intelligence guarantee success – or perhaps does success dictate in-

telligence?

Numerous intelligence tests exist to determine supposed levels of intelligence. The most well known test, the Intelligence Quotient (IQ) Test, boasts only a 0.5 correlation with school grades, according to the American Psychological Association article "Knowns and Unknowns." Therefore, only 25 percent of a student's excellent mark in school is associated with high IQ scores – not such a convincing relationship.

SAT and personality tests measure some type of intelligence reflected by a person's particular mental and social strengths. Nonetheless, students with impeccable grades often stumble on the SAT, failing to parallel their performance in a classroom setting. A picture comes to my mind of a distraught junior in college, utterly confused with no direction, hoping that a personality test will reveal the area of his intelligence. These tests do not give conclusive clarity.

There have been attempts, and counter attempts, to categorize intelligence in ways other than the traditional tests. In his book "The Nine Types of Knowledge," Howard Gardner, Professor of Psychology at Virginia University, categorizes

intelligence into nine categories.

Naturalist Intelligence, or "Nature Smart," is the ability to distinguish between plants, rock formations, and living things, a skill usually found in chefs, botanists and the consumer society. Musical Intelligence is as it sounds (no pun intended): the skill to discern pitch, tone and notes, etc. Logical-Mathematical Intelligence is the skill to identify patterns and think in abstract symbols, characteristic of mathematicians and scientists. Those with Existential Intelligence have deep inquiries about the existence of life and humanity. Masters of Interpersonal Intelligence are able to communicate and correctly identify others' needs and feelings. Body-Kinesthetic Intelligence is the ability to use physical skills. Linguistic Intelligence represents the art of complex word formulation, whether in speech or in writing. Intra-personal Intelligence is the ability to know oneself, one's feelings, and know how to use those skills to best direct one. Those with Spatial Intelligence can visualize concepts and shapes in three dimensions, crucial for pilots, sculptors and architects.

Gardner posits that children with specific intelligence categories learn best from methods

aimed at their style of intelligence, and it would suggest that students enter fields that support their specific areas of intelligence. Yet this theory only serves to divide intelligence into categories, further complicating the process of determining top intelligence. It would appear that when comparing two persons, one with Musical Intelligence and one with Linguistic Intelligence, such a comparison would essentially invalidate itself. It is impossible to compare two diametrically different entities, let alone determine which is "better" than the other. Those against this theory argue that Gardner misinterprets and incorrectly expands the definition of "intelligence," coming to include areas mostly recognized as strengths or skills.

Even if Gardner's theory were true, can one type of intelligence be superior to another? Success in grade school requires acute ability to understand information, perhaps some degree of analysis and recognition of similar concepts, and the ability to retain that information. High school requires more independent thinking and analysis in written and verbal form. Certain professions favor specific intelligence types over others. Reporters might have little need for spatial

ability and architects could do without linguistic skills.

Perhaps intelligence should be measured on a category basis: within a given field or profession, which person has the strongest qualities or has the most of the specific intelligence needed in that area? This method presents the difficulty of measuring intelligence in those who have not yet begun a profession or who are still discovering their strengths.

Thus, according to this method, a person who is most intelligent in one type of intelligence will be guaranteed success in that field, i.e. someone with heightened Spatial Intelligence will be guaranteed success as an architect. However, calculations are not quite that simple. Architects require more than just spatial capabilities—they do have to interact with other people (Interpersonal Intelligence), organize work (Logical-Mathematical Intelligence), etc. Perhaps absolute intelligence, inasmuch as it predicts success, cannot be measured?

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Hana Herst

Recently, the Yeshiva University (YU) Social Justice Society and the YU Israel Club took a small group of YU students to the Public Theater production of "The Human Scale." Lawrence Wright, a well-known staff writer for *The New Yorker*, wrote and performed the play. At certain points throughout the production, Wright addressed the audience about the ongoing conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis, drawing on experiences from his personal visit to Gaza and his interviews with Palestinian and Israeli leaders. "The Human Scale" touched upon three different yet interconnected topics: the past and present situation in Gaza, the capture of Gilad Shalit, and the value of a human life.

The play opened with a video of Gilad Shalit, a young Israeli soldier who was captured by Hamas in 2006. Negotiations have been proceeding between Israel and Hamas over his freedom, and in exchange for Shalit, Hamas demanded the release of 1,400 Arabs convicted on charges of terrorism. But halfway through the play, another heart wrenching video was shown, one that I, surprisingly, couldn't help but compare to Gilad Shalit's situation.

The video opened with a Palestinian family enjoying each other's company on a sunny day at the

beach. Little did the family know that their lives were about to be shattered, as the beach had been marked to be bombed by Israeli soldiers that day. Lucky civilians on the beach were only severely wounded. A cameraman was in the area and rushed down to the water to film the bloody scene. Out of the corner of his lens was a little girl running down the beach and the cameraman, sensing a story, ran after her. The girl finally stopped running, paused for a moment, and began to scream and cry. The camera moved from the tear stained face of the little girl to the mutilated body of her father. The daughter fell to her knees shouting the word "father!" in Arabic over and over again. It was a scene of human loss, and the cries of a girl that hit a universal note.

As I sat in the audience witnessing this scene, I closed my eyes and simply listened to the cries of this young girl. I let her tears and her pain wash over me; I removed myself from my present mindset and from my prejudices. I transported myself to that beach and I stood next to her and I wondered, what if that dead body was someone I loved? As this video ended and Wright resumed speaking, I opened my eyes surprised to find my sight blurred and unfocused due to the tears that were building up inside

of me.

This video made me rethink my approach to human existence; it helped me understand that a life is a life regardless of skin color or religious belief. I realized that in my eyes all men and women are equal. As a Jew, I cannot approach the capture of Shalit without being unbiased. I understand that as caring and appreciative as I am of other life styles, I will always be first and foremost a Jew, and therefore my allegiance and support will be directed toward the Jewish people. But at the same time, I now choose to be equally respectful and sympathetic towards any other religion, sect, or group that may or may not have extreme differences from my own religion.

It was men like Hitler who tried to differentiate between the worth of one human life over another. Hitler killed the mentally challenged, gypsies, Jews and homosexuals simply because he found them unworthy of life. This idea of finding value in one soul while disregarding the other, of devaluing someone based on intelligence, skin color, religious belief or sexual orientation is what leads to prejudice and hate between people from all walks of life. Obliterating this hate may not be possible and tension may always exist in this

world, but we must take action, whether it be attending marches or signing petitions, to lessen this intolerance.

The "Human Scale" was a play that was neither pro-Israel nor pro-Palestinian; it simply was a play that was pro-human life. Politics pale when juxtaposed to the potential of humans to feel pain, the universality of heartbreak when someone you love dies. We are all people, and we all have histories and dreams and fears. For the first time, I realized that one cannot demonize the entire Palestinian people – we relate to each other in more ways than we could ever imagine. Indeed, the politics never go away, but now I can see the conflict as a terrible situation between two peoples, not just a case of one side terrorizing the other. Recognizing the opposite side as human beings is the true first step to wanting peace.

Gilad Shalit is a Jew and the little girl was a Palestinian, but at the end of the day, they are both people with feelings and emotions. They are both people with families, with friends, with something or someone to live for. The "Human Scale" reminded me of this equality.

I exited the theater that night with feelings of compassion and sympathy for those beyond my

own religion. That night, my love and respect for both the Jewish people and the Palestinian people increased tenfold, because both nations have suffered so much and endured loss and pain in ways that I have never known. As a Jew born and raised in America, the land of the free, I have never seen a family member murdered, I have never had someone I loved kidnapped, taken away and gone for what may turn out to be forever. I cannot imagine the heartache of Shalit's family and I cannot begin to count how many tears that young Palestinian girl cried for the death of her father. But now, I can properly show sympathy, and properly pray for peace. I can cry with both the Jewish people and the Palestinian people and let them know that their losses are important, that every life, regardless of who it may belong to, means just as much as any other.

The face of Gilad Shalit will forever be etched in my thoughts and the cries of that girl will always ring in my ears, both equal in their impact on my view of the world and the people living on it.



## OPINIONS

### Our Dumbo Feather

Rebecca Frankel

"Maybe try shuckling more intensely."

This is one of the many pieces of advice floating through my head as I pray. How can I make my voice louder? What should I do differently so He will listen? What am I doing wrong? Many of us are told by our teachers and Rabbis the importance of *kavana* (focused attention) in *tefilla* (prayer), and that without it our prayers are meaningless and will not be listened to. This I do not deny at all. However, I believe I have reasons why *kavana* must accompany *tefilla* that differ from the norm.

To whom do we pray? Are we talking to God? Or ourselves? We are taught that if we concentrate hard, our prayers will be answered. So we often find ourselves moving violently back and forth, tightly closing our eyes, and saying the words ever so carefully. That seems to be the magic potion. But then why does that not always work?

"You must have not said the words so clearly," people answer me.

The type of *davening* that we perform today, and which was taught to us at an early age, has become our Dumbo feather. We grasp these techniques so tightly as we pray, sure that the right combination of all the right moves will make it all work. We believe that without these techniques, our prayers will malfunction. We think that we must never let go of our feather, for without it, surely our prayers could not fly to God.

After many years of being disappointed with the feather, I decided to let go of it and see if my prayers truly would then crash and burn. To my surprise and delight, I had acquired a new approach to davening.

How could it be that simply because I concentrated on something, it came true? Judaism is not a form of magic. It could not be that I did not get the grade I wanted because I had not moved my body during *tefilla* as intensely as I usually did.

What if we were not talking to God? What if the point of prayer was not to try to be persuasive enough to change His mind, but to concentrate enough so that it may change ours?

The three main sections of *tefilla* are *shevach* (praise), *bakasha* (request), and *hoda'ah* (thanks). If we look at prayer as our way of communicating with God, as I have learned from my teachers, then the purpose for these sections become the following: The purpose of *shevach* is to "butter Him up" (direct quote from an elementary school teacher), so that when we approach Him with our *bakashot* (requests) - or wish list, as it has become - He is more inclined to listen because God needs to feel exalted, as we all

know. And it would be rude of us to approach the King, ask Him for things, and walk out without saying "thank you," so this is where *hoda'ah* comes in.

What if we look at prayer as a way of communicating with, dare I say it, ourselves and not God? The purpose for prayer becomes personal. Prayer becomes difficult. It becomes *avodah* (work). If we look at prayer as a way to engrain in ourselves three times a day the ideas we should feel for 24 hours of the day, the purpose of *shevach*, *bakasha* and *hoda'ah* becomes reminding ourselves of the infinite awesomeness the One we serve possesses.

Reading about the incredible powers He possesses in the *shevach* sections of *tefilla* enforces our faith in Him. Concentrating on the fact that He, and only He, is the One who provides us with all we want and need as we see in the *bakasha* sections instills in us a love for Him that can propel us to serve Him more wholeheartedly. And seeing from the *hoda'ah* sections that He is the One we must thank, from every breath we take to every car we own, implants in us a devotion to Him made of deep-rooted respect.

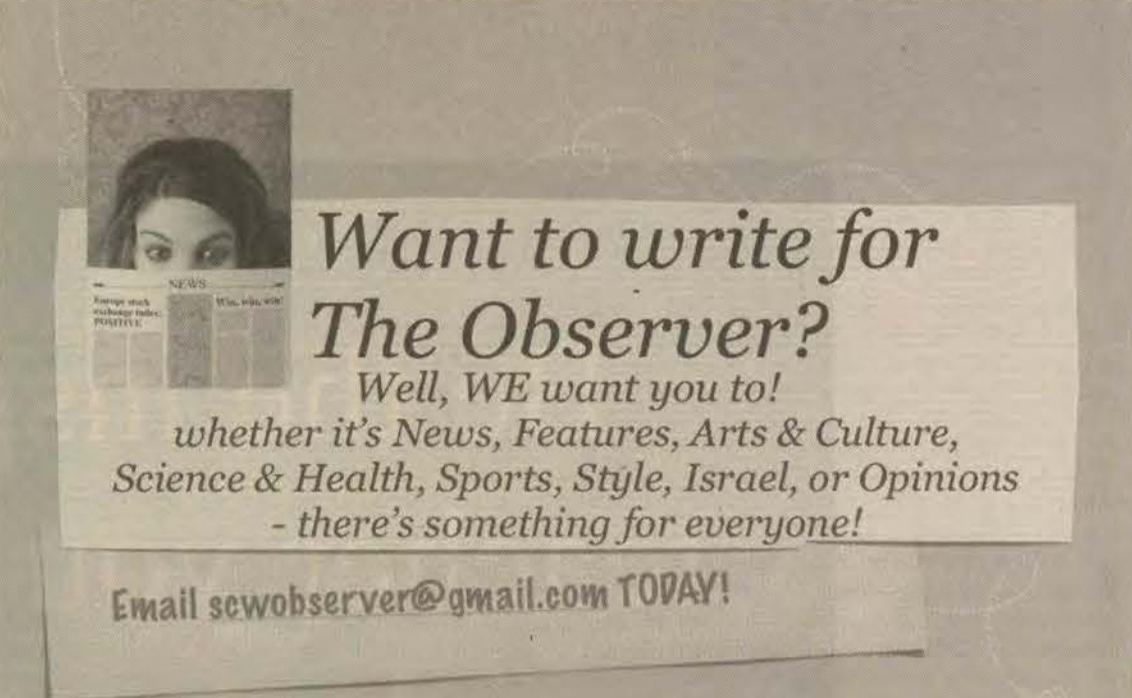
What is all that without *kavana*? If we look at davening as a device to make us better, more devoted Jews, then *kal vachomer* (even more so) in this case, rattling off the words as something that "at the end of the day just has to be said" is as foolish as Dumbo thinking that holding the feather will enable him to fly.

The power for change lies within us. Concentrating on the words will make davening our daily pep talk to ourselves. Having meaning for the words will subconsciously make us work harder to earn that A-plus that we aim for. Saying out loud that we want to stop speaking *lashon hara* (evil language), or that we want to work on any other personal area will remind us that we need to grow throughout the days of our lives.

I apologize to all you kindergarten graduates for crushing your hopes so early, but there are no Hebrew magic words to give you that new expensive toy of your dreams. There is an English word, however, that has been said to have magical effects, and it rhymes with "cheese." However, better I crush your hopes now than they inevitably collapse on themselves in the future after discovering that you were lied to all these years.

Our prayers can fly without the feather. Instead of flying into the spiritual realm to be judged and analyzed, they will fly within the physical realm, the realm of reality, where they can become three-dimensional if we truly want them to be.

So let go of the feather.



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor,

"We bring wisdom to life by combining the finest contemporary academic education with the timeless teachings of Torah. It is Yeshiva's unique dual curriculum that teaches knowledge enlightened by values that helps our students gain the wisdom to make their lives both a secular and spiritual success." This is YU's Mission Statement for undergraduates. I suggest it be amended. The University cannot claim that the undergraduate students are exposed to 'the finest contemporary academic education' when the students are denied the opportunities

to explore ideas. An integral part of the college experience is that of pushing boundaries and the exploration of thought. YU cannot claim simultaneously to provide a contemporary academic education and restrict our learning experience, for the two cannot coexist.

Furthermore, I suggest the 'censorship committee' turn its scrutiny away from the students and focus on the curriculum. YC and SCW students in Biology classes learn evolution, an idea that is declared by many leaders of Orthodoxy to be a falsehood at best and heretical at worst. In Judaic classes, we learn ideas and read articles that are not in sync with mainstream

Orthodoxy. If we are to truly remain sheltered and never need to confront ideas that differ from our own, the university must overhaul its entire educational system in a way that would be intellectually dishonest.

YU is both a Yeshiva and a University and nobody denies that the two opposing values are difficult to balance. Yet Rambam advocated the Golden Mean, and this is not it.

Sincerely,  
Ariella Gottesman  
SCW '12



Built originally as a residence for working women, the Park Hotel at Park Ave 33rd St served most of its days as an upper-class hotel and was demolished in 1927.

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