



The Yeshiva University

OBSERVER

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Upcoming Changes to Undergraduate Faculty Spark Speculation

Rivkah Rogawski

In a university-wide email sent out on Thursday, March 24th, President Joel announced the administration's intention to organize the faculty of Stern College, Sy Syms, and Yeshiva College into one unified Yeshiva University undergraduate faculty. Dubbed the "reimagining" of the Yeshiva University undergraduate faculty, this initiative will be a long-term process spearheaded by the newly appointed Vice Provost Dr. Lawrence Schiffman. Although this announcement has sparked much speculation amongst both faculty and students, few additional details have been released and much of the definite structure remains shrouded in mystery.

The idea originated two years ago with Dr. Morton Lowengrub, YU's Provost. Dr. Lowengrub then established the Reimagining Committee on Undergraduate Education, composed of select faculty and administration, which met over the course of one and a half years in order to work out the details of the planned merger.

According to Dr. Lowengrub, the impetus for the changes came from the administration's desire to provide the best quality of undergraduate education possible. This quality will be improved by having larger departments with a greater critical mass of faculty. Another potential motive, of course, was the increased financial efficiency of having a single faculty.

As Dr. Lowengrub's vision began to take shape, Dr. Lawrence Schiffman, previously a professor of Hebrew and Judaic studies at NYU, was appointed as Vice Provost and brought in to work on the reimagining project. Dr. Schiffman is currently working only part-time as Vice-Provost, as he is simultaneously finishing his last semester at NYU, but beginning next year he will be working full-time on reshaping the structure of the undergraduate faculty. Dr. Schiffman is tasked with coordinating faculty, students and administration to allow the change to occur as seamlessly as possible.

It is worth noting that this has been tried once before in the history of Yeshiva University. According to Dean Ethel Orlian, a similar initiative was started in the seventies to combine the faculty of both colleges into one. Under that

plan, different departments were organized into schools- School of Humanities, Sciences, etc- and deans were appointed for each school. This attempt ultimately failed, and the current structure was reinstated.

The restructuring of the faculty coincides with the departure of Dr. Hillel Davis, Vice President for University Life. With his departure, finance, admissions and recruitment will be temporarily under the jurisdiction of Rabbi Kenneth Brander of the CJF in a two-year appointment.

Under the new plan, Sy Syms will cease to function as a separate school, although business majors will still be offered. The current Sy Syms faculty will be assimilated into other school departments. This will allow business students to participate in the Honors Program, and it will also allow students in the arts to take business courses and vice versa.

Despite the fact that the faculty will be unified, students on each campus will still be enrolled in either Stern College for Women or Yeshiva College, from which they will receive their degrees. Student Affairs and other programs will likewise be campus specific- for example, there is no motion as yet to combine the Honors Programs. As Dr. Lowengrub explained, unified does not mean the same, and many of the distinctions between the two campuses will remain in place.

Both Dr. Lowengrub and Dean Bacon, the Monique C. Katz Dean of Stern College, emphasized that all plans are still in the skeletal stages, and many details are still unknown. It is Dr. Lowengrub's hope that once the faculties are combined under an initial structure, the natural evolution of each department will lead to growth in different areas. As the faculty of each department make crucial decisions as to how they will merge, the unified faculty will change and grow.

In fact, both noted, there are some departments that are already unified on both campuses. For years, YC and Stern have shared a history department, and in recent years political science, mathematical sciences, and the fine arts have also been combined. For these de-

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Students for Israel Rock Times Square



Mati Engel

Crowds of students joined the YU Israel Club for a kumitz in Times Square as part of Israel Peace Week. For more pictures see page 15.

Opt for OpEd if You're a Woman

Estie Neff

For students who want their opinions read outside the university walls, next semester will give them their chance. Thanks to efforts made by Dean Karen Bacon and Professor Linda Shires, the OpEd Project will be visiting its first college - Stern College for Women (SCW) - to teach young women how to communicate their views to the American readership.

"Women tend to downplay their expertise in most areas and are culturally taught to be far less vocal in public than men," commented Shires, chair of the English department at SCW. "Dean Bacon and I felt positive about an organization working to promote more women's voices in the media and so we investigated it further."

The OpEd project was founded by Catherine Orenstein, a nationally syndicated writer on topics such as women, politics and human rights, with the goal of increasing the number of opinions pieces submitted to major publications written by women to benefit public debate and policy. "What is the cost to society when half of the nation's best minds and best ideas - women's minds and women's ideas - are left out?" the organization's website asks.

According to a survey conducted by a member of the OpEd Project staff, percentages of op-ed pieces written by women are significantly lower than those written by men. From October to December 2010, 20 percent of the op-ed pieces in *The New York Times* were written by women, as opposed to 80 percent written by men. *The Washington Post* and the *Wall Street Journal* had similar percentages.

The OpEd Project generally targets and trains women at top universities, think tanks, nonprofits, corporations and community organizations, and this September it will offer its services to SCW students.

"Although [the OpEd Project] had not worked with students before - only with graduates, faculty, or working women - they were extremely welcoming to the idea of partnering with Stern," noted

Shires.

Shires heard of the OpEd Project from Dean Bacon, the Dr. Monique C. Katz Dean at SCW, who heard of it from SCW alumna Ora Sheinson at an alumnae event they both attended. Sheinson, now an environmental lawyer, participated in an OpEd seminar and felt that students at SCW would greatly benefit from the program.

"I believe our students have valuable ideas and that their voices should be heard," Dean Bacon stated. "Our education is so very unique both in its Jewish content and in its emphasis on thinking about values. With these qualities of heart and mind, our students have something important to contribute to the public conversation." Dean Bacon asked Shires and Dr. John Fousek, the Pre-Law academic advisor, to publicize and

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OP-ED

From the Desk of the Editor-in-Chief

Rivkah Rogowski, Editor-in-Chief

"Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote/ the droghte of Marche hath perced to the roote/ and bathed every vein in swich liquor/of which vertu engendred is the flour"

At this point in the year, most of us can identify with the above immortal lines of Geoffrey Chaucer (for those of you who don't speak Middle English, it essentially translates to "it may be rainy in April, but we're all really psyched for spring"). While April is certainly bathing us in showers sweet, the promise of warm weather, Pesach vacation, and strappy sandals is filling the veins of Stern women with the liquor of the blossoming spring.

That's why this month's edition of the Observer is perfectly suited for taking along with you on your airplane ride home, Chol Hamoed trip to the beach, and backpacking expedition through Nepal. Check out the News section to find out about new additions to the English department, the recent So You Think Stern Can Dance event, and the exciting new Op-Ed project (the deadline is today, so quickly apply!). You can also read about recent events such as the Town

Hall, Rabbi Goldsmith's speech, and the YUConnects panel on Relationships in the Digital Age.

In the Features section, Avigail Solovechik, in a splendid feat of investigative journalism, explores the fact and fiction of the rattling pipes in Schottenstein Dorm, while Shira Goldstein discusses the pros and cons of grading against a curve.

If you missed the Stern College Dramatics Society Production of Hamlet, it is not too late to hear about the rotten state of Denmark in Devorah Isenberg's excellent and exhaustive review of the production. Arts and Culture also features a fascinating review of *A Perfect Mess*, a book about the pros and cons of neatness, especially pertinent in the pre-Pesach closet purge.

In Science and Health, read about an easy new way to burn calories, get inspired by stellar science student Tirtza Spiegel, and find out about one of our friendly Manhattan neighbors, the Manhattan East Pharmacy. And, in a moment of shameless self-promotion, I feel compelled to tell you that you can also read about my recent trip to the National Meeting

of the American Chemical Society along with Tsipora Huisman and Kate Rosenblatt to present our research at an undergraduate poster competition.

Aimee Rubenstein of the Style Section provides the lowdown on the recent Tommy Hilfiger event at YU, and Dassi Fant shares her experience meeting with Mickey Drexler, CEO of J. Crew. The Sports section features inspiring anecdotes from the athletic field and an interesting Anu Ratzim V'Heim Ratzim about Sandy Koufax.

To hear the lowdown on what your fellow Sternies are thinking, head over to the Opinions section and read about Sophie Felder's take on the digital age, Ilana Brandt's plug for QUEST, and Ayelet Freidman's opinion about student leadership. In the Israel section, Lauren Burstein discusses communal reactions to the Itamar tragedy and Sophie Felder laments the narrow-minded groupthink of the contemporary political scene.

So as all ye palmeres (pilgrims) head back to strange strondes (back home), allow me, on behalf of the Observer, to wish you a Chag Kasher V'Sameach.

MISSING:

Our family's good silver. Reward offered. If found please return to 45 Ra Road (it's the house with the clean doorpost).

The Yeshiva University

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NEWS

April Town Hall Meeting Addresses Hot Topics

Sophie Felder

Over 150 students and faculty members packed into Yagoda Commons on Wednesday, May 30th, for a Town Hall meeting, to hear from President Richard Joel as he addressed questions from the student body.

President Joel opened with condolences to the family of Jose Bencantes, Beren Campus Facilities Manager, acknowledging his service to the university and remarking on the relationship the university was fortunate to have with such an individual.

He then moved on to address an e-mail that was submitted by a Sy Syms student who requested that the rumors regarding Sy Syms' closure be addressed at the upcoming Town Hall Meeting. President Joel put the rumors to rest, quipping that here was proof that Wikipedia is not a reliable source. Apparently, an article on Wikipedia claimed that Sy Syms was closing had many people concerned. Joel assured the crowd that "Sy Syms is alive and well."

However, he noted that certain changes will be made in terms of the undergraduate program in general. "We are consolidating the faculty as one undergraduate university faculty," said President Joel. "The Stern College faculty, the YC faculty, the Sy Syms faculty - need to be a YU undergrad faculty." He further noted that YU, like all universities, will need to make significant budget cuts

in the coming years. For YU, this means cutting back by 13 million dollars although President Joel emphasized that "it's not coming from the academics side." With the rearranging of undergraduate education and the budget cuts, change is inevitable, but President Joel asked the student body to involve themselves in this change so that it can move forward with input from both the administration and the student body.

Chana Eisen raised a follow-up question that addressed the athletics department and the budget cuts it has already suffered. Reiterating the unfortunate need for budget cuts, President Joel quipped that, coming into the presidency, building a swimming pool at Stern had been one of his goals, but now "the only water [Stern] has are the leaks in the buildings". Dean Schwartz, University Dean of Students, is forced to make difficult decisions and "no one is not affected." President Joel also assured students that "it's not about hiding things from the students." He also stated his willingness to answer any questions to the newspapers about the incumbent changes in order to best include the student body. Communication between all parties was a consistent theme in President Joel's response.

Deena Shayne, a junior and next year's SCWSC president, brought up the question of a double standard when it comes to the Wilf and

Beren campus in regards to the Drama Societies. On the Wilf Campus, credits are given to those who participate in the play, while on the Beren campus the same amount of work is not rewarded with academic merit. Joel clarified that it was certainly not a *hashkafic* issue, and that such a query would certainly benefit from a conversation with Dean Bacon. Said Joel, "The way to move it forward...meet with Dean Bacon, have the facts.... If you have students, the dean of the university is supportive. Be the right lobbyists and advocate."

One of the more exciting comments, though, was in response to a question about the meal plan. Although the arrangements have not been formalized, President Joel has been hopeful that in the near future, caf cards will be considered legal tender at local eateries in Murray Hill and Washington Heights. These comments were greeted with a burst of excited murmuring from the student body.

Tirtza Spiegel, a senior, brought up the recent email that was sent to the entire undergraduate student body that invited student to a "SOY Shabbaton in Midtown Manhattan." Ms. Spiegel pointed to the lack of recognition to both the efforts of TAC as well as the women of Stern College in this e-mail and inquired as to what might be the response to sexism on the Wilf campus. President Joel responded

that he did not know what e-mail she was talking about, but that as a general rule, sexism is not to be tolerated - it should be reported and met with disciplinary action if necessary. However, President Joel noted that the writer of the e-mail most likely "well intentioned!" but was "ignorant" and stated that it should be looked into. President Joel felt it necessary though to comment on the university being "halachic" and not "egalitarian".

A question regarding the dress code was raised by Talya Laufer, a junior and next year's TAC Vice President, in response to the recent email reminder about the dress code. She inquired as to the nature of this dress code - was it a *halachic* decision, if so, which rabbis were consulted and why has there been a lack of transparency? President Joel quipped that he did not want any dress to be transparent, and then proceeded with a complicated answer that seemed to suggest that the dress code is not the result of a *halachic* decision, but rather a cultural or traditional feeling for what is considered appropriate. The university made a decision as to what clothing best represents a Modern Orthodox institution - and thus the dress code was born.

"We try and develop with the culture," says President Joel. However, the university must also, "be sensitive to the many kinds of people that make up the students

and faculty. The decision wasn't made by Roshei Yeshiva...there should be students involved in the conversations."

Nomi Teplitsky, a junior, commented on Joel's response to this question. "He did not answer her question. The question was who made up these guidelines, and he said these are just known guidelines, but clearly the memo was written by someone. So [here is] another example of him not addressing any issue."

There have been many complaints about President Joel's responses to student questions. "As usual, President Joel did not give any real answers. I think he's a good politician and does a good job skirting around the issue," says Teplitsky. "I have been to this meeting for the past 4 semesters, it is always the same. He never answers the questions, but he does it in a very slick way that you only realize after that he didn't say anything at all."

She did note, however, the touching message regarding our perspective on our problems in relation to the rest of the world, with which President Joel concluded. Other students though, are pleased that President Joel is able to reassure the student body and encourage them to participate. A student body that takes an active stance for their interests can be confident in their university.

Do You Think Stern Can Dance?

Adina Erdfarb

The third annual *So You Think Stern Can Dance* benefit performance took place on Monday, April 4, and Tuesday, April 5. Held at Schottenstein Cultural Center, the dance showcase featured original dances choreographed and performed by Stern students, with proceeds donated to Sunrise Day Camp Israel, a day camp dedicated to cancer patients and their siblings.

Produced by Adina Erdfarb (SCW '11) and Emily Harris (SCW '11), this year's *So You Think Stern Can Dance* exceeded expectations, both quantitatively and qualitatively. After successful turnouts the last two years, more than 400 attendees came to see over 30 Stern students and alumnae perform. The largest audience in the performance's history was treated to eleven dances, each of which showcased the wide-ranging talent of the Stern student body.

The show benefitted Sunrise Day Camp Israel, located in Even Yehuda, a community just south of Netanya. Sunrise Israel is an offshoot of the original Sunrise Day Camp located in New York, the first day camp in the world for cancer pa-

tients and their siblings.

"I started working at Sunrise Day Camp in New York the first year it began," says producer Emily Harris. "It's a truly unique camp that provides a fun and safe environment for children with cancer and their siblings. I'm so glad Stern students were able to come enjoy an evening of dance and music, and simultaneously raise money to help make Sunrise Israel a success."

As in the past, the evening kicked off with a performance by the B'notes, Stern's a capella group, led by Penina Siegel and Dina Lustiger. Singing "Just The Way You Are," "The B'notes Medley," and "Hinei Ba HaShalom," the B'notes wowed the crowd with their harmonies and vocal skills. The floor was then turned over to emcees Tamara Frieden and Avi Varnai, who were introduced with an entertaining video exploring and exposing the "dancing skills" of the Stern College student body.

Then it was time for the *real* dancers to take the stage. From beginning to end, viewers were impressed by solos and group dances in a variety of genres, including

hip-hop, belly dancing, Persian, and Broadway. Dance after dance wowed the near-capacity theater, with the crowd singing and clapping along throughout the show. The evening capped off with a



Stern students get a preview in the form of a flashmob in Kushner Dining Hall.

performance of "Switch," the flash mob that took place in the Stern and Sy Syms cafeterias during the week prior to the show, but was months in the making.

"Since the beginning of the school year, I had wanted to promote the dance show in a unique

way and get everyone excited to come," says producer Emily Harris. "I came up with the idea to do a flash mob in the cafeteria, a sure way to catch everyone's attention. I think it ended up being a real success, surprising the student body and attracting a lot of girls to the event." The flash mob videos have already garnered a combined 1300 hits on YouTube, attracting attention

from students and non-students alike. In addition to raising money for *tzedakah* (charity), *So You Think Stern Can Dance* serves an additional purpose, allowing female students to perform in a comfortable, all-female venue.

Julia Siegel

"*So You Think Stern Can Dance* offers our undergraduate women the opportunity to pursue their passion for dance in a beautiful, artistic, fun-filled way," says Zeldra Braun, Associate Dean of Students at Yeshiva University's Beren Campus. "This event attracts women from across the campus spectrum and provides an amazing, unifying, energizing evening," says Dean Braun.

All together, it was an enjoyable evening for dancers as well as audience members, not only because of the impressive dancing and worthy cause, but due to the campus unity it generates as well.

"There's really nothing like *So You Think Stern Can Dance*," says assistant producer Ayala (Yali) Raichlin (SCW '14). "It's one of the few times where the bubble you placed your classmates in bursts and the results are outstanding. To see quiet girls come out of their shells and see girls of different religious backgrounds all dance together is quite something. Being part of *So You Think Stern Can Dance* makes me proud to be a student of Stern College."

NEWS

Digital Relationships Panel Draws a Crowd

Rachel Schultz

On March 22, 2011, a forum was held at Stern College for Women on the topic of "Developing Relationships in the Modern Age." The forum, jointly organized by YUConnects, the YU Counseling Center, and T-Cubed, informed students of the potential harms resulting from an over-reliance on technology, within the context of personal and professional relationships. The highly-attended event featured three accomplished and knowledgeable speakers—Dr. David Pelcovitz, Professor of Psychology and Education at YU's Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration, Dr. Steve Nissenfeld, Clinical Professor of Management Science at Sy Syms School of Business, and Dr. Efrat Sobolofsky of YUConnects.

The forum was moderated by Charlie Harary, a popular and dynamic motivational speaker. Harary opened the evening by explaining how the internet and social media shape and influence society at an unfathomable pace and showed a video entitled "Is Social Media a Fad?" The video highlighted the widespread usage of the internet and social media and the resulting fundamental shift within societal communication.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive aspects of these forms of communication, Harary urged the audience to educate themselves regarding the potentially harmful impact the internet and social media may have on one's interpersonal relationships. As opposed to abstaining from technology usage altogether, the intelligent solution is to be cognizant of the issues involved and learn how to properly engage in and utilize these modes of communication.

Dr. Pelcovitz addressed the overall impact that technology has on interpersonal relationships, dating, and family life. He discussed the psychological concept of fragmentation and how multi-tasking can prevent one from focusing effectively on the task at hand. Although technology enables a person to accomplish more in a shorter period of time, it can also prevent one from being present in the moment. He joked about the reality of "email voice" and how people can easily discern if they are having a conversation with someone who is simultaneously checking his or her email.

Nowadays, society relies on digital communication at the expense of face to face communication. As a result, people find it more dif-

ficult to relate to the emotions of others and empathy levels are decreasing. Healthy relationships require a solid foundation of face to face interaction, enabling both individuals to feed off of facial expressions and body language. Once grounded in the human interaction, these types of relationships can then be strengthened with phone and or texting conver-

employers. Additionally, employees must beware of professional relationships becoming too casual through the use of social media and or email.

As a general rule, digital communication diminishes one's sensitivities to the emotions' of others, sensitivities that are crucial to creating effective business relationships. Dr. Nissenfeld claimed

brought down from Har Sinai and how the second set, which were given in a quieter and more modest manner, were the ones that were everlasting and permanent. In this way, she introduced the concept of maintaining privacy within valued interpersonal relationships.

Within a Torah perspective, a Jew's interpersonal relationships should be modeled after his or her connection with *Hashem*, which exists ideally as an intimate and private bond. When a person shares too much information with too many friends, it detracts from the uniqueness and intimacy of a given relationship. Meaningful relationships result when two individuals focus solely on their personal connection and gain satisfaction from the presence of the other individual. An awareness of this reality enables people to maintain the proper perspective towards establishing healthy and lasting relationships.

In terms of social media and technology, Dr. Sobolofsky advised students to be careful when posting information on the internet. She referenced Rav Yisrael Salanter's famous words, "Not every-

thing we think has to be said, not everything said needs to be written, and not everything written needs to be published." The panel then concluded with a question and answer session.

Sy Syms senior Chana Salomon felt that the panel was extremely important in that it addressed a relevant issue to all. "Everywhere we go, people are no longer engaging in the world but rather are absorbed in the digital world," Salomon stated. In the business realm, she commented on how technology has changed the dynamic of the workplace in that "people used to be able to leave their work at work, but now due to technology, your work haunts you in your living room."

Similarly, Stern senior Leah Peyman stated that she truly enjoyed the event and, "...thought it was relevant not only to the dating world but in all realms of life." She continued and said, "The reality of how technology has changed the world over the last decade or two really opened my eyes, both in terms of embracing it for the future and reminding me that sometimes traditional forms of communication are preferred."

When asked about the impetus for creating the panel, Dr. Sobolofsky explained how YUConnects tries to "host educational forums featuring the building blocks for



Tova Klapper

Interested students listen to Dr. Pelcovitz, Dr. Nissenfeld, and Dr. Sobolofsky talk about Relationships in the Digital Age.

sations. However, without the face to face component, a relationship will lack the fundamental ingredient to a meaningful and lasting connection.

Dr. Pelcovitz broached the issue known as "Half Shabboss," a term coined for the sad reality that large numbers of Modern Orthodox teenagers publically keep the laws of Shabboss but privately use their phones for texting. "Half Shabboss" may partially exist due to society's over-usage of and attachment to technology.

Students then heard from Dr. Steve Nissenfeld, Clinical Professor of Management Science at Sy Syms School of Business, who spoke about using technology in the professional sphere. Dr. Nissenfeld discussed the unprecedented pace of change taking place within digital communication and the effects of this reality on the workplace. Professionals who utilize the internet and/or social media properly can become more effective and efficient in their work. However, if used inappropriately, employees can cross professional lines and find themselves in serious trouble.

Dr. Nissenfeld explained how professionals should avoid emailing or posting career-related information that could be viewed as negative or controversial by

that this form of "emotional intelligence" is necessary for all professional leaders to promote proper interpersonal skills, enabling them to empower and motivate others.

Furthermore, technology causes professionals to suffer from information overload, resulting in increased distractions and lowered work performance. Therefore, some companies are trying to help their employees implement healthy strategies to effectively manage the tremendous amount of information that exists due to the internet.

At this point in the panel, Harary, who is also the First Vice President of Residential Operation and Legal Counsel of RXR Realty, a real estate company based in New York, offered some helpful pieces of advice regarding professional interviews. He encouraged students to view the internet and social media as resources, utilizing them to their advantage. Harary also warned students looking for jobs that employers do in fact look at the Facebook page's of applicants.

The final speaker of the night was Dr. Efrat Sobolofsky, Director of YUConnects, who discussed the topic of "Privacy vs. Shared Information—the Torah Perspective." She began with a description of the two sets of tablets that Moshe

Opt for OpEd if You're a Woman

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manage the OpEd Project in SCW. According to Fousek, Dean Bacon was able to get university funding for the program, and it is "something we hope to raise funds for and repeat."

Students are required to submit applications to the OpEd Project, which asks for two short essays. The application will assess students' writing skills and their quality of expression. After reviewing the applications, a YU faculty committee will accept 20 students to the program. The faculty reviewers will have students' transcripts and GPAs to consider, "but that would be a very minor and secondary consideration," noted Fousek. Students will find out if they have been accepted by May 11.

Once accepted, students will attend an all-day seminar given by an OpEd mentor on the Beren Campus. After the seminar, students will get matched up with OpEd mentors based on each student's writing interests and will work with them for a full year on submitting opinion pieces to major publications. "The mentors are published authors, journalists, and public intellectuals," remarked Shires. As the OpEd Project will be time-consuming for students, Fousek said that the program might count for some credit; however, nothing formal has been discussed yet.

After the OpEd Project is over, students will receive continued guidance and support from OpEd Project networking events, if they choose to attend.

"This is a fabulous opportunity for students to learn more about themselves and about how their experiences make them experts already in certain areas," Shires remarked. "I hope that the seminar will inspire and motivate students to speak out about what matters to them."

Dean Bacon agreed with Shires about what she hopes students will gain from the OpEd Project, but added that, "even if this goal is not realized, I feel certain the participants will find the lessons and the networking valuable in both their personal and professional lives."

healthy relationships." She elaborated and explained that, "The idea of this specific forum evolved through multiple conversations with student leaders and an interdisciplinary faculty meeting which helped to identify a very relevant topic to all of us...We wanted to attract a large audience by offering professional and experiential insights, the latest research, and meaningful Torah messages for everyone."

NEWS

Let's Hear it for the English Department!

Naomi Teplitsky

This coming Fall 2011 semester, there are a number of exciting new English courses being offered in the constantly evolving English department at Stern College for Women (SCW). The new lineup consists of several interesting courses in both Communications and English Literature, including Media Studies, Advance Copywriting: The Portfolio Class, Writing Women's Lives: An Honors Seminar, The Enlightenment, The Romantic Vision, Images of Women in American Literature, Junior Seminar: Jane Austen and Modern Responses, and more.

The English department has been making improvements to their program for the past three years. According to Dr. Shires, head of the English Department at SCW, "We have eliminated courses, added new courses, and revised courses to keep up with a) current scholarship in literary studies b) the interests and expertise of our current faculty." She continued to explain the two-pronged approach towards developing new classes. Department faculty incorporate both requests made by students at each semester's English Tea Party, as well as the suggestions made by English faculty members. Ultimately, Dean Orlian reviews the English department offerings that Dr. Shires submits to her for approval, and from then on the courses are posted on the Banner website.

One of the major changes to the department is the revamping of the Communications track, which is being renamed "Media Studies". All students participating on this track will be required to take a course titled "Media Studies." This class incorporates introductions to all three former Communications tracks- Advertising, Journalism, and Public Relations- and focuses on the evolving changes of the media since the 1900's. The course will study both the traditional print forms and photographic, broadcast and cinematic media.

Changes to the Communications

track involves far more than a new introductory requirement. Professor Mintz, an adjunct instructor, will be offering a new course called "Advance Copywriting: The Portfolio Class," which will serve as an opportunity for students to gain the necessary skills for a career in advertising. The class will be an intensive workshop providing students with the tools to create a practical and useful advertising portfolio.

In the English Literature department, Dr. Joy Ladin, a student favorite, full time professor, and Director of the Writing Center, will be offering a course never before offered titled, "Writing Women's Lives: An Honors Seminar." This course is designed to make students think. In the course description she provides, Dr Ladin asks the thought-provoking questions "Who writes and reads for whom, in what ways, and why does it matter?" Before the nineteenth century, literature written from a woman's perspective was actually written by men. However, by the turn of the nineteenth century women began writing their own novels and autobiographies. This class will give students the opportunity to study American women's writing- something to which the entire student body can relate.

There is also a new Junior Seminar- an intensive course required for the major- being offered called "Junior Seminar: Jane Austen and Modern Responses," which will focus on the responses to Jane Austen's work. While some adore her writing, other cannot stand it; this course will expose students to the differing opinions on her work and understand both the positive and negative impact she had on the various authors, filmmakers, and academics that she influenced.

To appeal to those more scientifically inclined, Dr. Shires will teach "Interdisciplinary Approaches to Literature: Science and 19th/20th C British Literature" meant to bridge the gap between the arts and sciences. This course will take students back to a time

when literature and science were not so distant from one another. Students will learn that both science and literature have deeply impacted one another and will explore science in an entire new light.

For students further intrigued by the mind, and the way it works, Dr. Shires will be teaching another thought-provoking course, which was also restructured for the Fall 2011 semester. "The Romantic Vision" will focus on mental exercise and experience by studying and brain and cognition through literature. "I am angling this course to my strengths and not covering continental Romanticism, while adding a new idea in British Romantic Studies: brain science and the neural 'sublime,'" says Dr. Shires, "something I want to read about and explore more with the class." Dr. Shires is an expert in 19th century Victorian literature and culture.

While not all the courses being offered next semester are new, many of old courses have been restructured. "The Enlightenment", taught by Dr. Manfred, is one such survey course designed to "pose questions about how texts, interpretive communities, and reading practices generate histories." Students will follow the transformation of a theocentric society into one which fosters individualism and intellectualism.

Dr. Manzella is teaching another course that has been rethought called, "African American Literature." This course is designed to study fictions, drama, poetry and essays in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, exploring what it means to be black in the United States in this time period. This course was previously taught by Professor Wachtell and the change of professor alters the course content and approach.

The English department at Stern College is one of the largest, and hopefully the upcoming improvements will both keep and attract interested writers and readers.

Upcoming Changes to Undergraduate Faculty Spark Speculation

CHANGES from page 1

partments, little will change in the upcoming restructuring.

Much of the hubbub has focused around how the merger will practically work- will faculty be required to teach on both campuses each semester, or will they alternate one semester on each campus? No decisive conclusion has been reached, and it is likely that individual departments will decide some of these questions.

This makes sense, as the execution of the merger will have different effects in different departments. As Mrs. Cecily Dobin of the Stern College Chemistry department points out, in the hard lab sciences it would be nearly impossible for a professor to teach on two campuses, as many hours per week are spent setting up experiments and preparing labs. Professors teaching lab courses can only really work on one campus at a time.

Other faculty members pointed out the difficulty raised by the fact that professors will only have offices on one campus. Dr. Ruth Bevan of the Political Science Department has been teaching on both campuses for several years, although her home base is on the Wilf campus, and she emphasized the logistical nightmare of finding office space for all the professors traveling back and forth. Office space is necessary not only for storing extra materials, but also for professors to be available to students, a crucial aspect of the liberal arts education. Additionally, many professors choose to live close to the campus on which they teach; having to travel back and forth would seriously impact the quality of their commute.

Dr. Lowengrub pointed out that there are other universities with multiple campuses but shared faculty. For example, Tulane University, a private research university located in New Orleans, has multiple campuses but one faculty. Similarly, Fordham University has three main campuses located in various parts of New York City with a faculty that travels back and forth.

However, some faculty members are concerned that Yeshiva University is a unique case. For example, Dr. Marnin Young, Professor of Art History, expressed a concern that "the unique character of Stern College would be lost." The faculty of Stern College work in an

environment singularly focused on women's education and achievement, and teaching the men of Yeshiva College would add a new dimension that might detract from the attention the women currently receive.

In Dr. Young's case, this is further complicated by the fact that, due to religious reasons, Yeshiva College historically does not have an art history department. It was still unclear to Dr. Young and his colleagues how this would be resolved were the faculty to be combined.

Similarly, many professors are worried that a unified faculty will result in some professors being let go. Dean Bacon pointed out that, although there may be some overlap, just because the faculty is combined does not mean that the undergraduates will require fewer courses to be taught. The same number of professors will be required because the same number of classes needs to be offered each semester. Despite this logic, skepticism remains, and some students believe that fewer faculty will be hired and receiving tenure.

When queried as to how the unified faculty would affect single-sex education, both Dean Bacon and Dr. Lowengrub emphatically stated that coeducation is not the goal of the unified faculty. Not only are the logistics of two separate campuses working against coeducation, Yeshiva University intends to remain staunchly committed to single-sex education.

That being said, Dr. Lowengrub believes in thinking creatively in terms of how education can be delivered. With the prevalence of video conferencing technology, Dr. Lowengrub is open to the possibility of holding a lecture simultaneously on both campuses through Skype. In fact, last year, Dr. Lowengrub himself taught differential equations through video conferencing to 12 women and 25 men. This class was ultimately stopped due to technology malfunction, but Dr. Lowengrub maintains that it is prototypical of a viable option for some specialized classes.

Alana Himer, President of SCWSC, bluntly states that "nobody really has a clue what is happening." It can only be hoped that over the course of the next year, as the reimagining of the undergraduate faculty takes place, everything will be illuminated.

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NEWS

Mayor of Itamar Speaks at YU

Elana Goldberg

On Wednesday night, March 29th at 8pm, Rabbi Moshe Goldsmith, mayor of Itamar, addressed over 500 Yeshiva University students in Lamport Auditorium. The event, sponsored by the YU Israel Club, YSU, TAC, and the Soldiers in Exile club, responded to the campus-wide distress over the murders committed against five members of the Fogel family, residents of Itamar. Since the brutal slaying of Rav Udi, wife Ruth, and three of their six children—Yoav (11), Elad (4), and Hadas (3 months) *a"h*—several weeks ago on the hilltop settlement of Itamar, YU students have rallied behind the Itamar community to raise funds, support, and even learn in the Fogel family members' memories. YU constituted a main stop on Rabbi Goldsmith's 49-site tour of his native Tristate area, where he and fellow American wife Leah spoke up on behalf of Itamar and in thanks to American supporters.

The program began with a video about life in Itamar that Rabbi and Mrs. Goldsmith had prepared over a year ago, depicting scenes of life in Itamar and the inhabitants of the settlement. The video was followed by a brief and emotional speech from Leah Goldsmith.

Rabbi Goldsmith then proceeded to address the silent auditorium, having prepared a slideshow that took the crowd on a grueling step-by-step illustration of the Friday night attack on the Fogel home, including pictures of the house.



Rabbi Moshe Goldsmith, Mayor of Itamar, addresses students on March 30th in Lamport Auditorium.

Rabbi Goldsmith also displayed photographs of the security fence that the terrorists scaled and, due to an absence of cameras, slipped over undetected into the foggy night following the murders.

The slideshow ended with a photograph of the Fogels' front door still displaying the Itamar community's good wishes to the family on the birth of Hadas *a"h* several months prior to the attack. Throughout the slideshow, Rabbi Goldsmith spoke of the Fogel family, focusing especially on his in-

teraction with Rabbi Udi Fogel *a"h* on the Thursday night prior to his death. "The night before the attack, Udi came up to me with a holy light shining from his face," said Rabbi Goldsmith. "Now I know why—his *neshama* (soul) was already connected to *shamayim* (the Heavens)".

Following the presentation, Rabbi and Mrs. Goldsmith accepted questions from the audience in a discussion that ranged from the political to the personal. One point emphasized by Rabbi Goldsmith was the need for an improved security fence around Itamar through the purchase of an additional security camera for the hefty price of \$80,000. The Goldsmiths applauded the efforts of the American Jewish community, and the students of YU in particular, for expressing such immense warmth and support for the Itamar family.

Students left the Wednesday night event with a renewed sadness over the tragedy that befell the Itamar family. However, Rabbi and Mrs. Goldsmith's frank and sincere manner also instilled within students a newfound sense of hope in the wake of such an inexplicable catastrophe. Students left the mayor feeling reconnected

Election Results

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to Israel and all it stands for, and hoping to play a more active role not only in rebuilding the Itamar community, but also in advocating for peace and a final end to the strife that has repeatedly torn our nation apart since its 1948 found-

ing. "The mayor really helped me feel a sense of purpose regarding Israel, and what I can do to help", said SCW Sophomore Sarah Marvin. "I think his visit made students feel more unified".



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FEATURES

STERN COLLEGE CONFIDENTIAL

A Heated Mystery in a Stern College Dormitory

Avigail Soloveichik

SCHOTTENSTEIN - Several months ago, at six a.m., I awoke in my Schottenstein Residence Hall (SRH) West Side dorm room to the clanking and hammering noise of the man in the heater. After re-considering my initial sleep-deprived and dismayed thought that a criminal was forcing his way in, I reckoned that repairmen were working on the building. Once I wandered bleary-eyed to the lobby, however, the security guard set me straight. "That's probably the heater turning on," she calmly explained.

Many of you may be acquainted with the man in the heater. I have been told that he inhabits the 36th Street dormitory as well. For those of you who have not had the luxury of this experience, let me provide some helpful commentary. One SRH resident compared the noise to the sound of a fight taking place inside the heater. Another student suggested in jest that the ghosts of the building have returned to haunt it. Shulamit Brunswick said she always exclaims, "There's a man in the basement, trapped, trying to get out! We have to save the man in the basement!" According to Esther of the East Side, the noise resembles an entire symphony that starts "first in the bathroom—then the room across the hall, then the room beneath me."

My research on the Schottenstein steam heaters unearthed several surprises. First, not every room has noise. Second, although I had lived hammer-free on the East Side of Schottenstein for two years, apparently the noise also exists on the East Side. Third, although a clanking hammer was the

most commonly reported noise, other students described sounds of running water and a curious whoosh.

Perhaps these discrepancies have to do with the complex architecture of Schottenstein. Brunswick conjectured that we are witnessing a gradual breakdown of the steam heater; last year it was breaking down on the West Side, and now on the East side. "Next year there will probably be a whole orchestra," she cheerfully surmised. Alternatively, perhaps a deeper and more investigative exploration of Schottenstein is required.

Either way, as residents of New York City, we are not alone in this experience. Curious noises are a common phenomenon in the city, where many apartments and houses use steam heat. As an article on the New York webpage of *Apartment Therapy: Saving the World, One Room at a Time* put it, "Well, it's officially steam hammer season."

We generally assume the noise has something to do with water and old pipes, and we are probably right. The basic steam heater is relatively simple. As fire heats water in a boiler, the temperature of the water steadily rises until it reaches 100 °C. At this point, the water remains at a constant temperature while "latent heat" from the fire converts the liquid into dry steam. As steam travels through the pipes down a small pressure gradient, the cold metal pipes cause the steam to condense back to liquid and emit latent heat. Due to a partial vacuum created when the water condenses, this heat emerges through the radiator.

Once the steam, pipes, and room reach thermal equilibrium at the first radiator, the remaining steam in the system continues on to heat the next rooms.

"The banging noises are caused by steam forcing its way through pockets of water," explains the *Apartment Therapy* webpage. This excess water can stem from a variety of problems, such as "a worn-out seat in the steam valve," a partially closed or opened steam valve, the radiator tilting incorrectly, or "poor return drainage." As one commenter elucidates, "When the steam turns into water and cools, if it doesn't drain out of the pipes fast enough, some physics-y stuff happens when the new hot steam collides with it that result[s] in the sound of someone banging the radiator with a tire iron!"

Students' opinions on the man in the heater vary. While some deem the noise oddly comforting, others find it aggravating; but, interestingly, even these latter students often appreciate a certain charm in the noise. One West Side resident finds the noise frustrating when she is trying to work, but the noise does not wake her when she is sleeping. Esther of the East Side similarly says the noise only bothers her when she is trying to study and needs quiet or when she is sleeping. Otherwise, she feels that she is in the olden days, in the early 1900s. Ilana Ickow finds the heater hysterical even if also somewhat frustrating. Aviva Gubin says the heater does not bother her all that much; she loves her room. Sari of the West Side even says she likes the noise; it helps her sleep.

Interestingly, of the several students I asked, even those who do not particularly enjoy the noise said that they would not change locations because of it. One SRH West Side resident said that she got used to it; and she would not leave the West Side of Schottenstein, because "the West Side is the best side!" Ilana Ickow, similarly, said that the noise would not make her leave Schottenstein's West Side. "The bathrooms are really clean on this side," she explained.

Other non-Stern College individuals, too, have their own stories and camaraderie to add to the mix. Jerry Alonzy, professionally known as "The Natural Handyman," remarks: "I fondly remember the banging and clanging of the rapidly expanding iron pipes as the boiler did its work." Frank, a commenter on the *Apartment Therapy* article, similarly reminisces: "Ahh - the sweet sounds of home!" Simon, another commenter, writes, "It makes me feel better to now know that I am not alone." Margaret, responding to the author's request for advice on how to stop the noise, exclaims, "No, no, leave it alone, it's MUSIC!"

Proposed techniques to minimize the noise depend on the exact problem and on whether you have access to your building's core heating system. Suggestions include placing a shim under the radiator or soaking the expansion valve in vinegar. Other commenters suggest reading Dan Holohan's *The Lost Art of Steam Heating or We Got Steam Heat, A Homeowner's Guide to Peaceful Coexistence*. One individual simply offers, "As someone who has lived, and still

lives in old homes, my advice is to buy earplugs."

When asked whether they had ever tried to stop the noise, many SRH students responded that they had not. Ilana Ickow, however, happily professed, "Yes, when it first started, when I didn't know what it was, I hit the wall, the radiator; and then I realized that wouldn't do anything." Still, such attempts are more logical than the futile scolding this author has delivered to her heater. There is another tactic, shared by Rachel Kirshenbaum. When Rachel first heard the hammering in the top corner of her room on the West Side, she climbed out of bed and followed the noise upstairs, but she could not track it down. When asked if she ever tried anything like kicking, Rachel dramatically replied, "No, I would never. I can't win. I'm no match."

What is it that allows us to shout and sigh and laugh about the man in the heater, all at the same time? Perhaps it is something that bonds us as students; maybe it is being able, every time I hear the noise, to shout good-naturedly through the wall so my neighbor can hear me, "Ahhh! Why? Why?" Maybe it is the feeling of kinship with other New Yorkers. Alternatively, perhaps the humor lies in the special feeling that our heaters might be extra crazy, or in the scientific mystery of it all. Certainly I wish the noise would stop; but at least this engineering phenomenon gives our home away from home a personality all its own.

Competitive Grading

Shira Goldstein

For the most part, we assume that we understand the grading system used at Stern. We all know and accept begrudgingly that there is no A+ at Stern. We understand that a 93/94 is an A (depending on the class), a 90 is an A- and so on.

In reality, the grading system is often not as simple as we believe. Teachers are allowed much freedom in the way they grade. The teachers use this freedom to delegate grades in a way they feel is most beneficial to the student's learning process. One form of grading that is often used is what can be referred to as competitive grading. In the competitive grading system, instead of students being awarded raw grades, the students' grades are weighed against those of the rest of the class. In this way the grades are determined in relation to, or competitively with one

another. The efficacy and fairness of this grading system is debatable.

Dr. Leah Blau, an organic chemistry professor at SCW, believes that a competitive grading system is necessary and can even be advantageous for students. She feels that it is necessary in order to differentiate between A and A- students. Blau explains that the differences in good grades are so slight that it is necessary to judge grades in relation with one another in order to mark the differences. In addition, she says that if due to the nature of a particular test, an entire class graded lower, competitive grading can be very helpful. If the highest grade on a test is a 96, that becomes an A and the other grades are altered in relation to the highest grade. This, she believes, ensures the standardization and

fairness of the testing method.

In Princeton University's undergraduate program, the students are graded competitively in every class. The top 10% of the students with the highest grades get an A, while the rest of the grades are calibrated in relation to that top 10%. Rachel Ratner (SCW 2012), comments that according to a Princeton friend of hers, the grading system creates a very competitive atmosphere. Because the students are graded against each other, they lose out if their colleague does well, and gain if he or she does poorly. This creates a tense atmosphere in which the students do not help each other but rather may, unfortunately, harm each other. The students do not share notes, they steal books from the library so that no one else can use them, and they some-

times even break other students' lab equipment so that others will fail the labs. Ratner feels that such a learning atmosphere is a terrible one to be in. She believes that there is no reason to contribute to competitive feelings amongst students, especially in Stern, a college that prides itself on maintaining a warm, more intimate setting.

Elisa Karp (SCW 2013), agrees with Ratner and points out that it is specifically for that reason that medical schools grade their students using a pass or fail system. This, she claims, encourages collaboration among medical students rather than the cut-throat atmosphere present in a competitive grading system. She adds that a competitive atmosphere is not conducive to studying, because one would refrain from asking questions and having dis-

cussions about the material with other students, a process that is often very beneficial to the learning experience. She also believes that a competitive grading system reflects more on the level of the overall class than on the personal level of the student. Whereas in a raw score system, the grade solely reflects the achievement of the student, in a competitive grading system, the grade reflects the accomplishments of the student and of the entire class. Therefore if one were in a smarter class, one would do more poorly than if one were in a less intelligent class. In this way, the grade reflects the intelligence of the class more than of the student alone. Elisa also argues that teachers' tests don't change so drastically from year to year. It is the same teacher making the

See GRADING page 8

SPORTS

Anu Ratzim V'haym Ratzim: Sandy Koufax

Arguably the most famous Jewish athlete of all time, Sandy Koufax is widely known for refusing to pitch Game 1 of the 1965 World Series because it fell out on Yom Kippur. As a young boy raised in Brooklyn, Koufax was an avid athlete. And although he is famous for being a baseball player, he really grew up on the basketball court of the local Jewish community center. Captain of his high school basketball team, Koufax ranked second in his division.

During his freshman year at the University of Cincinnati, Koufax was a walk-on to the college basketball team, and in the spring he made the baseball team. Koufax pitched four games that year, and, unexpectedly, won three. A scout from the Brooklyn Dodgers took note of this unknown player and sent a report to the Dodgers' office - where the report was lost amidst the office clutter.

Fortunately, another Dodgers scout, Al Campanis, heard about Koufax and invited the soon-to-be legend to a Dodgers tryout. At the tryout, Campanis stepped up to the plate as Koufax took the mound. With the team manager and scouting director watching, Koufax began to throw. As Campanis later described the pitches,

"There are two times in my life the hair on my arms has stood up: the first time I saw the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and the first time I saw Sandy Koufax throw a fast-ball."

The Dodgers quickly signed Koufax before the other teams had a chance to grab the shining new prospect. Although Koufax began playing with the Dodgers during the 1955 season, he was not yet prepared to pitch in the Major Leagues; his pitches were almost as wild as they were fast. Koufax made just twelve appearances that season, shattering predictions of his domination on the field. Though the Dodgers ended up winning the World Series that year, Koufax almost seemed more focused on night classes he was taking at Columbia University than baseball, even attending class the night the Dodgers won the World Series.

Over the next few seasons, Koufax's performance fell short of all expectations. Like any player, Koufax had some shining moments, including tying for the Major League record of strikeouts recorded in a single game by pitching 18 strikeouts. Nevertheless, Koufax was not a reliable player. He walked almost as many batters as he struck out.

By the end of the 1960 season, Koufax decided to give up baseball for a profession in electronics.

Nevertheless, letting baseball go was easier said than done. Koufax decided to try one more season to



see just how skilled he could be on the mound. Koufax worked out during the off-season and came to pre-season in better shape than he had been the previous few seasons. With help from the coaching staff, Koufax made a slight change in his windup to allow for better vision of the strike zone while pitching.

The event that sparked Koufax's

comeback, however, occurred at a pre-season game. Although Koufax was normally taken out of a game as soon as he began throwing wild pitches, the backup pitcher was not able to relieve Koufax on the mound that day due to flight delays. The first twelve pitches Koufax threw were balls. Bases loaded, no outs. After a quick pep-talk with the catcher, Koufax seemed to find his stride. Not only did he strike out the following three batters, but also subsequently threw a no-hitter.

With broken records, no-hitters, MVPs and Cy Young awards, the next few seasons were ones of total success for Koufax. Yet, to all good things must come an end, and, at the close of the 1964 season, Koufax was diagnosed with traumatic arthritis in his arm.

Dr. Robert Kerlan told Koufax that he would be lucky to pitch once a week, given the arthritis in his arm. Koufax was not willing to accept Dr. Kerlan's prediction and continued to play through pain. Despite all odds, Koufax pitched more than 335 innings that season with an ERA of 2.04. Koufax won his second unanimous Cy Young award, helping the Dodgers reach the 1965 World Series. It was that

very year that Koufax refused to pitch the first game of the World Series because the game fell out on Yom Kippur. Though the Dodgers lost that game, with Koufax's help they ended up winning the series in Games 5 and 7.

Prior to the 1966 season, Dr. Kerlan advised Koufax to retire. Yet again, Koufax rejected the doctor's advice and continued to maintain his intense pitching schedule. Koufax pitched 323 innings that year with an ERA of 1.73, leading the Dodgers to another pennant victory. Only after achieving a career ERA of 2.76 and pitching 2,396 strikeouts was Koufax willing to retire. In 1972, Sandy Koufax was inducted into the Hall of Fame, and, later that year, his jersey number 32 was retired.

Koufax epitomizes the athlete's drive for greatness. Koufax continued pitching with arthritis in his arm, determined that only he could choose when to retire from baseball. Until that day came, Koufax played to the best of his ability. Because of Koufax's dedication to baseball and continued dominance throughout the 1965-1966 seasons, he is still known today - and will probably forever be known - as one of the greatest pitchers ever to live.

Quotes of the Month

"It does not matter how many times you get knocked down, but how many times you get up."

- Vince Lombardi (American Football Coach)

"I never thought about losing, but now that it's happened, the only thing is to do it right."

- Muhammed Ali (World Champion Heavyweight Boxer)

"Victory is in the quality of competition and not the final score."

- Mike Marshall (MLB Baseball Player)

The answers to these questions will determine your success or failure. 1) Can people trust me to do what's right? 2) Am I committed to doing my best? 3) Do I care about other people and show it? If the answers to these questions are yes, there is no way you can fail."

-Lou Holtz (American Football Coach)

Congratulations to...

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Fencing's Michal Gilboa, Rebecca Sperling, Brahma Kessler, Elizabeth Penn, Avigayil Goldson, Tali Kern, Jill Josophowitz, Dana Robinson, and Eliana Shaul for representing Yeshiva University at the NCAA regionals.

Competitive Grading

GRADING from page 7

test and thus the standard should remain pretty constant. What can vary more widely, she asserts, is the intelligence level of the unique class each year. She therefore believes that competitive grading does not ensure proper test standards, because it is affected much more by the level of the class than that of the test itself.

Rivky Jacobov (SCW 2012) sees both sides of the argument. She says that on the one hand she understands that competitive grading is necessary to differentiate between minutiae in grades, however, she questions the cost. She says that a competitive environment is the antithesis of the Torah spirit. When students are judged against one another it creates disunity. Such an environment is antithetical to a Torah that encourages harmony and unity.

Shira Zuckier (SCW 2011) argues that Stern women should not be penalized for having higher grades than average college students. She says that many students at Stern have been motivated their whole lives to work hard and do extremely well in school and thus the average grades are often higher. She says that Stern is not a typical college and thus a bell curve of

grades does not apply. Teachers should not penalize high achieving Stern students by try to induce a bell curve like distribution of grades where it does not apply.

She also discusses the Torah idea of, "kinaat sofrim marbeh chachmah" (Bava Batra 10), that competition among scholars increases wisdom. Zuckier believes that in an ideal situation, grading competitively would increase the students overall knowledge. If one is competing against other hard-working students in the class, one must study a lot harder to achieve the same grade as one would in a raw score system. However, Zuckier points out that practically, the dual curriculum in Stern doesn't allow for the luxury of endless study time and thus it is not feasible to put students into a situation in which they must give double the study time to each of their seven courses, because they are being graded competitively.

As discussed by the various students and teachers above, a competitive grading system has both benefits and disadvantages. A close evaluation of the pros and cons is necessary before instituting such a policy in a particular class at Stern.

SPORTS

Sportsmanship or Playoff Victory; A Lesson from the Sports World

Meira Lerner

While playing competitive sports, athletes often display their true character in a way that rarely occurs in other settings. For example, in the spring of 2008, two softball teams, Central Washington University and Western Oregon, battled in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference playoffs. Both teams hoped to reach the NCAA Division II softball tournament for the first time in either school's history.

At the top of the second inning, a senior from Western Oregon, Sara Tucholsky, stepped up to bat with two runners on base. Sara was not the best player on her team. In fact, she was only batting 3 for 34 that season. Yet, at that moment, Sara's fate could go two ways: either she would step up to the plate and hit home the runners standing on first and second, or she faced a potential end to her softball career just short of an NCAA Division II tournament.

Full of confidence, Sara ap-

proached home plate. She stared down the pitcher and patiently awaited the pitch. Suddenly, a loud crack rang over the field, as the ball soared from the end of Sara's bat over the infield...the outfield...the fence. Sara had hit the first homerun of her softball career!

Sara's teammates, along with all the Western Oregon fans, cheered as the two base runners scored the first two runs of the playoff game. When attention returned to Sara, however, people began to notice that she had fallen on the baseline in between first and second base, her face filled with agony. In Sara's excitement over hitting her first home run, she had accidentally missed first base. As she had turned around to tag the base, she twisted her right knee, tearing her ACL.

At first, no one knew what to do. Speechless, everyone watched Sara crawl to the safety of first base. Sara's coach, Pam Knox, asked the umpire whether she

could appoint another member of the team to round the bases in Sara's place. The umpire, quoting the rulebook, apologetically explained that if a Western Oregon player would help Sara, Sara would be called out. Alternatively, if the coach officially replaced Sara, her hit would be considered a two-run single. Though Knox knew she had no choice but to replace Sara with another runner, she could not bear the thought of taking away Sara's big moment - the homerun Sara had so badly desired throughout her four years on the team. What a way for Sara to retire not only the season but also her softball career!

Just then, Mallory Holtman, a member of the opposing team, CWU, asked the umpire whether she could carry Sara around the bases for a homerun. As Mallory later explained, "In the end, it was not about winning and losing so much. It was about this girl. She hit it over the fence and was

in pain, and she deserved a home run." Mallory, one of the most decorated offensive players of that conference, wanted the game to be played right; she wanted the game to be won by the most deserving team. And, more importantly, she valued sportsmanship over an NCAA tournament berth.

Mallory and shortstop Liz Wallace carried Sara Tucholsky around the bases, dipping Sara's right foot down to touch each base. Selflessly, Holtman and Wallace gave Tucholsky the three-run homer that she deserved and were greeted at home base by a dumbfounded, teary-eyed crowd.

Despite the two runs scored by Wester Oregon in the bottom of the second, CWU held onto their lead, ultimately winning the game 4-2. However, although CWU placed first in their conference and participated in the NCAA tournament, the climax of their season was the altruistic behavior of Mallory and Liz.

Games are won and lost every day. Game-winning dives are watched repeatedly on ESPN. Yet, it is acts of sportsmanship that form the most meaningful aspect of sports; they compel athletes to take a step back and reconsider their priorities.

As Hall of Fame soccer player, Mia Hamm, once said, "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." As we grow older, we play sports for the intensity and the competition. Nevertheless, as Mallory and Liz demonstrated, we must always remember that we are also playing for the love of the game, for the soul of the team, and for the test of character - not for the win.

ARTS AND CULTURE

A Review of *A Perfect Mess*

Atara Arbesfeld

Merry mess-makers rejoice! *A Perfect Mess* is the book that explains and validates lack of orderliness and puts those persnickety neat-o perfectionists to shame. Many college students can attest to experiencing the exhilarating thrill of completing an assignment seconds before it is due, or acing an exam studied for at the last minute, at least once. Along the same vein and being no exception, this very article was composed two hours before its deadline, with its author sprawled atop an unmade bed with books, papers, laundry, and various UFOs (unidentified food objects) strewn all over the floor.

In the spirit of procrastination, reading *A Perfect Mess* provides a refreshing relief indeed for those who seem to lack organizational skills when it comes to study and work habits. *A Perfect Mess*, written by Columbia Business School Professor Eric Abrahamson together with journalist David H. Freedman, is a psychology/self-help/business guide that is the ultimate antithesis to clean-up-your-act books like Stephen Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. There is even a section cheekily named "The Seven Highly Overrat-

ed Habits of Time Management."

What is a mess? Messes are related to physical principle of entropy, which states that any system left on its own, without intervention, will eventually lose its order and become more disorganized than its original state. The proverbial "mess" is simply the inevitable fulfillment of a scientific maxim. Nonetheless, the fear of being labeled as "messy," "disorganized" or, worse, a "procrastinator" remains.

Messes, as the authors point out, are actually pretty subjective when it comes to the eye of the beholder. What, then, is considered a mess in the technical sense? As authors explain, contrary to popular belief, being messy does not mean total lack of order. Rather, a mess is a missing or "failed order," in one specific area while everything else is in place. For example, a room may have cabinets, bins, and drawers that are compartmentalized for different items, but even when just the bins are overflowing and disorganized, there is a sense of "failed order" and, hence, a mess.

The book goes on to categorize different types of messes, naming them in elegant terms with

fancy definitions such as "clutters" (elements scattered out, often prolifically, from normally accepted positions) and "convolutions" (organizational schemes that are eccentric and opaque, being dependent on intuition and are in some ways illogical). There are also different kinds of messy people described, including "the mess phony" (ex: the teenager who spend twenty minutes in the mirror fashioning a look of casual disarray) and "the orderly procrastinator" (the professor who spends entire days reorganizing her computer files).

As for the good news, it turns out that it really does not pay to be overly neat after all. The authors explain that a system which is neat and orderly has to be constantly maintained to remain in such a state, which takes up precious amounts of time; eventually the order is loosened. For example, take two magazine street vendors - one with impeccably organized racks, the other with magazines scattered about in a loose arrangement. Surprisingly, the latter is still in business while the former ended up closing. The reason? Unlike his competitor, the second street vendor avoided the extra

costs of having a computer inventory system to track items and hiring additional staff to maintain orderly racks. As a result, the vendor with the more "disorganized" business approach had better financial success.

The problem is that American society has an obsession with the pursuit of organization and neatness - over \$2 billion a year are spent on closet renovations alone, according to Closets magazine. This obsession is ironic considering that many beautiful works of art, celebrated musical compositions, and other creative modes which are highly valued in American society are actually products of mess. In the West, for example, Vincent Van Gogh's post-impressionist paintings incorporated thick, swirled and, seemingly disorganized brushstrokes weave together expressive depictions of the experiences of peasant life. In the East, Japanese art celebrated wabi sabi - "the beauty of imperfection." Johann Sebastian Bach, famed for his spontaneous musical improvisations, would embellish his organ music, even in the middle of church services, at the behest of the clergymen. Einstein's observations about Brownian mo-

tion theory, which identified the random movements of pollen in a drop of water, have led to a dozen other Nobel Prizes being awarded for further research involving random movements. Mess also paved the way in modern medicine: Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin on the mold of one of his petri dishes that he had sorted from a clutter.

"A Perfect Mess" is not a light read, but it is entertaining as well as enlightening due to its highly engaging style and random factoids. There are also chapters on how mess can bring benefits for organizations and leadership, which may be useful for individuals who are currently in the business world or will be entering it in the near future. *A Perfect Mess* is highly recommend for those disorganized, yet talented and creative, individuals who would like to learn how to use their unique abilities to their advantage instead of viewing their mess as a liability. As Albert Einstein put it, "if a cluttered desk is the sign of a cluttered mind, of what then, is an empty desk?"

ARTS AND CULTURE

A Review of *Hamlet*

Devorah Isenberg

Whether you are aware of it or not, if you have attended a Stern College Dramatics Society production, you are familiar with the breeches role. The breeches role, also known as the trouser role, is a role in which an actress appears in male clothing. Of course, here at Stern, the SCDS specializes in embracing the breeches role for all its inherent comedic potential, as anyone who witnessed last semester's rollicking *Pirates of Penzance* will attest. But taking on a drama with this kind of casting, never mind a tragedy, requires much more skillful direction and even more talent in acting. Attempting to stage Shakespeare's longest and perhaps most serious play, one of the treasured classics of English literature, is not a simple task.

And yet—despite the daunting nature of the task—the SCDS production of *Hamlet* was the best show this reviewer has seen at Yeshiva University. According to the show's star, SCW senior Tiferet Weiss, Stern College professor and dramatics director professor Reuven Russell has been encouraging the dramatics society to take on the challenge of Shakespeare for several years. This year, after mastering the tricky wordplay of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pirates*, the actors of the dramatics society finally felt ready for the Bard.

Why *Hamlet*? "Rather than doing a comedy, or a tragedy more conducive to a cast of women," said Weiss, "Reuven wanted to take on a very meaty work that would be a far cry from our usual comedy." And of course, Shakespeare was originally performed with an all-male cast; why not an all-female one? The role of *Hamlet* has been played by women before, most notably by Sarah Bernhardt in 1899 and Diane Venora in Joseph Papp's 1983 production. It was a video of the latter performance that inspired Tiferet Weiss to attempt to take on the iconic role.

The stark, simple set (designed by Stern graduate Liat Tretin) that greeted the audience as they entered the Schottenstein Cultural Center was the first sign that they were not in the land of musical comedy anymore. The actresses, when they emerged and spoke the first lines of the play—in the scene in which the guards and Horatio first encounter the ghost of *Hamlet's* father—conveyed a

quietness and seriousness that cut through the dim blue lighting and sent shivers down the spine. The appearance of the ghost can be a challenge to stage in such a way that it appears genuinely frightening and doesn't elicit unintended laughter. Sultana Shoshani's huge eyes against her pale makeup and her slow, monotonous intonation against an eerie background echo created a genuinely ghostly apparition.

The appearance, in the second scene, of the primary characters of the play, revealed for the first time the skill and talent of hair and makeup stylist Sali Blum. Due to a deft combination of wigs, false beards, and wrinkle-simulating makeup, Chana Gila Ovitz-Levy's Claudius and Shlomit Freidman's Polonius were believable as middle-aged men. And although Tiferet Weiss' *Hamlet* was still relatively feminine looking despite her loose tunic and short black wig, the impression of femininity didn't necessarily detract from the character's stormy yet vulnerable personality. Weiss' reserved,

high-pitched giggling tone in her voice hinted at what lies ahead for her character.

Having been convinced by the ghost that his uncle Claudius killed his father in order to ascend the throne and marry his mother, *Hamlet* begins planning his revenge. At this point in the play, *Hamlet's* philosophical and pensive soliloquies contrast dramatically with the light, irreverent tone he takes when teasing Polonius or hanging out with his friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (the comically identical-looking Tovah Silberman and Zahava Rothschild). Tiferet Weiss embodied that dichotomy, practically bouncing through her deliciously snide banter with Polonius in one instant and then almost visibly peeling off her light-hearted mask to ask, "To be or not to be" the next. Weiss and Freidman were probably the two actresses most comfortable with the Shakespearean language. In their inter-

actions, the words sing. Was every word of the complex Shakespearean dialogue performed perfectly? No, of course not. But what we forget about Shakespeare when we study his plays in English lit classes is that Shakespeare was first and foremost an entertainer. His plays were written to be performed and watched, not read and analyzed. What was captured in the SCDS production was not the most inspired reading of every line or

the most novel reinterpretation of one of the most famous plays in the world, but the original sense of drama, adventure and tragedy that and queen and babbles to herself. Her crazed hysterical laughter echoes through the theater.

Laertes returns to find both his father and sister dead. At this point, Arielle Freundel's Laertes, with heavy eyebrows and tightly pulled back hair, stops appearing like an anonymous member of the royal court and inhabits a reserved but expressive personality that is all his own. In contrast to *Hamlet's* petulant, talkative, trembling show of grief, Laertes has a manly, no-nonsense attitude that Freundel conveyed with a perfectly straight back and a calm de-

The talented cast and crew of SCDS's *Hamlet*.

From Pessy Leibowitz



From Pessy Leibowitz

The talented cast and crew of SCDS's *Hamlet*.

meanor. *Hamlet* and Laertes duel—it is to a tribute to both actors that the duel was simultaneously well-choreographed and fun to watch, as well as serious and foreboding of imminent danger. The duel begins with arrogant boasts from the duelers and then progresses to an intense silence as both realize that they are dueling for their lives.

Laertes is stabbed with a poisoned lance and dies, Gertrude drinks from the poisoned cup prepared for *Hamlet* and dies, Claudius is stabbed too and dies, and *Hamlet* is wounded and prepares to die. When Horatio, *Hamlet's* one trusted friend, returns, it is to a scene of devastation. While Sarah Shafner's petite presence as Horatio in the first scene was somewhat unconvincing, as she cradles a dying *Hamlet* in her arms, suddenly her small features and short stature become a sign of her powerlessness to save him, her insignificance in a huge world full of hate, revenge, and death.

Hamlet is really all about. After all, when you strip away the poison and the sword fighting, the prince and the ghost, isn't *Hamlet* really just about a boy from a broken home who refuses to call his stepfather 'Dad'? This production, with its minimal spectacle and relatable characters, brought the famous play back to that.

While confronting his complacent mother Gertrude (Chaya Weissman), *Hamlet* think she hears Claudius eavesdropping and stabs his sword through the curtain, accidentally killing Polonius, who falls in a tangle of black curtain and with a chillingly real-sounding thump. In the next scene, Ophelia, having been rejected by *Hamlet* and abandoned by her brother Laertes, mourns her father; she appears with her pretty white dress smudged and tangled, her hair matted, and her eyes frighteningly wide and unseeing. Her cutely feminine voice now seems eerie and heart-breaking as she hands flowers to the shocked king







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ARTS AND CULTURE



Around NYC

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

Ongoing through Sunday, April 10, 2011

Macy's Flower Show
Macy's Herald Square
151 West 34th Street, New York, NY 1001
Guided tour offered at 11am and 4pm daily

Opening Saturday, April 16, 2011

The World's Largest Dinosaurs
American Museum of Natural History
Central Park West at 79th Street, New York, NY, 10024
Visit www.amnh.org for ticket pricing

Ongoing through Monday, April 25, 2011

The Orchid Show: On Broadway
The New York Botanical Garden
Bronx River Parkway at Fordham Road, Bronx, NY 10458. (718)- 817- 8700
Visit www.nybg.org for more information.

April 20, 2011 through May 1, 2011

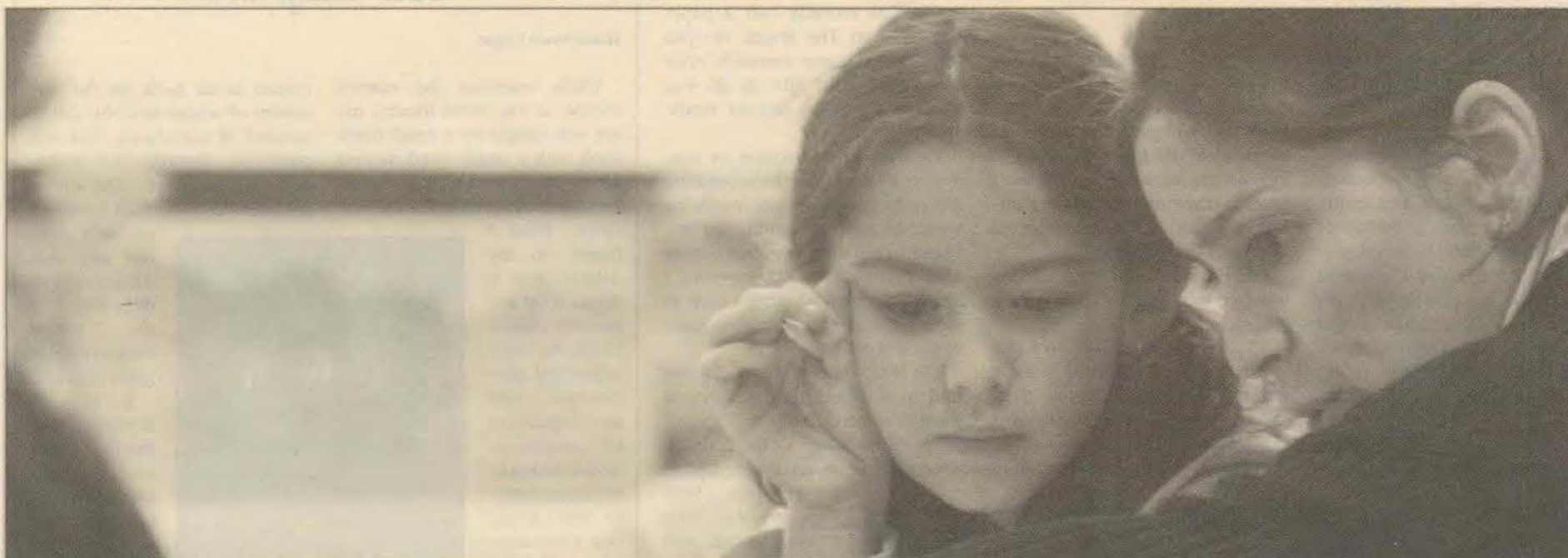
Tribeca Film Festival
Screenings held at various locations around NYC
Visit www.tribecafilm.com for schedule and ticket information

Ongoing through Sunday, May 22, 2011

The Diary: Three Centuries of Private Lives
The Morgan Library & Museum
225 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, (212) 685- 0008
Note: This exhibit features the diaries of dozens of prolific authors such as Charlotte Bronte, Tennessee Williams, Sir Walter Scott, Henry David Thoreau, and Anais Nin.

Ongoing through Sunday, June 26, 2011

The Washington Haggadah: Medieval Jewish Art in Context
Lawrence A. and Barbara Fleischman Gallery of Late Medieval Art
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10028
Visit www.metmuseum.org for museum hours



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SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Science Student Profile: Tirtza Spiegel

Interview by Observer Staff

Tirtza Spiegel is a graduating "super-senior" at SCW majoring in Biology, with a Cellular and Molecular Concentration, and minoring in Women's Studies. She is currently involved in many extracurricular activities, including the Biology Club and SURGE. She aims to become a doctor.

Observer Staff: When did you know that you wanted to be a doctor? Is there any particular branch of medicine you'd like to specialize in?

Tirtza Spiegel: I became curious about the intricacies of the human body at age two, when I was diagnosed with multiple allergies. I was always passionate about science and math in school, furthering my interest in medicine. As I am an outgoing individual, I knew I wanted to work with people. After spending a summer in the breast clinic at the Odette Cancer Centre, my desire to become a physician was cemented. The integration of science and creative strategies to help others truly appeals to me.

OS: Which science courses have you found to be interesting and helpful to your career choice? Which non-science courses have you enjoyed?

TS: My favorite Biology course was Molecular Biology. Molecular Biology taught me to think critically and refined my analytical skills which are crucial for both scientists and physicians. Other helpful courses I enjoyed were Genetics, Cell Biology, and Medical Biochemistry. I enjoy thinking outside of the box and find multiple choice tests boring. Personally, it is exponentially more satisfying to have that "eureka!" moment when solving a problem set. My favorite non-science course was Women's Studies. Learning about the diverse challenges facing women and discussing the implementation of various strategies to improve the lives of women fueled my interest in women's health. I

am currently taking Philosophy of Logic and am loving it!

OS: If I'm correct, you're a Women's Studies minor. Why did you pick this minor?

TS: Correct! I wanted to challenge



Tirtza Spiegel

Tirtza Spiegel

myself in the liberal arts as well as the sciences in order to receive a thorough education. As a feminist, I felt that Women's Studies would be an ideal discipline in which to expand my knowledge. Women's Studies is an interdisciplinary minor and I enjoy this multifaceted approach to education.

OS: How did you start getting involved in research? What is your research about?

TS: My first foray into research occurred at the Odette Cancer Centre, where I conducted clinical and psychosocial breast cancer research. There, I researched the breast exam preferences of

women with BRCA gene mutations and published my findings in the *Journal of Women's Health*. Additionally, I researched the anxiety that women with BRCA gene mutations may experience while undergoing yearly breast MRI exams, with a special interest in the women recalled for suspicious findings. This manuscript was recently accepted for publication in *The Breast*. Synthesizing research with clinical experience showed me the importance of using one's knowledge to improve the lives of others personally and globally. The research and clinical experiences complemented each other. The knowledge I amassed through my research enhanced my ability to connect with my patients, while the knowledge acquired through patient care provided greater urgency and meaning to my research.

OS: Aside from working with Dr. Holz, where else (if anywhere) have you done research?

TS: My research at the Odette Cancer Centre was conducted under the guidance of Dr. Ellen Warmer, a medical oncologist. In addition, I was a Roth Scholar in Einstein and worked in Dr. Jeffrey Segall's lab.

OS: You recently had a paper published in *The Breast*. Do you want to continue research after completing your MD, or do you plan to focus on clinical medicine?

TS: I aspire to become an academic physician. Incorporating research, teaching, and medicine would be most rewarding for me. I plan to obtain a research degree after receiving an MD, however, I haven't decided whether I wish to pursue this degree in basic science or clinical epidemiology.

OS: Why cancer? What do you find in the field that makes you want to research it?

TS: When things in the body go wrong, there is an innate desire to research what went wrong, why it went wrong, and how to fix it. Due to its prevalence in our society, cancer research remains a hot topic and the urgency to discover therapeutic treatments is increasing. My initial exposure to cancer research was a fluke. However, after my first experience with cancer research, I became fascinated with the disease and wanted to study it from many different angles. I decided to conduct my Honors Senior Thesis re-

search with Dr. Holz, who focuses on basic breast cancer research, and conducted translational research on metastasis while in the Roth Scholars Program at Einstein. I am currently reading *The Emperor of All Maladies*, which is a "biography" of cancer. I'm hooked!

OS: If you could go back to your first year on campus, what advice would you give yourself?

TS: I would advise myself not to be nervous. College is awesome! These four years have allowed me to mature into a thoughtful individual and develop my leadership abilities. I would also tell myself to be more aware of the multiple learning opportunities that exist outside the formal classroom. The friendships created in college are life-lasting, and there is so much to be learned from my peers.

OS: Which course(s) do you wish you could have taken while at Stern?

TS: I love history- I wish I could

have taken last semester, and I wish I was in History of Women this semester. I also that wish I would have continued learning French, which I believe to be the most beautiful language.

OS: What advice do you have for incoming Stern students wishing to pursue an advanced degree in the sciences (MD, PhD, etc)?

TS: Discover what you are passionate about, and pursue it. Immerse yourself in the academic discipline and the extracurricular activities you most enjoy, and your college years will be worthwhile. Also, challenge yourself! Sign up for classes that you will believe will expand your knowledge and broaden your research skills. Most importantly, become involved in your community. Take advantage of the plethora of opportunities Yeshiva University has to offer, and give back in order for other students to gain from these experiences as well.

Science Book Short

Breaking Through History in Ten Chapters

Helen Ayala Unger

While browsing the science section of the Stern library, my eye was caught by a small black book with a single word dashed across its cover. I took it out on a whim, curious as to what it was

about. What I found, to my delight, was a detailed yet accessible history of the ten most influential discoveries and developments in medicine. *Breakthrough!*, by science writer Jon Queijo, was a fascinating read that both revealed the human follies within the medical field and revealed in the advancements that have been made since ancient times.

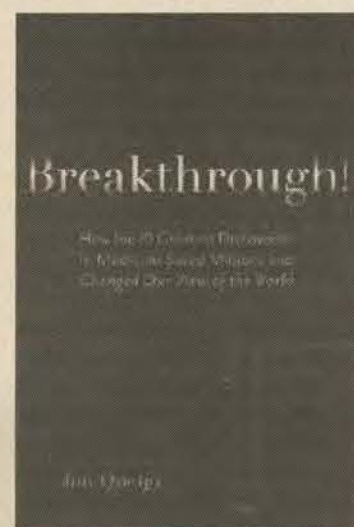
The book is organized in chronological order, beginning with the creation of clinical medicine in Hippocrates's times and progressing until the present day. He breaks down the ten breakthroughs, giving a rich back-story to each and allowing the reader to fully understand the developments from a historical, social, and medical standpoint. Some of the breakthroughs in-

cluded in the book are the discovery of antibiotics, the development of anesthesia, and—my particular favorite—the evolution of germ theory. The author manages to give equal attention

to each subject and uses descriptive diction to help the reader comprehend every concept.

This month's featured science read is informational, entertaining, and well-written. It describes the way medicine used to be, demonstrates how it changed, and indicates to where it may be headed in the near future. Queijo, using his talent as a writer, illuminates the world of medicine in a uniquely human light. This view is one that is not to be missed by anyone interested in medicine.

Helen Ayala Unger is a sophomore at SCW from Cleveland, Ohio, majoring in Biology. In her (nonexistent) spare time, she (hypothetically) enjoys lab research and sleeping. Go Cavs!



**Six weeks to go. The official
Countdown to summer begins...**

NOW!

SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Chemists and Cheerleaders: One Student's ACS Experience

Rivkah Rogawski

The first thing I noticed while checking into the Anaheim Hilton Honors hotel, home of the Conference of the American Chemical Society (ACS), was a bevy of blond teenage girls in miniskirts, pony-tails, and glittery eyeshadow. Having assumed that my fellow chemists would be more on the male and nerdy side, I was pleasantly surprised—until I realized that the hotel was also home to the USA Cheerleading Finals, a competition that I initially thought had little in common with the ACS.

After giving the matter some thought, though, I realized that both the ACS and the Cheerleading Finals were celebrating unique, competitive fields that are underappreciated. To the general public, chemistry is as indecipherable as the cheerleading pyramid. If the average American does think about chemistry, it is probably as a mysterious, impractical field that has little relation to their lives.

But, to those who appreciate chemistry, it is, like a cheerleading routine, a dynamic and exciting field that is constantly evolving in new directions. It encompasses areas of life as disparate as food development, agriculture, biology, and material science. It was therefore with great excitement that I and my two fellow Stern students, Kate Rosenblatt and Tsipora Huisman, prepared ourselves to participate in the 241st ACS National Meeting. Having been selected to represent Stern College for Women at the ACS Student Chapter Awards Ceremony and to present posters of our own research at the Under-

graduate Poster Symposium, we anticipated meeting like-minded undergraduate scientists, learning more about chemistry, and perhaps even getting a tan in the California sun.

The ACS National Meeting is intimidating in its scale, gathering thousands of chemists from 35 different divisions— including some I had never heard of, such as Colloid and Surface Chemistry— in one location for a continuous program of poster symposia, lectures, meetings, awards ceremonies, and events. Additionally, the ACS also hosts an Industrial Exposition, where myriad companies display their chemical wares, luring passerby in with free chocolates, posters, and T-shirts with catchy slogans like "Got Dihydrogen Monoxide?" This particular National Meeting was extremely exciting for the chemistry community, because 2011 is the International Year of Chemistry, a special year dedicated to the promotion of chemistry. The theme of the meeting was the chemistry of natural resources, which meant that many of the special lectures and expositions focused on green chemistry, biochemistry, and geochemistry.

After getting my bearings— and a free ice cream from the friendly ACS staff— I attended a fascinating symposium on Hollywood Chemistry. Co-sponsored by the Science and Entertainment Exchange, the symposium featured both scientists and entertainment professionals discussing how science is portrayed in mass media. The screenwriters for hit TV shows

House, M.D. and Breaking Bad discussed how they plan an episode to be scientifically accurate, and

education, and the other was for green chemistry initiatives. While waiting to receive our awards, I chat-

graduate Research Poster Session. As we walked into the huge auditorium, I wondered what types of projects other undergraduates engaged in— would my own poster, on the interaction of lysophosphatidic acid with model membranes, be considered objectively significant or insignificant? To my surprise, the range of projects displayed at the session ran the gamut from small project to ambitious undertaking, with my own poster falling squarely in the middle. I also met a range of fascinating characters, including a former dairy farmer in his mid-sixties who was returning for a second degree in chemistry and biology. Inspired by the forty years he spent on a dairy farm, this Texan had a mission; to cure diarrhea in calves, which he proposed to do by developing a drug to sequester chemical products produced by bacteria in the intestinal tract of the calves. Talking to him, I was inspired by his drive and passion, and his refusal to allow age to stand in the way of his academic achievement.

Soon after the poster session, we boarded a Super Shuttle back to the airport, where we were propitiously seated next to a Jewish physical chemist from Budapest who regaled us with tales from the history of chemistry, one of his fields of interest. As I listened to him discuss the Martian Five— five Jewish physicists who changed the 20th century— I marveled at how chemistry could unite a disparate group of individuals, all committed to sharing knowledge and learning from each other.



Tsipora Huisman

Rosenblatt, Huisman and Rogawski represent Stern at the ACS Student Chapter Awards Ceremony.

scientists who work as consultants in Hollywood explained how to get involved as a chemist in the entertainment industry. Rather than griping about how inaccurate "The Day After Tomorrow" is, scientists are urged to contribute as consultants to the Hollywood community— and maybe shake the stereotype of "The Absentminded Professor".

That evening, my fellow students and I, along with Dr. Estes of the SCW Chemistry Department, accepted two awards on behalf of the SCW Chemistry Department. One was an overall award for achievement in communal chemistry edu-

ted with nearby students about chemistry and their research. Most of the fellow students were, like me, considering a career in chemistry— except for a pair of Jewish boys from Long Island, who were, of course, going into medicine. After the awards ceremony, Kate, Tsipora, Dr. Estes and I retired to the Hilton lobby to enjoy our pre-ordered kosher meal. Unfortunately, what arrived more closely resembled rubberized polymers from the Polymer Chemistry Division than anything from the Food and Agriculture sub-section.

The next morning, we awoke to present our research at the Under-

Better Than Your Grandmother's Chicken Soup

Aimee Rubenstein

The only thing worse than getting sick at Stern College for Women is getting sick without a stash of your Bubby's ever-healing-always-handy chicken soup. Cue Midtown East Pharmacy and Surgical LLC. Amidst blocks full of generic Duane Reade and CVS stores, this pharmacy promises a unique and friendly atmosphere. Midtown East Pharmacy is a private company— officially categorized under Medicines— Patent and Proprietary— and its staff engage with every person who walks through the door. Catching the flu is never fun, but with a discount for all Yeshiva University students and incomparable customer service, Midtown Pharmacy East is literally like a next door neighbor.

Only two minutes from Brookdale Residence Hall, Midtown East Pharmacy is located at the ground floor on 161 Madison Avenue between 32nd and 33rd Avenue. When I entered the store, the owner Noam Avigdor greeted me and explained his unique method

of displaying products, something I had noticed immediately. The shelves hold boxes of generic medicine, vitamins and toiletries,



Midtown East Pharmacy

The well-organized interior of Midtown East Pharmacy welcomes sick students.

but not in a superfluous manner. Every product has its space on the shelf, which allows the customer to compare brands and prices and not be overwhelmed by fifteen

different brands of cold medicine. Furthermore, Midtown East Pharmacy only stocks products that they cannot get on their shelves for no additional price.

Avigdor, who is Jewish, explains that at his pharmacy, the customer is not just a number with a prescription, stating firmly that "here you are a person." Pharmacist Robert Sabet offered his knowledge of products and the importance of customer service. Despite his prestigious license, Sabet, (PharmD, RPh) explains that he cares about a "face to face"

Turning up the Heat Helps Torch Fat

Dena Kapetansky

Diets these days revolve around calories. We find ourselves counting calories, saving calories, and trying to burn calories— but no matter what, it never seems to work the way that diet books say it will. It is evident that what we think we know about calories is simply not true. We have always been taught that all calories are the same. We are taught to believe that whether we eat 300 calories of carrots or 300 calories of carrot cake, our bodies will store and burn them equally. New scientific discoveries, how-

ever, show that when it comes to losing weight, not all calories are equal.

Studies have shown that foods that require more effort to eat help you burn more calories while you digest them. These foods include fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and lean meats. Just the act of chewing these foods can help you burn 30% more calories. The fiber and the protein in these foods take so much effort to digest that your body doesn't absorb all of their calories. In addition, the act of

See CALORIES page 14

relationship with his customers. This enables the customer to get the right product faster and therefore feel better quicker.

The pharmacy's motto is "Come in and say hello!"— but for those of you who are too sick to get out of your bed and do that, they have free delivery as well. There are no long lines in Midtown East Phar-

macy, so if you're in a rush this is a great place to pick up a pick-me-up. And if you have some time to spare, since there is an availability of service, you will also have the opportunity to converse with experts who can help you find the best cure for your cold— after Bubby's chicken soup, of course.

ISRAEL

Responding to Communal Tragedy

Lauren Burstein

Pictures of slain children infiltrated our collective conscious through the internet, and blood-filled floor tiles and red-stained bed sheets caught our attention as we browsed through news articles. The five members of the Fogel family, who were vehemently slaughtered in their sleep on the night of Friday, March 11th, will be remembered most prominently by their familial survivors: daughter Tamar, 12; a son, 8; and another son, 2. Their hometown, Itamar, a small settlement in the West Bank, will not forget the inhumane cries that fractured the devastating Shabbat, the cries that reverberated at the funerals in Jerusalem. Moreover, the Jewish nation as a whole will also remember the published images of despair, the loss that penetrated Israel, and the bravery that continues to lurk through other settlement territories.

When tragedy strikes a religious sect, it is other members of the religion often unite through the loss and try to contribute to those still suffering. Modern technology has enhanced this act of uniting. Social networking sites, such as Facebook, allow strangers who believe in a common cause to communicate with one another. Facebook groups entitled, "RIP Fogel Family" as well as "Never Forget the Fogel Family Tragedy" have been created in response to the tragedy in Itamar.

But this act is really a tragedy

for the entire Jewish people, not only those religiously affiliated. It is a terrorist attack that has been recorded as one of the most gruesome in all of Israeli history. The slaying of a three month old infant is an incomprehensible act that forces one to ponder more philosophical questions. How is such an act committed? From where do such heinous feelings stem? Yet, while such ponderings can never cease to be addressed, it is the actions that we take that more thoroughly fulfill our instinctual need to contribute.

Jewish organizations such as the Jewish Federation of America have set up international fundraising programs to help support the remaining Fogel family members. Synagogues and organizations world-wide have come to try and alleviate some of the financial burdens the family continues to experience. At Yeshiva University, undergraduate students have come together to help raise money and to learn in the memories of the victims. Additionally, a kumzitz in Times Square on March 31st brought many students in the New York area to sing and unite in support of Israel in light of recent tragedies. As a people who care for one another, Jews value taking continuous action to help each other; we promote togetherness in times of sorrow.

Yet, in spite of the actions we all take to help, tragedy can often be a dividing force. After the

Itamar Massacre, as it has come to be known, a surge of debates ensued about the building of more homes in the settlement territories. Following the attack, Israeli Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, approved the building of 500 new homes in the West Bank settlements. This decision was strengthening for some, while posing anxiety for others. In the weeks following the attack, online responses to Netanyahu's decision have spanned the entire political spectrum. One commenter writes, "We own the land! Why shouldn't we build?" On the other hand, another commenter argues, "It's amazing that the Netanyahu Government can't see that there is a direct connection between Jewish deaths and settlement construction." While some people fear that the cessation of settlement building will mark the defeat of the Jewish state, others fear for the safety of the people who continue to live in dangerous territories.

Whatever a person's position may be regarding the building of West Bank settlements, we should all remember that through controversy, we enable conversation, and through debate we enable passion. Perhaps we should look at our differences not so much as a dividing force, but more of an impetus for continued discussion. When we stop discussing our differences, when we abandon our own beliefs, we lose our connection to our subject. When we stop caring about Israel, when we lose our voices, we become detached from the important task at hand: supporting the Jewish state. In whatever way we think we should, in whatever way we think best, we should strive to enact on our beliefs, to contribute to continued discussions, and to collaborate with one another to produce the best possible outcome.

After the funeral of her parents and siblings, Netanyahu visited Tamar Fogel and said, "We build; they destroy." Whatever we think "build" means, whether it be literal, or figurative, let's continue to "build" our nation and not allow terrorists to destroy our humanity.

satisfying them on less. Hearty Foods, such as brown rice, whole grains, and cereals, are also chewy, yet are packed with fiber, which causes them to take up more room in our stomachs, leaving us fuller (when compared to other foods with the same amount of calories). Energizing Foods, like coffee, tea, and dark chocolate, can cause a metabolism boost if we do not load them with milk, cream, or sugar. Lastly, Warming Foods, like peppers, cinnamon, ginger, and garlic, contain varied levels of the chemical capsaicin, which binds to nerve receptors and sends fat-burning signals to the brain.

Although calories are the main focus of most diets, followers of the Active Calorie Diet do not need to track their calorie consumption. Simply eating all four types of calories per day, along with two glasses of water with each meal, brings you one step closer a healthier you.

Turning up the Heat Helps Torch Fat

CALORIES from page 13

chewing slows down your eating process and can help you feel fuller while eating less food.

There are some surprising foods that can give us an even bigger calorie burn. It has been found that caffeine and other compounds found in coffee, tea, and spices like cinnamon and ginger all stimulate the central nervous system and can boost the metabolism by as much as 12%. By combining these foods, we get what has been named the Active Calorie Diet. This smart plan, created with the new knowledge we have about calories, aims to direct dieters toward food choices that will allow them to burn calories throughout the day.

There are four types of Active Calorie foods that stimulate our bodies to burn more calories and lost more weight. Chewy foods, such as lean meats, nuts, whole fruits and vegetables, maximize the calories we burn by forcing the eater to actively chew them, and

Shiv'im Panim L'Politics

Sophie Felder

You know what they say - two Jews, three opinions! Although that joke may be the oldest in the book, it's a good joke, mostly because it is true. And it is applicable not only to Jews - all people are complex.

The society that we have constructed for ourselves creates categories to make life easier for us. If we had to try and understand the complexity behind every individual and every circumstance, we would never get anywhere - options actually prevent us from making decisions. A recent Forbes article actually credited the success of supermarkets to the fact that they limit the choices of their patrons to only a few options. Less choices makes us feel as if we have chosen correctly. The same goes for people, particularly in regards to political debates. However, I fear that engaging in political groupthink and limiting ourselves to two or three political stances, particularly with regard to Israel, is both dangerous and ineffective.

This discussion will require some generalizations, which I realize is hypocritical, since I am trying to highlight the uniqueness of the individual's opinion. But, allow me a moment. In terms of our political relation to Israel, our society has developed two ends of a spectrum on which to place ourselves - "right wing" and "left wing." The characteristics of the "left wing" group have become increasingly difficult to discern, but here are a few: followers of J Street, people who encourage dialogue with Palestinians, people who support land for peace, just to name a few. The characteristics I understand to be associated with the "right wing" group seem to include an AIPAC membership, supporting the settlements, supporting any actions of the Israeli army (unless they are directed at the settlements), and not supporting a two state solution. All of this has been drawn from vague discussions with the people around me. Again, this is what I have noticed; it is not the summation of an extensive amount of research.

I have also noticed that the term, "right wing," has become associated with "pro Israel" and that

the terms, "left wing" and "liberal," have become synonymous with "anti Israel" - and to me, this is frightening. Perhaps it is because I have been called a "liberal," but would react violently if someone ever accused me of being "anti-Israel." It is more likely, however, because I think it implies an incomplete and inaccurate analysis of what it means to be "left wing".

I believe that it is possible to be a "liberal" who is "pro Israel". The "liberal's" support will certainly manifest itself differently from the "right wing" individual, but that does not make it wrong. Moreover, some activities of the "left wing" have unfortunately been labeled as "anti-Israel," when in fact they represent nothing more than a desire to understand.

For example, a few years ago, as a student living in a settlement in the West Bank ("right wing" ideal), I also developed relationships with people living in Bethlehem ("left wing" ideal). These activities did not seem incongruous to me; on the contrary, they meshed perfectly with my love for the Jewish homeland, and my desire to communicate with the different populations that play a significant role in the narrative of our country. Many people voiced their opposition with my decision to communicate with people from Bethlehem. They relayed comments such as, "you know talking doesn't work." Perhaps that's true; perhaps we haven't had the right conversation yet. Perhaps we haven't met the right people to talk to, but "not talking" doesn't seem to be "working" either.

To that effect, I would like to voice my concern that we have made an extreme binary of "right wing" and "left wing," and it would be to our advantage to abandon this extremely partisan approach in favor of a case by case analysis of approaches to the conflict. Too often, we label activities from the onset without taking time to investigate whether or not they may be effective, and in doing so, we lose out on important opportunities to fulfill the aforementioned adage and cultivate multifaceted opinions.

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www.yuobserver.com

STUDENT SNAPSHOTS

WORD SEARCH

DAVIDA KOLLMAR

Pesach is coming, the time when Jews all over go crazy searching for Chametz. In the spirit of searching for things, here is a word search of things you don't necessarily need to look so hard to find at Stern... Words can be in any direction and one word should remain after all of the other words have been found.

- Bio Major
- Board
- Cafs
- Cellphone
- Club
- Coffee
- Cookies
- Dictionary
- Flyer
- Froyo
- Headphones
- Hebrew
- Homework
- ID Card
- Kallah Door
- Laptop
- Laundry
- Learning
- New Yorker
- Pairs
- Rainboots
- Readings
- Recycling
- Ring
- Salad
- Shana Bet-ter
- Shuttle
- Skirt
- Speaker
- Staff
- Test (2)
- Textbook
- Tights
- Torah
- Women

C	L	U	B	S	D	I	C	T	I	O	N	A	R	Y
O	T	E	E	F	F	O	C	F	L	Y	E	R	G	R
O	L	H	O	M	E	W	O	R	K	R	I	D	N	D
K	A	L	L	A	H	D	O	O	R	N	N	A	I	N
I	P	E	G	D	E	E	H	Y	G	R	I	L	L	U
E	T	A	T	R	B	A	A	O	L	S	F	A	C	A
S	O	R	E	A	R	E	A	D	I	N	G	S	Y	L
H	P	N	X	O	E	N	O	H	P	L	L	E	C	T
U	A	I	T	B	W	O	M	E	N	H	T	S	E	I
T	I	N	B	I	O	M	A	J	O	R	O	S	R	G
T	R	G	O	R	E	K	R	O	Y	W	E	N	E	H
L	S	I	O	S	T	O	O	B	N	I	A	R	E	T
E	R	E	K	A	E	P	S	D	R	A	C	D	I	S
F	F	A	T	S	H	A	N	A	B	E	T	T	E	R

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The first 5 students to solve this week's puzzle corner get a \$5 coffee gift certificate.

Email solutions ASAP to rtrogawski@gmail.com



Mati Engel



Kumzitz for Israel



from Ariella Gottesman



STUDENT SNAPSHOTS



Students, including new student Zelda B, show off their Purim costumes.



Caption Contest

Do you have a clever or witty caption for one of these three pictures? If so, email the number and caption to rtrogawski@gmail.com. Winners will receive a mystery prize!

2

1



3



STYLE

The Man Behind J.Crew

Dassi Fant

"OMG, what in the world do I wear?" That was very first thought that scurried across my mind the fateful day that I was chosen by the Kukin Lecture Series as student ambassador to escort J. Crew CEO Mickey Drexler, the fashion hero of every Stern College for Women student. This reflection was quickly followed by "Do I wear something from J. Crew, or is that tacky? Will the perceptive and shrewd Drexler notice that it is from last season, rendering me supremely embarrassed? Is it bad form to pair it with a shirt from Gap, considering the bad blood there?" I nervously anticipated the upcoming Friday, the day of the Kukin Lecture. The Kukin Lecture Series is a course offered at Sy Syms that features inspiring speakers from across the business world. The speakers share stories and advice and answer questions from the students about being entrepreneurs in the business world.

After my initial freak out, and several pensive lattes later, I was clear headed enough to both sift through the bowels of my closet in search for the perfect ensemble, as well as actually do some research on the retail mogul. Millard "Mickey" Drexler is best known for his fairy godmother role in transforming J. Crew from a struggling retail outlet into a fashion phenomenon that has taken the nation by storm, in a tizzy of pencil skirts, tailored blazers, and artfully chunky accessories.

However, well before the first

J. Crew catalogue was published, Drexler had his feet submerged in the waters of the fashion industry. After receiving his MBA from Boston University, Drexler went

spired by Benetton Kids, Drexler proposed GapKids, a place where the Gap mom could shop for her cute Gap offspring. Drexler also helped to conceptualize Old Navy,



The author, second from left, with Sy Syms representatives and Mickey Drexler, CEO of J. Crew.

on to become a buyer for Abraham & Strauss, Macy's and Bloomingdales. He was then recruited by Ann Taylor recruited to inject some style into their dull clothes. After three years, Ann Taylor became a notable fashion outlet churning out unprecedented profits, not to mention great clothes.

Drexler's next endeavor was at the Gap. To make the Gap more appealing, Drexler outfitted its stores with quality basics at an affordable price point. Drexler also helped grow the company to include a wider demographic. In-

the Gap's cheaper and trendier counterpart. Interestingly, Old Navy is actually the name of Drexler's favorite hot spot in Paris.

Under Drexler's guidance, The Gap grew at an exponential rate, with the closet of every American man, woman and child bearing proof. However, in 2002, Drexler was inexplicably fired from his position. To this day, the reason remains a mystery, even to Drexler. Drexler was then hired as the CEO of J. Crew, which at the time was a well liked, but not very profitable, retail outlet.

And thus, the pumpkin began its transformation. To improve the company, Drexler took personal interest in perspective designs and garment quality. His retail philosophy was that every man and woman is on a lifelong prowl for the perfect basic- the perfect pair of jeans, the perfect white t-shirt, the perfect black dress, the perfect ballet flat. J. Crew would offer such perfect basics, with designer quality sans the inflated price.

Just as he did at Gap, Drexler conceptualized and executed many J. Crew extensions. Think J. Crew Bridal Boutique- a store that has not escaped the radar of many betrothed Stern girls- CrewCuts, and Madewell, J. Crew's hipster cousin. However, what makes Drexler a truly remarkable leader is his attention to detail and customer service. It is not uncommon for Drexler to peer over the shoulders of company designers or waltz into one of the many J. Crew stores to check up on its progress and the satisfaction of its customers.

This explains my fashion panic attack- Drexler's attention to detail could be a point of humiliation, and I intended to ward off the danger at all costs. As a student ambassador, it was my job to escort Drexler to brunch before his lecture. Luckily, this went off without a hitch- or at least without me tripping over my stilettos.

Dressed in his casual everyday best, Drexler's Art Deco plastic glasses, artfully crumpled scarf

beneath a puffy vest, and Oxford shirt paired with light-wash jeans and comfy shoes complemented his artfully rough demeanor. Not one for wasting time, Drexler immediately launched into an illustrated account of his retail relationship with William Sonoma, its marketing challenged sales force and the future of discount shopping. As an elitist kitchen snob drawn to the most expensive wares in the store, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that almost everything from the posh kitchen retailer could be found on Amazon at a fraction of the price. Now why hadn't my price savvy mother ever informed me of this nifty trick? But more importantly, why was I learning this invaluable lesson from a fabulously wealthy CEO of an equally as fabulously successful company? Why would he care about a \$50 difference in the price of his fancy-shmancy coffee maker? For the same reason J. Crew is so successful today- his attention to detail.

And so concluded my experience with Mickey Drexler, the buyer turned CEO, whom I still hope to impress- and maybe even follow in his illustrious footsteps. Perhaps one day, I'll become a Kukin lecturer, looking out at the hopeful students wishing they could wear my magnificent Christian Louboutin heels. (As long as I'm dreaming, I'm going to do it in style!)

Was Yeshiva University Used For Publicity?

Aimee Rubenstein

On March 21st, in a packed Yagoda Commons, the famed designer Thomas Jacob "Tommy" Hilfiger graced Stern College for Women and Sy Syms School of Business with his presence. Although Hilfiger is known for his "traditional with a twist" style, he is also rumored to be racist, particularly against blacks, Hispanics, and Jews.

This alleged racism can be traced to the fall of 1995, when Hilfiger supposedly appeared on an Oprah Winfrey episode and said "If I knew that blacks and Asians were going to wear my clothes, I would never have designed them." The problem with this rumor is that Hilfiger never went on the Oprah Winfrey show until 2007- when he appeared expressly to debunk this myth of racism. Therefore, by joining the Yeshiva University community of entrepreneurs and dreamers, the designer was finally able to achieve closure for himself and for his brand.

This was clearly Hilfiger's goal in speaking at YU. He began the event by thanking President Joel,

commenting that his partner is named Joel and clearly emphasizing on the Jewishness of the name. He then asked the audience how someone who could work so closely with Jews could be an anti-Semite.

Hilfiger discussed his career from its risky beginnings to the success he now enjoys. He started his brand in 1984 and has overcome many obstacles in developing it to its present ubiquity. Hilfiger noted, "I was always a dreamer and thinking about what I wanted to do next... I was wise enough at the time to know my own faults and weaknesses." The designer took many risks- including never graduating college, spending all of his money on jeans, and turning down a job with Ralph Lauren.

However, Hilfiger always had a plan. "I wanted [the clothing] to be aspirational, inspirational, spirited and unique," Hilfiger said. Throughout the years, Hilfiger has stayed true to his All-American taste, creating epic jeans ranging from the bell-bottom to the boot-leg to the skinny jean. He explains

that he always had a clear, stylized taste, aiming to redefine and



Tommy Hilfiger addresses a transfixed crowd of Yeshiva students.

redesign classics. In his beginning days, he would take a pair of jeans and then rip, dye, adorn and shred them. Using this approach, Hilfiger has created a brand name that sets him in the same tier as Calvin Klein and Ralph Lauren.

Furthermore, Hilfiger decided

to reach the masses by "lowering the price point", designing

jeans that can be worn by both a celebrity and a cashier. Implicit in this statement is a negation of the his previous racist slur- why would Hilfiger lower his prices if he doesn't want people from stereotypical lower classes to wear his clothing?

The climax of the Hilfiger event was when the lights were turned off and the 2007 episode of Hilfiger on Oprah was played. Oprah herself explained that the rumor about Hilfiger was not only untrue, but also inconsiderate. Hilfiger went on the show to "squash" the statement that branded him as racist. Standing before a room full of Jewish students in a Jewish university, Hilfiger confessed that "[the rumor] is devastating to me personally because it is so untrue."

With stores in over 65 countries and a net worth of over two billion dollars, Hilfiger seemed grounded beneath his starched navy blazer and dress pants. He openly admitted to his captivated audience that fashion doesn't solve everything, explaining that "In the scope of what is happening in the world, fashion isn't really that important." However, he couldn't help adding that "I hope you will all go shopping this weekend!"

OPINIONS

Oligarchy in Stern

Ayelet Friedman

You know that girl who sits in the Beit Midrash. I forgot her name, but I'm sure you know it. Everyone does. You know that she is the student in charge of the weekly learning program, she was a panelist in the recent debate, and she ran both the Purim and the Chanukah events. All of the past programming from the student body has been her ideas. She was on the "Got Middos" staff and she facilitated the group discussions. She is the one that Dean Bacon calls when she needs a student representative- in fact, she is probably the one the President calls when he tries to decide if he is cancelling school due to the impending snowstorm.

Don't get me wrong, she is really cool and competent, but sometimes I wonder whether there is anyone else in this school who is capable. Is there anyone else in this school with a name, interests, capabilities, potential, drive, and a YUMS account? There must be someone, but I haven't found her yet. Her name is never on any posters, she isn't the president of every club (she isn't the president of any club), and she doesn't send

out sstuds. If anyone knows of a girl who is competent and motivated, would they please let me know?

Somehow, Stern has turned into an oligarchy. An oligarchy is a government type in which a small number of people who control all of the power. Often, there are families within the oligarchy that pass their power from generation to generation. In the past Stern elections, there were quite a few positions for which, although we referred the winners as "candidates", they had in fact already won the moment they declared their candidacies, as they were running unopposed. How is it that in a college the size of Stern, only two women want the presidencies of the two main governing councils? Is this "natural selection"- i.e., only the fittest make it to the competition-, or is it an "oligarchic selection". Perhaps, despite our pretense to democracy, these candidates run unopposed because all of the other candidates are intimidated by the prestige and social power that these students wield.

There is one more possibility that exists for why only two stu-

dents ran for these positions. Perhaps there are only a very limited amount of students at Stern with the capacity to be on a panel, in a skit, on a board, plan an event, lead a discussion group, or come up with ideas. Perhaps the student body at Stern is overwhelmingly incapable, and that is why out of the entire student body, only two students want the highest student council positions. This would explain why I only know one girl's name- that girl.

It is often said that the student body presidents do not feel supported by the student body. The presidents, using all of their superb planning abilities, put together an extravagant event, and only a fraction of the student body shows up. And that is only if there is food at the event- without some sort of snack, nobody shows up. In order to explain this phenomenon, it has been said that "Stern lacks a community"- but I believe that this is not the root of the problem. The problem stems from the fact that Stern has become an oligarchy.

In my time at Stern, I have attended very few events. The only two events that I could not miss

were the two drama productions, The Pirates of Penzance and Hamlet. Is this because I am fascinated by the musical abilities of a group of uncouth pirates? Is this because I am intrigued by the political misconduct in the state of Denmark? No. In fact, the only reason that I went to the plays is because my roommates acted in them. I would not have missed those plays for any reason- not because I am the most communally minded student at Stern, but rather because my roommates, people that I know and support, were going to be in the play.

Oligarchy is precisely why "Stern lacks community." If only a handful of students run every event, are on every panel, and chair every board, the responsibility to support them falls only on a very small number of shoulders, and after a short while it is difficult for these students to continue going to every event. Thus the numbers at the fantastic events dwindle to near nothingness -- that is after the food runs out.

Our student councils and their associated clubs work extremely hard at infusing energy into our

school, but student councils are not supposed to be entities onto themselves. The key component of strengthening a community is involvement by as many of its members as possible. Planning programming should include as much of the student body as possible. This may resemble communism, but it is not (although I am a member of the Russian club) and I firmly believe that greater involvement from the student body will lead to a deeper sense of community throughout the university. Rather than attempting to lure in attendees, the student councils would be better served involving students in the actual planning, all the while gaining their support, and thus widening the attendance base.

If you don't like or agree with this whole proposal of how to involve and interest more Stern students, there is an easier quick fix to this enormous problem that you might prefer: just bring buses down from the Wilf campus every time we have an event. Then the student body will show their faces.

Simcha Deliveries: Uniting Communities Through Chessed

Margot Reinstein

Following the Itamar Massacre, our Jewish community felt a pressing need to help one another and unite in an attempt to negate the tremendous evil that had struck our nation. We found ourselves constantly asking "What can we do to help?" And yet, in the face of this tragedy, we were challenged with the task of rejoicing in the miracle of Purim. Many of us felt uncomfortable with the idea of celebrating after having experienced the loss of five precious souls and asked "how does one celebrate at a time like this?"

Unbeknownst to us at the time, the answer to these questions lay in a simple act of Chessed known as Simcha Deliveries which we had the opportunity to partake in on Purim day.

Simcha Deliveries is an independent student run initiative which sends volunteers to various areas in New York to deliver Shaloach Manot, sing songs and rejoice with the elderly on Purim day. This year Simcha Deliveries had over 120 volunteers who were sent to a range of nursing homes and hospitals including NYU hospital, the Kittay House, the Jewish Home in the Bronx, the Hebrew Home for the Aged in Riverdale and the Montefiore Medical Center- to name a few.

All the volunteers met Sunday

morning in Furst Hall for a community-led Megillah reading and breakfast. Following a short introduction and welcoming remarks by Daniella Peretz, Simcha Deliveries coordinator, the volunteers were split up into various groups and preceded to go to their destinations.

From a young age we have always been told, "you never know what one little action, like a smile, can do to change someone's day", but it's rare that one is able to actually see that change.

Our group of about fifteen guys and girls was sent to the Hebrew Home for the Aged in Riverdale, New York. As we walked in to the unfamiliar building, feelings of uneasiness and apprehension were felt throughout the group. "How were we to bring about simcha, simply by being here?" "Who are we to go into this place and claim that we'll bring *them* simcha?"

Upon arrival, we were told that we had come at the perfect time, since our "friends" had just finished hearing the megillah. As we walked into their multi-purpose room, all eyes shifted our way. Conquering our feelings of awkwardness and discomfort, we immediately spread ourselves out amongst the fifty or so, senior citizens and began to sing songs of simcha. As we were met with

smiles and tears, our worries gradually disappeared.

Through our singing, dancing and wacky costumes, the faces of the senior citizens began to slowly light up. They held out their hands so we could come dance with them. We, the Yeshiva students, started to let loose. There's something magical when Jewish people come together through song and dance. Although we had just met, almost instantaneously we were able to connect with our new friends as together we sang familiar Jewish songs, ones that we had all been taught as children; Mishenichnas Adar, Al Hanissim, and Am Yisrael Chai. Some of us even utilized our minute knowledge of Yiddish and sang Tum Ba La Layka, which brought tears to their eyes.

One woman kept asking us "why are you here? Who are you coming for?" we continuously told her, "we came to visit YOU!", but she did not seem to understand. Only after dancing for a couple of minutes did she realize that we came to bring *her* simcha!

After handing out Shaloach Manot, singing and dancing, our visit came to a quick and undesired end. On our way out one woman tugged on one of the volunteer's sleeves, beckoning her to come closer. She whispered into her ear, saying, "It is because of youth like

you that I understand why I went through what I did, in order to be Jewish."

Aside from the rewarding aspects of the experience, such as seeing the seniors smile, cry tears of joy, and join us in song, we were left with an overwhelming sense of responsibility. For many of the volunteers this experience helped provide a better understanding as to why we must contribute to the continuum of the Jewish people. Although the effects of contributing won't always be as obvious as Simcha Deliveries, the obligation is still there.

As we left Riverdale and headed to our own seudah's with friends and family, it became apparent that we had inadvertently answered our questions regarding what we can do in the face of such tragedy. We are all aware that it is imperative to support those immediately affected by the massacre, to the best of our abilities. However, we must also acknowledge that if we would like to internalize the message of unity in the face of adversity, than we must begin within our own communities. By celebrating the nullification of Haman's heinous decree at such a vulnerable time for the Jewish people we were staring evil in the face.

Chag

Kasher

V'sme'ach!

~from the

staff of the

Observer

OPINIONS

CJF Comes to Stern

Hana Brandt

For many YU students, Wednesday night is the best night of the school week. It is almost the end of the YU school week- Thursday is just hours away- and relief from homework and long schooldays is anticipated. Although ordinarily, Wednesday is something of a hump day, the day to get through before the last day of the week, YU's Center for the Jewish Future is out to change this stereotype. Enter, the Quest Leadership Fellowship. Instead of spending Wednesday nights on the ubiquitous and much-revered episodes of *How I Met Your Mother* and *House*, Quest offers a productive and yet fun way to spend Wednesday nights.

The CJF is home to the esteemed Leadership Training Department. In that department, one finds a few, special CJF employees who work tirelessly day in and day out creating, concocting, and perfecting programs to improve the leadership skills of the undergraduate student.

At the beginning of the Quest experience, the potential leader must promise not to waste any of the CJF's time by agreeing to fully commit to the program that the group leader is working so hard on. This might sound like "classic CJF," but the truth is that the programs arranged by the CJF really are fabricated to benefit the student body. As an alumnus of Quest and Counterpoint, I know and can affirm that they mean business. The programs are not just a simple alternative to the way people spend their usual Wednesday nights, summers, or winter breaks. They are truly life changing experiences that many other college students don't have the pleasure of experiencing. They challenge students to think for ourselves; to stand up for and define their beliefs; to help humanity in ways that students previously never thought necessary.

After two semesters together, my Quest group raised \$23,000 with the Jewish National Fund for their projects in the Negev. We specifically raised money for Halutza, a settlement bordering Egypt that was started by Gush Katif evacuees. Everyone involved in the settlement is an inspiration. They proved to us, YU students trained by the CJF, that anything is possible. They committed to accomplishing what the government failed to do for them and took the initiative to tie up the loose ends from a tragic event. We met face to face with people who lived what they believed, and realized that if we wish to be leaders of tomorrow, we must learn from the leaders of today.

Our winter mission in Israel was spent working in the Negev, and

included experiences as varied as making rock walls in the middle of a field that will help collect the rain water, painting buildings in Be'er Sheva, and picking etrogim and carrots grown out of sand. It was David Ben Gurion's dream for the population of Israel to settle in the Negev; yet the region, which 60% of the land of Israel, is home to a mere 5% of the population. After spending so much time in the Negev and giving the Negev so much of our time, energy and money, we came away with a sense of responsibility to the Negev. I want to protect it and see it continue to grow and flourish with the Jewish nation and fulfill Ben Gurion's dream.

I can't say this without a slight pang of guilt. Now that I have been trained as a Jewish leader I don't know where to begin on my leadership mission. I am not Israeli (yet), and I did not serve in the army. One can argue that the only reason that I feel a connection at all to the Negev is due to the fact that I did not grow up in Israel and that I see the Negev through the eyes of an American tourist and not with the true Israeli perspective.

This is the most challenging aspect of participating in a CJF program- they will not tell you what to do or think, but at the same time they challenge the way you think you see the world. They will not force you into one way of thinking, other than stressing your responsibility to be aware of certain aspects of the Jewish nation. They will not tell me what to do. But what is the right answer, to stay in America or to go to Israel? Is it abandoning one to exclusively work towards either goal?

My life ambition is now to live in the Negev, to settle the land and to ensure that Am Yisrael has a future in Eretz Yisrael. I mean that from more of a political perspective than a religious one. Although according to the belief system I was raised with, Israel belongs to the Jews and it is a mitzvah to settle the land, on a more practical note, it is just as important for Jews to settle the land politically, for them to be the ruling force in Israel and to continue to be the most reliable democracy in the middle east. If Jews don't start moving to the Negev, we will be faced with the risk of losing it.

Instead of spending my Wednesday nights in anticipation of the weekend, I was able to participate in the Quest program, and to gain the inspiration and the tools to be able to "do good" in my future, to have meaningful aspirations and to aim to use the leadership skills that I have been both taught and granted. I encourage you to drop *How I Met Your Mother* and do the same.

Sophie Felder

Virtual World, Real Words

Having grown up in a generation where digital expression is commonplace, we are at home in the world of online communication. Many of us would be hard-pressed to find a friend that does not have Facebook. The few Facebook-free individuals that I know are accustomed to the bewildered and shocked responses that they receive when they drop the "I don't have a Facebook" bomb. We have grown accustomed to spreading birthday wishes or holiday cheer through the internet, and even conduct lengthy, personal conversations online.

However, this comfort with digital conversation has somewhat warped our ability to engage in normal discourse. Let's face it; the differences between face-to-face conversation and Facebook posts are quite apparent. For instance, negative or confrontational comments are much more difficult to say in person. Nowadays, we type up these negative comments, press enter and send our thoughts into the online stratosphere without thinking twice. Furthermore, there

is a lack of tone in online texts; one is forced to read expression into the typed word, a dangerous move in some cases. I personally have made many an unfortunate mistake while interpreting the tone of online posts.

I am an avid reader of a blog written by a man who calls himself the "Orthoprax Rabbi". A rabbi of a community shul, the author has anonymously confessed that he is an atheist, though he continues to lead his congregants in their religious practices. Needless to say, this is a controversial site, a reality that the Rabbi acknowledges. Nonetheless, I find the vicious comments posted on the site to be rather surprising. Without the framework of a face-to-face conversation, individuals seem to feel more comfortable offering criticism that is devoid of decency and is more focused on belittling the individual to whom they are responding rather than critiquing that person's words.

Recent events in YU further demonstrate that when a conversation does not occur in front of

an actual person, people feel that it does not require graciousness and respect. While internet forums are important and effective, as we have seen in recent political movements in the Middle East, they should not be the end of civility. Explosive and sensationalistic statements are fun to make - they get attention and provoke response, but they are dishonest and are not in keeping with simple human decency. Comments that aim to attack are unproductive and reminiscent of the days when sticking out one's tongue was a valid way to express displeasure.

As a result of these online jousts, I have become increasingly aware of the need for us to lay down our keyboards and take a step back from our "trigger happy" habits. Not every conversation needs to turn into a shouting match and not every post warrants a critique the likes of analysis done by a Phd review board. We would do well to reconsider the nature of online conversation in comparison to real conversation and reconsider the way we communicate online

One Big Happy Family?

Rivkah Rogawski

One of the topics much under discussion this past fortnight is the upcoming attempt by the administration of YU to combine the faculty of Yeshiva College and Stern College for Women. Most of the details of this merger are unclear, including how exactly a combined faculty would split its time and what the motivations for this structural shift may be. Tremendous logistical problems aside, however, I would like to ask, as a Stern woman, what this merger might mean for the unique educational character of our institution.

Having been a student at Stern for (almost) six semesters, it has been my experience that Stern tries to foster an environment uniquely focused on Orthodox women's achievement. In addition to a plethora of extracurricular activities, this includes creating opportunities for women to expand their intellectual horizons. One excellent example of this is the upcoming Op-Ed project, an opportunity for women to sharpen their opinions writing skills and work on getting more women's voices into major publications (for more details, see Estie Neff's article on this topic, page 1).

Another important aspect of this is providing opportunities for women to engage in research on campus. Besides for being a

resume-buffer, research on campus contextualizes the classroom lessons by showing students how their chosen fields progress. Students also develop intellectual relationships with their professors and receive career guidance from their mentors. In my own personal Stern experience, working closely with a professor on a research project actually galvanized me to apply to graduate school in chemistry, as well as giving me the opportunity to present at two national conferences in my field.

The faculty of Stern College, because they teach only women, gear their extra-classroom time towards providing such personal research opportunities for women. It is my fear that if the faculty is combined, the faculty will be less closely focused on providing such opportunities for women. In the prototypical coeducational classroom, it is the women who end up losing out to their stereotypically more aggressive male peers.

Even if single-sex education never actually happens, faculty will be still be splitting their time between two different populations of students. If both men and women have equal access to the faculty members, will the women end up being left out? I sincerely hope that if the faculty have less time to spend with students, we ensure that it is equally split between the

students at Yeshiva College and those at Stern College for Women.

A more general point to make is that if faculty is splitting their time between campuses, traveling back and forth, they will have less time in general to spend with students developing the type of beneficial, informal mentoring relationships mentioned above. So much of undergraduate education is created in the spaces between the lectures and the exams, in the informal conversations that can spark a student's interest in a particular field. Professors who are stressed and lacking office space can hardly have the time to inspire students in this casual manner.

One might say that this is a misanthropic attitude to have towards what should be an educationally positive move for the university. After all, exposing students to more professors with different teaching styles and areas of expertise should be a positive thing. I would therefore like to emphasize that, in raising my concerns, I merely want to start a conversation about how we can preserve the vibrant atmosphere that, to my mind, makes Stern College exceptional, by keeping our faculty engaged in the ongoing conversation about women's education that makes this institution unique.



Yeshiva University

2011 Commencement

GRADUATING SENIORS

THURSDAY, MAY 26

IZOD CENTER

EAST RUTHERFORD, NEW JERSEY

BEREN CAMPUS

CAP & GOWN AND TICKET DISTRIBUTION

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11 | 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. | YAGODA COMMONS

This is the only day you can pick up your cap and gown.
No attire will be given out at the IZOD CENTER on commencement day.